ORGANIZATIONAL
PROFILES

ACHIEVEMENT NETWORK
EMPOWERING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The increasing focus on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) post-pandemic has led to significant investments in SEL by districts across the United States. However, these initiatives often occur in isolation and lack specificity. Educators do not know how to sift through all the different approaches to SEL and do not understand how those SEL efforts are connected to academic achievement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Achievement Network (ANet) is working to demonstrate the connection between students' SEL and their academic achievement. ANet's logic model is as follows: ANet will help schools improve on one or more of the Empowering Learning Environments constructs (self efficacy, student voice, belonging and identity affirmation), which will lead to more engaging and effective academic interactions between students and teachers, which will in turn lead to increased student performance on math and ELA assessments.

In addition to this project, ANet is pursuing many innovations in the area of assessment including a partnership with Stanford University for foundational skills assessments for older students, using large data sets on student misconceptions to shape AI tools and teacher professional learning and developing academic assessment content that is affirming of marginalized identities.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- ANet established the four constructs of Empowering Learning Environments (ELE) and selected existing instruments to measure each:
  + Self efficacy: Math and Me Survey Self-Perception (English and Spanish), Motivation to Read Profile (Revised, English and Spanish).
  + Student Voice: Transcend Leaps Survey (Adapted)
  + Belonging: Transcend Leaps Survey Community and Connection Scale (Adapted)
  + Identity Affirmation: Transcend Leaps Survey Affirmation of Self and Others Scale (Adapted)

- ANet has nine schools piloting its ELE work. Each school has administered surveys pertaining to at least one of the four constructs described above and they are incorporating analysis of their survey data into existing cycles for examining student academic assessment data.

CHALLENGES

- **Buy in and clarity:** "Social and Emotional Learning" continues to be an umbrella term that different educators interpret in different ways. When schools invest in SEL, schools often struggle to build a clear, shared picture of what outcomes they are trying to achieve and why those outcomes matter.

- **Logistics:** Schools, as always, are struggling to juggle many priorities and SEL can often be seen as "yet another initiative." As a result, adding SEL measures and data collection to an already full plate has been difficult. Because of time constraints within the school day, ANet has also struggled to deliver the full breadth of support (running data analysis meetings, providing professional learning) that we hoped to.

- **Data tools:** Educators are data rich, but information poor. They have too many data systems they need to maintain and often these systems struggle to provide data in ways that are actionable for educators.

LESSONS LEARNED

ANet is reflecting on multiple key lessons after this ELE cycle, namely:

- Most schools chose to focus on the concept of self efficacy. This construct is highly correlated with improved academic outcomes, and focusing on just this one construct can really help to sharpen educators' focus. Some of the trouble ANet had building buy-in and clarity around "ELE" or "SEL" overall was alleviated by a more specific focus on student self-efficacy.

- ANet was able to overcome some of the logistical and time barriers they encountered by folding in their data collection and analysis routines related to self efficacy with existing school routines for looking at academic assessment data. They also found that educator practice strengthened when they folded in practices of looking at student experience data with existing routines for looking at academic data.

- Through targeted professional learning, educators reported being able to make connections between a student's self efficacy in math and appropriate instructional moves. Educators have remarked that they are able to plan ahead and adapt instruction in real-time with self efficacy data in mind.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

ANet's first phase focused on the implementation of the pilot and early qualitative indicators of impact for the teacher and leader outcomes. A year-end report will include student outcomes. The key impact outcomes they planned to study in year 1 were:

- Leaders and Teachers build knowledge of the ELE constructs and how ELE constructs connect to their academic priorities.

- Leaders and teachers take action based on their tudent ELE survey data.

- Increased student experiences of the ELE construct of focus.

In the future, ANet is excited to explore the following questions:

- Under what conditions does student academic data change in correlation with ELE practices?

- How might the ELE construct choice (self efficacy, student voice, belonging, and identity affirmation) that a school makes be predictive of student outcomes?

- What are the specific levers in data meetings that fold ELE constructs in with academic data that lead to practice change, and ultimately changes in student outcomes?

- How might offering a menu of instructional moves for each ELE construct lead to a change in teacher practice and student outcomes?

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2024 - Aug 2027

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Greater Boston Area, Massachusetts; Plainfield, New Jersey; New York, New York

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.achievementnetwork.org/

ALL4ED (ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION)
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All4Ed is a national nonprofit advocacy organization committed to expanding equitable educational opportunities for students of color, students from low-income families and other marginalized groups. They advance transformation from the classroom to Congress by advocating for federal, state and local policies and practices that ensure all students graduate high school prepared for college, work and life.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

All4Ed (formerly the Alliance for Excellent Education) is working to advance equitable education strategies at the federal and state levels, increase student achievement, maintain transparent data on student outcomes, close the digital divide and expand educational attainment and college and career readiness. All4Ed has also focused on COVID-19 by advocating for federal relief funding to support equitable pandemic recovery efforts in schools and close the homework gap.

Over the past five years, All4Ed's accountability work has focused on analyzing the realities of how states have implemented ESSA, how that implementation has driven spending and resource allocation and how those policies have impacted educational equity. In particular, All4Ed released a series on ESSA accountability systems, focusing on equity in implementation in ten states: *When Equity is Optional* (funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation supported the data collection and analyses). All4Ed has also published several policy reports on college and career readiness indicators, including *Undermeasuring: College and Career Readiness Indicators May Not Reflect College and*

Career Outcomes (supported by the Joyce Foundation) and *Preparing Students for Careers* (supported by the Walton Family Foundation). All4Ed also made next-generation accountability systems one of the pillars in its newly launched *State Policy Center*, including three pieces of model legislation for state policymakers based on its policy research and recommendations.

All4Ed plays a lead role in advising USED on assessment and accountability regulatory and administrative decisions. For example, in 2023, All4Ed helped lead coalition letters to USED (1) supporting Montana's request for a one-year waiver from assessment and accountability requirements; (2) responding to USED's request for information on implementation of the *Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority* IADA; and (3) making recommendations on the priorities for the 2024 Competitive Grants for State Assessments competition. All4Ed also led coalition efforts regarding *USED's guidance* related to pausing—and subsequently resuming—assessment and accountability systems due to COVID-19 disruptions. All4Ed also plays a leading role in advising Congressional offices on assessment and accountability issues and ESSA oversight. For example, All4Ed's analyses have been used in *Congressional hearings* and in developing messaging to counter anti-assessment legislation. More recently, All4Ed led efforts to secure report language in the FY24 spending deal requiring USED to enhance its monitoring and technical assistance (through the Comprehensive Centers) of states' school improvement activities under ESSA, as well as the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to continue its work reviewing ESSA implementation.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

All4Ed is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years. All4Ed also regularly works with the other national organizations partnering in the Rapid Response Desk for Equity (Education Trust, Education Reform Now, Center for American Progress, UnidosUS, National Urban League, Learning Policy Institute, SchoolHouse Connection, Teach Plus, National Center for Learning Disabilities, and Migration Policy Institute, facilitated by Education Counsel) as leads on fiscal equity and whole child policy. Additionally, All4Ed supports joint advocacy efforts for data transparency, privacy, infrastructure and P20-W systems alignment through the Data Champions Collaborative (led by Data Quality Campaign).

At the state level, All4Ed works with state advocacy coalitions primarily to advance its policy priorities as a national member in the PIE Network, including by taking part in its leadership group to develop Guiding Principles for Assessment and Accountability. All4Ed also coordinates with state advocacy coalitions through the Resource Equity Funders Collaborative, and has collaborated with the National Council for State Legislatures to present and facilitate multiple "boot camps" for state legislators and their staff on ESSA assessment and accountability policies. Finally, All4Ed helped facilitate the final convening of New York State's Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures, which was focused—in particular—on the role of state assessment results in graduation requirements.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

From the series, When Equity is Optional

- States *inconsistently* identify schools to receive support under ESSA.

  + Some states identified half, or more, of the public schools they serve, while others identified fewer than 5%. While some states ensured that the lowest-rated schools were consistently identified for support, other states made choices that resulted in low-rated schools being overlooked. As a result, students in low-performing schools—who are much more likely to be students of color or from low-income families—in different states have very different odds of receiving the support they need to improve.

- Funding for school improvement is inadequate; too many identified schools *spend less* per pupil the year after being identified for support than at the time of identification.

  + In 8 of the 9 states examined, at least 25% of identified schools spent less per-pupil following their identification for extra support, not more. When identified schools spent less overall per pupil, these declines more often stemmed from declines in spending from state and local sources than federal ones.

  + When identified schools spent less, they often spent *significantly* less. In schools spending less from federal sources as well as state and local ones, the declines typically exceeded $1,000 per pupil.

Profile continues on next page ➜

ALL4ED (ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION)
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All4Ed

- Much greater percentages of Black and Latinx students were enrolled in *low-rated schools* than their white peers.

  + Students of color were much more likely to receive a poorly rated education than white students. Students of color were overrepresented in schools with low ratings and underrepresented in schools with high ratings in all 10 states, often by very large margins.

- ESSA's seemingly uniform, straightforward requirement for states to identify *low-graduation-rate high schools* yielded uneven and inequitable results.

  + ESSA gives states significant flexibility in identifying low-performing schools for support, but there is an exception: States must identify for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) all high schools where fewer than 67% of students graduate. (This was a provision championed by All4Ed during the development of ESSA). All4Ed found dramatic differences in the proportion of high schools identified for CSI due to low graduation rates.

  + States do not receive any additional funds to support and improve high schools that graduate fewer than 67% of their students, whether they identify hundreds of these schools or only a few.

From Undermeasuring

College and career readiness measures varied widely across states, and these measures often *underestimated* the percentage of students who ultimately enrolled in college and the percentage of those students bypassing remedial college coursework.

  + In 34 states (including Washington, DC), the percentage of students deemed ready was lower than the percentage of graduates enrolling in

college. Similarly, in 25 of the 28 states with remediation data, the percentage of students deemed ready was lower than the percentage of graduates avoiding remediation.

  + Undermeasuring did not affect all states—or all student groups—similarly. It was especially problematic in states where All4Ed's readiness data only included performance on college admissions exams, as opposed to multiple data points. Likewise, states were more likely to undermeasure readiness for Black and Latinx students than for white students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the series, When Equity is Optional

- Policymakers should consider school identification results when making school funding decisions and proactively address the inadequacy of school improvement funding.

  + State and local governments should review their funding systems to ensure they are directing relatively more resources to identified schools and shielding them from budget cuts. They should also consider adding categorical funding mechanisms that exclusively support school improvement.

  + Federal lawmakers should increase funding for the "7% Title I set-aside." With at least 25% of identified schools in every state examined spending less per pupil from federal sources after identification, current funding for school improvement is inadequate to support the needs of all identified schools.

- States should leverage the accountability "pause" due to COVID-19 to use ESSA's flexibility in the service of equity:

  + Learn from states whose policy choices led to more equitable results prior to the pandemic

  + Evaluate their systems to ensure that schools ratings and identification reflect the performance of students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, English learners and students with disabilities

  + Include relevant data on students' academic, social and emotional needs post-pandemic

  + Target resources to schools whose students were disproportionately affected by the pandemic

- The findings about school ratings and race should give states pause and a renewed sense of urgency about investing in the resources and supports necessary to improve low-performing schools and ensure that every child—particularly students of color—have equal access to an excellent education.

  + States can improve their accountability systems by reviewing their data to determine whether schools receiving low ratings are being overlooked for support and analyzing their performance as well as the resources made available to them (e.g., per-pupil expenditure, presence of school counselors, access to advanced coursework, etc.).

    + Based on this information, lawmakers can determine if new or additional policies are needed to ensure students in schools with the lowest rating receive appropriate support and interventions to improve (*model legislation on aligning ratings and support* in All4Ed's State Policy Center).

- Other recommendations to improve state accountability systems:

  + Use an n-size as low as five in order to include data on as many students as possible and provide them with support as needed (*model legislation on n-size*) in All4Ed's State Policy Center).

  + From *Undermeasuring, equal importance to both college and career readiness, rather than favoring one over the other, and use a college and career readiness index that*:

    » includes multiple measures of college readiness and measures of career readiness;

    » includes measures that demonstrate readiness, such as college enrollment and remediation rates, rather than relying solely on measures that predict readiness, such as success in advanced coursework;

    » prioritizes measures backed by the strongest evidence of leading to postsecondary success; and

    » prioritizes the integration of college and career readiness (*model legislation on CCR indicators*) in All4Ed's State Policy Center).

FUTURE WORK

All4Ed plans to continue and expand its efforts to support effective assessment and accountability systems. This includes continued work to analyze and improve implementation of ESSA's school accountability framework through the When Equity Is Optional series, particularly as these systems have resumed after temporary pauses during the pandemic. Additionally, All4Ed is considering the development of a policy proposal for an eventual ESEA

Profile continues on next page ➜

ALL4ED (ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION)
EMPOWERING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

reauthorization that also reimagines the role of school districts within accountability and school improvement systems. The proposal would leverage accountability systems at the district level to promote equitable allocation of resources, as well as student outcomes, while maintaining—and improving—school-level accountability and support as well. In addition, All4Ed plans to pursue additional research and advocacy to expand and improve the distribution of school improvement funding (at the federal and state levels).

As high-quality assessments continue to be challenged politically on Capitol Hill and in state houses, All4Ed will also work with like-minded policymakers and advocates to maintain high-quality, statewide assessment and accountability systems, while supporting improvement and innovation within these systems. In particular, All4Ed may pursue new work to improve high school assessments and related policies, including improving alignment of assessments with student pathways and graduation requirements. In addition, All4Ed intends to expand its work on assessments and accountability at the state level. For example, they are in conversation with the National Conference of State Legislatures about providing long-term support to legislators in preparation for the eventual ESEA reauthorization and will provide technical assistance to state lawmakers and advocates on these issues through All4Ed's State Policy Center.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2024 – Aug 2027

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Greater Boston Area, Massachusetts; Plainfield, New Jersey; New York, New York

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://all4ed.org/

- **Publications**

  + Series: *When Equity is Optional*

    » *Does Accountability Drive School Spending?* (one-pager *here*)

    » *How State Choices Affect Ratings and Identification for Support Under ESSA*

    » *Students of Color Disproportionately Attend Low Rated Schools*

    » *Low Graduation Rate High Schools and the 67% Threshold*

    » *Fact Sheets on each When Equity Is Optional State*

  + *State Policy Center*: Model Legislation for *Next Generation Accountability*

    » *Rewarding Readiness*

    » *Ensuring All Students Count*

    » *School Ratings Mean School Support*

  + College and Career Readiness Indicators

    » *Undermeasuring: College and Career Readiness May Not Reflect College and Career Outcomes*

      • *Georgia Measures Readiness with College Outcomes*

      • *California Leads in Disaggregating Readiness Data*

      • *Louisiana Defines a Stronger Diploma*

    » *Preparing Students for Careers*

  + *ESSA Equity Dashboards for all State ESSA Plans* (updated December 2018)

  + *Additional information explaining ESSA opportunities and requirements*

- **Contact information**

  + Anne Hyslop, Director of Policy Development: *ahyslop@all4ed.org*

AMPLIFY
IDENTIFYING PROMISING MODELS OF SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Amplify.

Many education advocates, policymakers, and assessment experts have advocated for a next generation of large-scale assessment — one that is more responsive to the needs of educators, policymakers, learners and communities. Achieving that aspiration means taking a step back and thinking about the role of large-scale assessment in the context of the broader measurement and instructional infrastructure of K12.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Amplify is exploring a proposed flexible assessment system designed to better meet the needs of teachers, students and families. This work began with a landscape scan that investigated the history of assessments and accountability policies in the United States.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Key Deliverables:
  - + From an initial landscape scan, the project progressed to developing a conceptual solution for a future state large scale assessment system that would address several of the significant challenges raised by the landscape scan. Next, Amplify identified a set of priority investment areas that would be required - across academic, public sector, and industry partners - to realize the conceptual solution. Last, they tested a small slice of this broader concept through development of rich formative assessments in a digital modality.

- Findings:
  - + As student work is increasingly captured digitally, there are more opportunities than ever to learn about student academic progress and to provide actionable fine-grain instructional insights to students, educators, administrators and caregivers.
  - + Yet realizing that potential relies on foundational investments that span a range of stakeholders and disciplinary domains, including:
    - » Coordinated research across the fields of education policy, data science, psychometrics, data mining, among others.
    - » Increasingly fine grain learning constructs and statistical models capable of parsing rich tasks into reporting on those models.
    - » Stronger infrastructure for incorporating educator, student and community voice into assessment design and implementation.

CHALLENGES

- **Investment and collaboration demands ahead:** The investment and collaboration required to fully realize any of the future state concepts envisioned in Amplify's proposals will be extensive:
  - + Realizing this outcome will likely require much more interdisciplinary cross-pollination in the field, bringing together historically siloed areas of expertise (e.g., assessment policy; traditional psychometrics; educational data-mining).

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2019 - 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://amplify.com/

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The Aspen Institute (Aspen) is a global nonprofit organization committed to realizing a free, just and equitable society. Founded in 1949, the Institute drives change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the most important challenges facing the United States and the world. TAI holds conferences, events and seminars, creates programs, leadership programs and youth leadership programs and partners with international organizations.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Aspen Institute explored "Opportunities to Learn" (OTL) indicators for state accountability systems. Through their work, Aspen is addressing the larger issue that state leaders often operate with a compliance mindset. This often limits what they see as possible for accountability design. The goal of this work is for policymakers at the state and federal levels to establish consensus about how to use OTL indicators to gain an understanding of the gaps that keep public education from achieving its missions and keep young people from achieving their potential. In order to achieve this goal, Aspen is working to:

- Create a public consensus statement on the value and role of OTL data at state level
- Publish a paper on current state, best practices, and pitfalls of OTL
- Hold a public event using Aspen platform
- Publish commentaries/op-eds/blogs

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Aspen partnered with the Center for Assessment to frame the importance of OTL indicators to better understand the why behind outputs and outcomes. A bipartisan working group of state policymakers came together to study trends and research, clarify their own visions and values and determine the opportunities they wanted all students to have access to in public schools. The policymakers included chiefs, state board, legislators, and governor's advisors. We currently are working with leaders at the Tennessee State Board of Education and the Colorado Department of Education to embed OTL principles in school improvement protocols (TN) and the overall strategic plan (CO).

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

Aspen's work revealed that state policymakers are best positioned to determine what data are needed to understand opportunities and outcomes in public education and the multiple agencies, in addition to education systems, that have or can collect those data. For example, postsecondary education, healthcare, child protective services, juvenile justice systems and workforce agencies all have essential data about youth, that informs the support they need and outcomes they achieve. Only state leadership can forge collaborative agreements regarding data sharing across agencies. There is a lot of interest among policymakers and others in broadening the aperture on how we understand school quality so that we can design more effective improvement strategies and better respond to research and parent demands.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- In regards to OTL indicators, states must strategically collect and use data to illuminate the extent to which schools are providing all students with opportunities to learn. Data should:
  + Be collected with a clear theory of action regarding how it will be used to improve educational opportunities and outcomes.
  + Address youth development and preparation for citizenship and the future of work.
  + Assess availability of support services for basic needs as well as mental health and take a whole-of-government approach to meeting the needs of children and families, leveraging schools as hubs but not overwhelming them with inordinate responsibilities.
  + Come with use-case and the lowest capacity demands on local education agencies and school-based personnel.

- In redesigning accountability, chiefs should take two pieces into consideration: their broader vision for the state education system and the state's equity goals. Chiefs can take these specific actions:
  + Collect data and report on school climate.
  + Measure and report on opportunities for engaging with meaningful and rigorous content, for instance through use of HQIM, measures of student tasks and assignments, and the breadth of courses and extracurriculars students have access to.
  + Ensure that the accountability system is relevant and meaningful to parents, students and other stakeholders. Build partnerships and maintain open lines of communication with district and community leaders when intervening in low-performing schools.
  + Partner with LEAs to ensure school improvement efforts are targeted to community needs and strengths. Engage community-based organizations and service providers for additional expertise.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.aspeninstitute.org/

- Publications:
  + *Leading for Equity: Opportunities for State Education Chiefs*
  + *This Is Not a Test, This Is an Emergency: Special Considerations for Assessing and Advancing Equity in School Year 2020-21* (co-published with Center for Assessment)
  + *Looking Back to Accelerate Forward: Toward a Policy Paradigm That Advances Equity and Improvement* (co-published with Carnegie Foundation)
  + *Opportunity to Learn, Responsibility to Lead*

BELOVED COMMUNITY
EQUITY ASSESSMENT AND PLATFORM

Beloved COMMUNITY

Effective DEI work requires mutual accountability and sustainable, generational change. Organizations need a way to effectively assess their own equitable practices and meaningfully plan for action. Organizations working to advance DEI need more cross-sector collaboration and infrastructure for that collaboration to occur.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Beloved Community (BC) led two distinct projects: Beloved Community Equity Audit & Awa Platform and the National Convening for Sustaining Change.

- Beloved Community Equity Audit & Awa Platform

  + BC gathered data for a year-and-a-half in order to develop a tool that could empower teams to work together to collect data, reflect, and action-plan around DEI. This work led to the creation of the first comprehensive DEI assessment for the workplace with an emphasis on mutual accountability and shared ownership through an online space.

- National Convening for Sustaining Change

  + BC planned and implemented a national convening to enable engagement across sectors and regions and to sustain DEI advancements in the field.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Beloved Community Equity Audit & Awa Platform

  + There were 5,900 unique visitors to the Equity Audit's website. During the grant period, 281 organizational accounts were created, and the overall number reached 510, surpassing BC's goal.

- National Convening for Sustaining Change

  + The first National Convening for Sustaining Change took place in October 2022 with 150 attendees representing 18 states and the District of Columbia.

CHALLENGES

- Beloved Community Equity Audit & Awa Platform

  + The goal of Awa is to fit many different contexts based on the nuanced needs of different sectors, organization sizes and types. Building a product to meet all of those needs in the initial state was challenging.

    » To mitigate this challenge, BC worked to identify shared functions across these various groups in order to meet more needs.

  + BC's team also worked to build a minimum viable product that had the infrastructure needed to scale and maximize impact. This design decision added to the complexity of this project.

- National Convening for Sustaining Change

  + BC deliberately centered people and rest in the design of the convening by aiming to not exhaust participants and to reject the belief that "more is better" in white dominant culture. These values led to a convening schedule that incorporated breaks and reasonable start times. As a consequence, participants could attend fewer sessions.

    » To mitigate this consequence, BC made the slide decks and recordings for all sessions public, so that participants could access materials to the sessions they were unable to attend.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Beloved Community Equity Audit & Awa Platform

  + BC notes that if it were to do this work over again, it would have investigated with the end-user the value in integrating the platform into other existing systems earlier in the process. A future vision for this tool involves its integration into other apps and platforms in order to increase the sustainability of this work (e.g., so it is resilient to changes in leadership, funding or policies). BC is curious how important that feature is to an end-user.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- BC notes that both of these projects highlight the need to protect this work in hostile times in hostile places. BC is investigating how they can use language to adapt and survive in hostile spaces, but technology can make those nuanced adaptations challenging. For example, BC is working with a school district in Kansas City using the word "dignity" because the word "belonging" is under attack, making changes to software on an individual basis is costly and counters goals of scaling the work. BC believes that they need to build these tech tools in a way that adapts to politically unsafe environments while also allowing them to do this work.

- BC designed Awa to incorporate change at multiple levels: for individuals, for teams and for organizations. They are seeing now, as they conduct impact interviews with end-users, that this decision has been a catalyst for sustainable change and that these changes beget changes at other levels (e.g., an organizational change pushed change at the individual level).
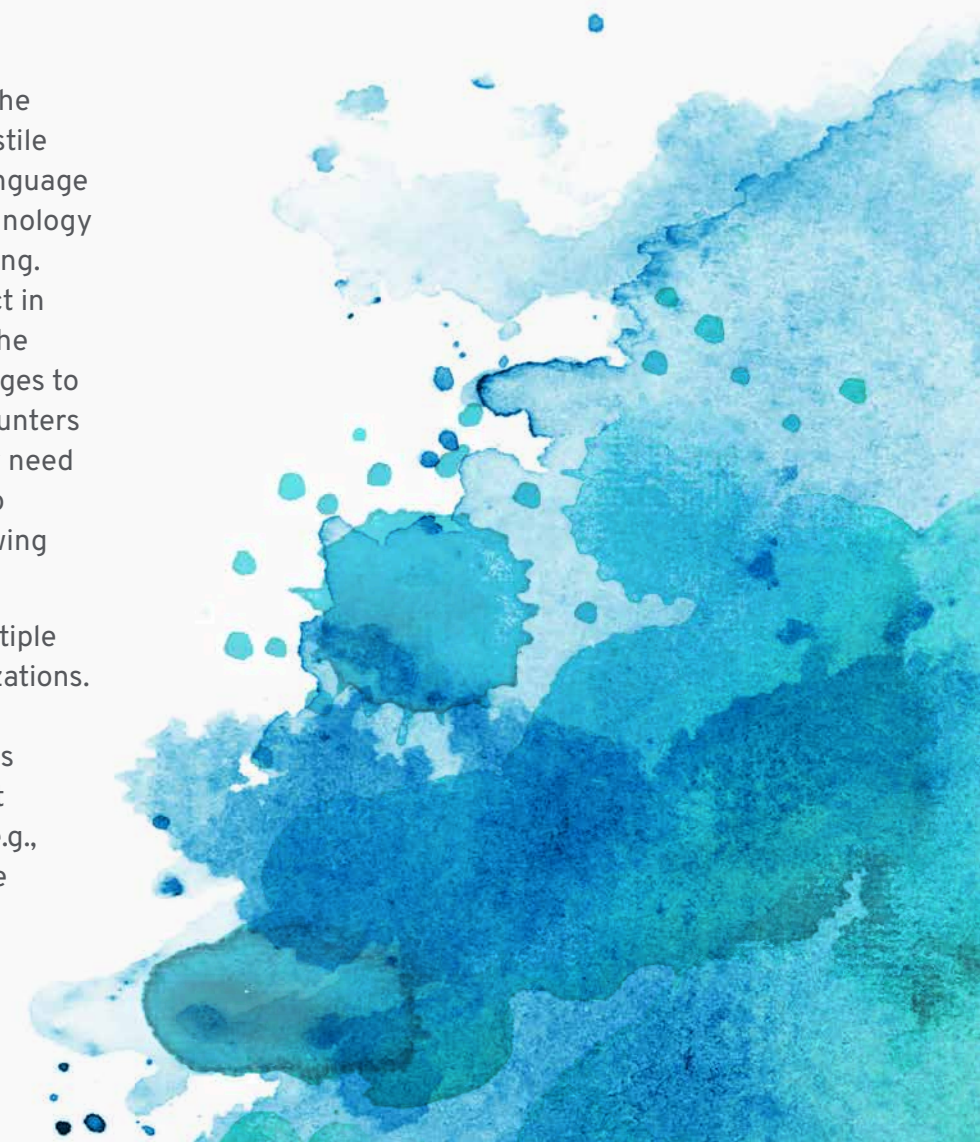
FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2022 – March 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

wearebeloved.org

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

CAMBIAR DIRECT TO FAMILIES
THRIVE GRANTS

CAMBIAR™ THRIVE grant

Cambiar's focus is on the unique intersection of relationships and technology/data/AI.

Cambiar believes that:

Investing in new and innovative solutions that focus on engaging families from diverse backgrounds and cultures about student data…

Will change the ecosystem by giving families the understanding and agency they need to better support and act on behalf of their children…

Resulting in improved student outcomes on academic and non-academic measures, and longer-term systems changes to support families in achieving these outcomes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cambiar Education and Tyton Partners' Thrive subgrantees' led implementation of innovative approaches to sharing meaningful and actionable education data with parents and families. The subgrants supported organizations' innovations and helped build an ecosystem that drives innovation, invites more capital, unpacks complexities for the broader field and affects meaningful change. Categories for subgrantees included:

- **Parent platform solutions** built for national reach
- **Parent platform solutions** built for specific community needs
- **Parent activators:** deep dive areas of focus for parents that provide insight into their child's learning profile and supports they need
- **Parent activators:** learning tools and workshops that lead to localized and deep transformation

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- The Thrive grant program has led to the creation of 31 new tools, solutions, playbooks, and methodologies to support parents, families and caregivers with data, explanations and recommendations about their K-8 learners' academic and/or social and emotional development. These innovations were launched or piloted in SY 2023-24.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Human trust is still the key to getting families to engage with additional services and supports. For apps or opt-in supports, the messenger has to be a trusted source.
- COVID-19 and increased physical school safety concerns have created more distance between the most vulnerable families and their school. They cannot talk to a human without first having to go through an app or getting screened at a gate.
- There is a deep need for data visualization products and services. Accessing data is difficult without a way to share that data in an accessible and easily understandable way.
- Parent agency and advocacy is extending beyond the school walls and impacting the policy space. Parents are using their power in new ways to directly influence school boards and policy changes.
- The connection between edtech platforms and parent activator organizations is leading to deep learning and more authentic design and representation of parent voice in ed tech parent engagement solutions.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- As schools lean towards using apps and technology for efficiency there has to be a complementary strategy for building 1:1 trust with families.
- To change practice and shift the nature of family-school engagement with student data, a focus on family engagement must be embedded within a school's or district's broader strategy.
- Data is coming to families from too many sources in packages that are difficult to understand. Families need a streamlined way to make sense of their student's data with easy to understand actions they can take as a result.
- Parent and families are having greater influence over who is at the decision-making table and occupying these spaces in new ways.
- Districts, schools, and products should explore the role of AI in personalizing and customizing parent engagement and supports.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Oct 2022 - Oct 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://www.cambiareducation.org/

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY
ENHANCE PROGRAM

Carnegie Mellon University

When When State Education Agencies (SEAs) are interested in redesigning their assessment and accountability systems, they are often still growing their capacity to develop new systems and/or the technical knowledge to do so. Carnegie Mellon's SEA Fellows Program addresses these growing needs for capacity and technical support in pursuit of assessment and accountability redesign, particularly in terms of psychometrics and machine learning.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) pairs the following SEAs with academic partners and postdoctoral fellows to explore particular topics related to assessments:

- **Louisiana:** CMU & Michael Asher
  - ELA curriculum-aligned through-course
- **South Carolina:** EdAnalytics & Shuyuan Li
  - Interim/benchmark assessments
- **CORE Districts in California:** EdAnalytics & Shuyuan Li
  - SEL survey measures
- **The Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA):** UMass & Nikki Holland
  - Portfolio/performance assessments
- **New Jersey:** New Meridian and TBA fellow
  - Assessment through models that empower educators to adapt and personalize instruction
- **Louisiana:** New Meridian and Kristopher John
  - Math Assessment through models that empower educators to adapt and personalize instruction

- **Montana:** New Meridian and Kristopher John
  - Assessment through models that empower educators to adapt and personalize instruction

RESULTS & FINDINGS

CMU's results so far suggest that SEAs are interested in developing novel assessments that focus on student growth instead of static one time measures of learning, that can inform teacher instruction and change during the academic year, as well as focus on life-long skills beyond content. CMU's results also suggest that initial attempts at through-year assessment and portfolio-based assessments present challenges that require further innovation.

CHALLENGES

Despite interest and enthusiasm to innovate on assessments, SEAs are often slow to change and take on new projects. This is due to many factors, including capacity, external pressures and legislative priorities often out of the control of the SEAs. One approach CMU found useful is to partner with organizations already working with the SEAs as a way to promote and support small incremental change.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Innovation in assessment might also mean innovation in the approach for reaching out, involvement and engagement.
- SEAs are constrained by the expertise available when deciding what projects to develop. This has implications for innovation and what seems relevant and worth exploring from their perspective.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

All SEAs CMU has spoken to are interested in, and in fact welcome, change and innovation on assessment. However, external pressures (such as reporting requirements, legislation, and capacity) are critical barriers. CMU is trying to address the capacity barrier by supporting the work of the Fellows; however, to place the Fellows, capacity at the SEAs to make decisions is needed. Future work could emphasize the network of SEAs and their current partners as a way to increase capacity.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2022–2025
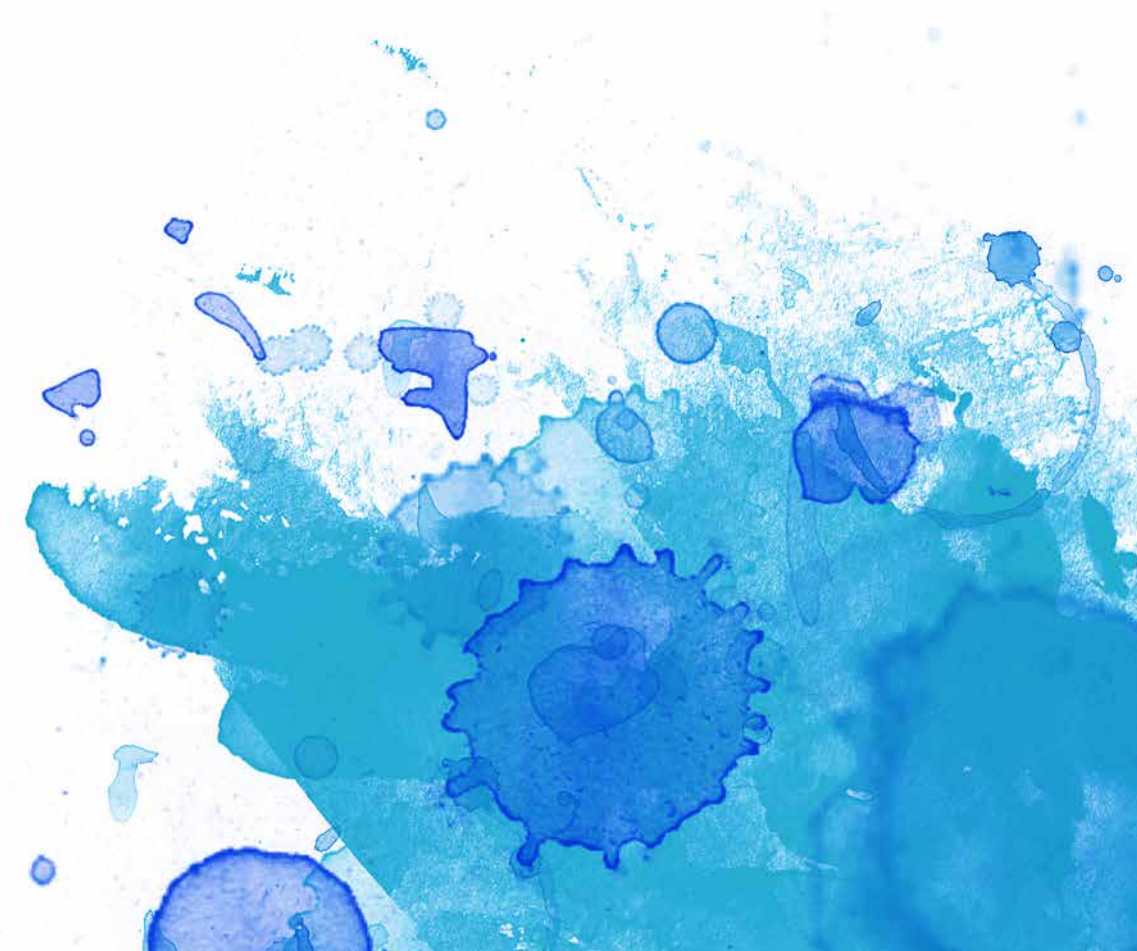
Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Louisiana, South Carolina, California, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Montana

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.cmu.edu/
- Publications:
  - *https://www.enhanceprogram.com/*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS
ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSESSMENT & CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY

CAP

The Center for American Progress is an independent, nonpartisan policy institute that is dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through bold, progressive ideas, as well as strong leadership and concerted action. Its aim is not just to change the conversation, but to change the country. Center for American Progress develops develop new policy ideas, challenges the media to cover the issues that truly matter, and shapes the national debate. With policy teams from a number of disciplines and major issue areas, the Center for American Progress applies creative approaches to develop ideas for policymakers that lead to real change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Center for American Progress (CAP) is working to improve accountability, oversight, and the K-12 public education system overall. CAP's work aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- Establish accountability and assessment system policies for districts and schools in alignment with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and CAP's 'future of testing' proposals
- Ensure that innovations and improvements to assessments are equitably distributed across U.S. public schools
- Contribute to the identification of evidence-based strategies for ensuring the integrity of accountability systems and protecting the civil rights of students, while balancing the purpose of those assessments, particularly for underserved students
- Advance innovation in K12 accountability and assessment

- Develop next generation accountability for the future of work
- Understand the future of assessment
- Support a balanced approach to charter school policy

CAP is using an explicit race equity lens in this work, working to understand the policy impacts on non-white populations and low-income communities. Ultimately, CAP will be identifying barriers and proposing policy solutions that create equitable opportunity for historically marginalized and low-income communities.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Through this work, CAP is engaging the following stakeholders: parents, students, educators, policymakers, employers and workforce members. CAP is also collaborating with the following organizations:

- The Education Trust
- Alliance for Excellent Education
- Learning Policy Institute
- Education Reform Now
- Educators for Excellence
- Teach Plus
- UnidosUS
- National Urban League
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- National Conference of State Legislators
- Education Commission of the States
- National Governors Association
- Local grassroots organizations

CAP is also participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability, and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

CAP experts engage in community conversations to inform their work. Community conversations are focus groups with students, caregivers, educators, and community advocates from across the country. Centering community members as co-creators in developing K12 education policy recommendations and seeking their input in efforts to design an education system that focuses on all aspects of child and student development, including built-in support for families, as a part of their community's economic development strategy, has been a key component of CAP's efforts to reimagine public education. The outcomes of this approach have been connecting with and centering lived experiences of educators in every region of the continental United States to better inform policies affecting the U.S. public school system.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- There is a strong appetite in the field for finding new ways to evaluate schools and districts in addition to standardized testing.
- Districts need more support with specific strategies to hold their schools accountable for community engagement, despite the inclusion of requirements for community engagement in both ESEA and the CARES Act.
- Flexibility and adaptability are critical for having policy impact.

- Planning for at least two years at a time is useful for making interim adjustments in a way that maintains the ability to meet long-term goals while adjusting for what is happening in the moment and the broader context.
- Strong relationships between school districts and their surrounding communities are critical in maximizing support for students and families.
- Data transparency and information sharing between federal entities and local actors is crucial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

During the pandemic, CAP along with a number of national partners, pushed for maintaining some version of annual assessments while offering flexibility on accountability. USED cited CAP's work in its guidance on this issue. CAP's October 2020 report "*A First 100 Days Agenda for K-12 Education*," was a form of public transition memo for the incoming Biden-Harris administration. Several policy proposals from that report–particularly those related to funding equity and teacher diversity–became priorities, budget requests, and recommendations of USED under the leadership of Secretary Cardona.

FUTURE WORK

The future of CAP's K12 education work will center on policies that equitably expand opportunities for all children in America's public schools to access a quality education. Their community-informed policy making strategy will continue to be threaded throughout future work. Upcoming products will span a wide variety of topics in education with a focus on ensuring that every community has safe, healthy, inclusive, and well-resourced public schools.

CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS
ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSESSMENT & CHARTER SCHOOL POLICY

CAP

On May 1-2, 2024 CAP hosted the "2024 Summit on Education: Reset. Reframe. Reform." At this event, CAP and partners worked to reset the education conversation, reframing it as an essential pillar of democracy, and explored reforms that will strengthen education as a crucial vehicle for opportunity for students and their families. CAP experts will use the conversations at this event to inform a blueprint of progressive, forward looking policy options for policymakers.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.americanprogress.org/

- Publications:

  + 2024

    » *Investing in School Libraries and Librarians To Improve Literacy Outcomes*

    » *K-12 Work-Based Learning Opportunities: A 50-State Scan of 2023 Legislative Action*

    » *Scaling Up High-Dosage Tutoring Is Crucial to Students' Academic Success*

  + 2023

    » *Challenges and Opportunities of Providing Free School Meals for All*

    » *5 States Addressing Child Hunger and Food Insecurity With Free School Meals for All*

  + 2022

    » *Book Banning, Curriculum Restrictions, and the Politicization of U.S. Schools*

  + 2021

    » *Understanding the Opportunities and Challenges of Charter Management Contracts for Public Schools*

    » *Future of Testing in Education: Effective and Equitable Systems*

    » *Future of Testing in Education: Artificial Intelligence*

    » *Future of Testing in Education: The Way Forward for State Standardized Tests*

    » *How To Ensure Equitable Access to Great Teaching: A Proposal for Targeted Grants for Educational Excellence*

    » *The Education Data That Matter Most to Parents and School Stakeholders*

    » *Preparing Students of Color for the Workforce*

    » *Good Jobs for All: How Federal Laws Can Create Pathways From Education and Training to Good Jobs*

  + 2020

    » *A First 100 Days Agenda for K-12 Education*

    » *Early High School STEM Perceptions Associated With Postsecondary Outcomes*

    » *Early High School STEM Perceptions Associated With Postsecondary Outcomes*

    » *Public Education Opportunity Grants: Increasing Funding and Equity in Federal K-12 Education Investments*

    » *Preparing American Students for the Workforce of the Future*

    » *Student Assessment During COVID-19*

    » *Building a Strong Middle Class Through Career Pathways Programs*

  + 2019

    » *Successful Implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials*

    » *Math Pathways*

    » *Elevating Student Voice in Education*

    » *How Delaware Aims to Improve College Readiness*

    » *Student Mobility, Backfill, and Charter Schools*

    » *A Quality Education for Every Child: A New Agenda for Education Policy*

    » *3 Ways DeVos Has Put Students At Risk by Deregulating Education*

    » *Homework and Higher Standards: How Homework Stacks Up to the Common Core*

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CENTER FOR ASSESSMENT
SAMPLING PROJECT

Center for Assessment

The burdensome nature of administering assessments, coupled with the consequential influence on classroom instruction, prompts an evaluation of the necessity of yearly testing of all students for accountability. The Center for Assessment (NCIEA) has set out to explore alternatives to yearly testing, with the goal of fostering assessment innovation while upholding the equity goals of standardized testing and accountability.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The NCIEA conducted research on the impact of alternatives to yearly testing on federal school accountability determinations and the identification of student subgroups in need of support. The high-level questions that the NCIEA set out to answer include the following:

- Do we need to test all students each year to understand how schools are doing and to identify gaps, inequities, or lack of opportunities in the education system?

- Could we draw the same conclusions if we tested less frequently, at select grades, or with a shorter test)?

- If we reduce testing, what are the trade-offs? Particularly as it relates to including student groups in accountability determinations.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- The NCIEA developed five testing scenarios as potential alternatives to testing every student in every grade every year. Scenarios included the following:

  1. **Test One Grade per Span** *Every Year:*
     - » Students are tested on ELA and math in **grade 5** in elementary and **grade 8** in middle

  2. **Test Two Grades per Span** *Every Year:*
     - » Students are tested on ELA and math in grades **3 & 5** in elementary and **6 & 8** in middle

  3. **Test All Students Every** *Other Year:*
     - » Students tested either in **even years or odd (still test 3-5 and 6-8th grades)**

  4. **Test Two Grades Per Span** *Every Other Year*
     - » Students are tested on ELA and math in grades **3 & 5** in elementary and **6 & 8** in middle

  5. **Test All Students Every Year, But** *Shorter Tests*
     - » **Cut the length of tests in half**, students still tested every year, in every grade, in both ELA and math

- The NCIEA looked at data from two states over two years. They compared each testing scenario to currently required assessment (every year and grade, in both ELA and math) and looked at whether the scenarios would change the outcomes of school accountability determinations and identification of student subgroups in need of support based on the current federal accountability laws and regulations. For each scenario, the study assessed whether the scenario had an effect on accountability determinations for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI).

- They also evaluated the above effects for different minimum sample size for defining student subgroups, Most states typically adopt a minimum-n between 20-30 students, although some use 10. The Center for Assessment evaluated minimum-n values of 10, 20, and 50.

- Findings suggest that while several of the scenarios do reduce logistical burdens of annual testing, the scenarios do have tradeoffs and risks in terms of identifying schools and student subgroups in need of support. Some scenarios may result in the exclusion of additional schools and student subgroups from accountability metrics or, for those that are still included, there are differences in the schools and students identified for improvement and support. Only two scenarios held promise for meeting the current intentions of the federal accountability system: **Testing every other year, and testing all students every year but shortening the test.**

  + *Note on Exclusions of schools and student groups: In this study, exclusion is relative to a system in which only one years-worth of data is used to make determinations. In a real ESSA accountability system, no school can be excluded from accountability. In practice, schools that do not meet minimum sample size requirements would need to include data from previous years, go through a small school review, or some similar mechanism. In terms of this study, exclusion significantly complicates an accountability system because it requires such exception-capturing mechanisms.*

CHALLENGES

- Limitations of the study included the following:
  + Extrapolating from simulated to real conditions.
  + Extrapolating to real (non-prototypical) accountability systems.
  + Generalizing across states and years.
  + Applicability to the post-COVID period.
  + Feasibility of the half-length scenario and its relation to matrix sampling of content.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Although all methods studied would face hurdles under ESSA, all of them are premised on the basic notion of ESSA's CSI and ATSI identification categories. Ultimately, the study addresses the very narrow question of whether it is possible to "recover" those identifications with less testing. This parameter of the study has been difficult to communicate to various audiences.

- All of the methods of reducing assessment burden that were designed and studied had the implication of reduced information about individual students - that is, less information for individual student reports (ISRs). In some cases, ISRs would not be available every year. The NCIEA did not anticipate the strength of the objection to trading away annual individual student information. Depending on how strongly parents and others value this information, it may not be possible to reduce the assessment burden, because assessment would be driven by a demand for information about students, rather than to fulfill school accountability purposes.

CENTER FOR ASSESSMENT
SAMPLING PROJECT

Center for Assessment

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- The testing burden reduction designs of this report have implications for SEAs and others in a position to respond to calls for reduced testing. There are a couple of promising directions that nearly preserve accountability designations, but these designs may not respond entirely to ESSA requirements. Moreover, all methods of reducing assessment burden require considering significant tradeoffs.

- Any testing burden reduction designs would require compromise on annual student-student comparable information for every student.

- This study has implications for full ESEA reauthorizations. It shows that it is possible to reduce testing in some ways, while approximating accountability inferences derived from annual all-grade testing.
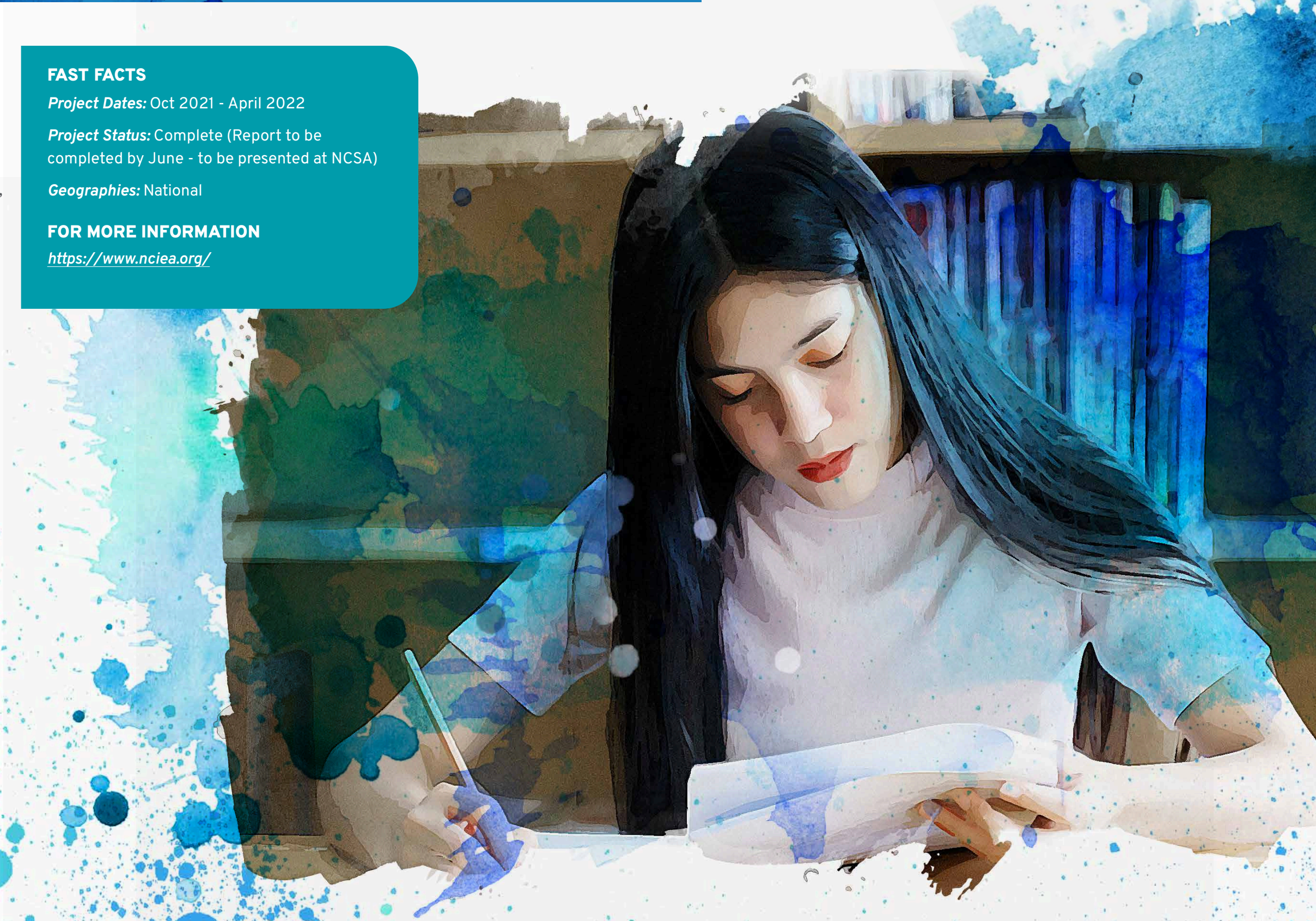
FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Oct 2021 - April 2022

Project Status: Complete (Report to be completed by June - to be presented at NCSA)

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.nciea.org/

CENTER FOR MEASUREMENT JUSTICE
RESEARCH CENTER & INNOVATIVE PSYCHOMETRICIANS NETWORK

CMJ
Center for Measurement Justice

Assessments often don't accurately and fairly measure the abilities of all students.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Center for Measurement Justice (CMJ) led by Dr. Jennifer Randall aims to promote a justice-oriented approach to measurement within school systems, assessment companies and research communities. Their mission is to ensure fair and accurate measurement of all students' knowledge and abilities. Supported by grants, the Center conducts research on the impact of assessments that center justice-oriented aims, collaborates with assessment companies as well as students and parents from racially and ethnically minoritized populations to create assessment content, supports stakeholders (e.g., local and state education agencies) in their efforts to understand and implement liberatory systems of assessments and works to increase the representation of Black, Brown, and Indigenous scholars in psychometrics.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- CMJ set out to achieve four primary goals as a part of this grant. The goals and the progress CMJ has made toward them are as follows:
  + **Goal: Successfully launch CMJ:**
    » CMJ is on track to meet strategy goals by 2024.
  + **Goal: Strengthen marginalized scholars in educational measurement**
    » CMJ managed and hosted a doctoral fellowship to provide financial and mentoring support to advanced doctoral students so that they can finish their degrees.

» CMJ served over 144 scholars through mentorships, internships, scholarships and doctoral fellowships to increase the representation of Black, Brown and Indigenous scholars in the field of psychometrics.

» Launched a youth advisory board composed of high school and undergraduate students with a variety of sociocultural identities.

» Beginning this summer, CMJ will sponsor undergraduate Black, Brown and Indigenous student interns as part of its recruitment efforts. The goal is for them to learn about the field of assessment/measurement in hopes of deciding to pursue an advanced degree in the field.

+ **Goal: Conduct research on justice-oriented measurement approaches**

» Journal articles produced so far have covered various aspects of measurement justice and its application. Articles include topics like recruitment and retention of marginalized graduate students, centering justice in medical education and disrupting White supremacy in assessment.

» CMJ has aimed to disseminate research widely during the grant period.

+ **Goal: Facilitate the adoption of justice-oriented approaches:**

» CMJ has worked with large assessment companies and has cultivated other strategic partnerships with various stakeholders in the field.

CHALLENGES

- Identifying partners who are committed to justice-oriented practices both in theory and in practice.

Partners are often excited about the idea of shifting their practices until they realize the work required to shift those practices.

+ Getting the field (whether that be test developers or state departments of education) to understand that this work requires more than simply changing names in ELA passages to sound "ethnic" or making references to non-American holidays and food.

- The landscape in which CMJ operates is dynamic and constantly evolving in response to shifting societal, political, and environmental factors. In such a fluid environment, it is essential to remain flexible and responsive, ready to pivot and adjust their strategies according to the prevailing climate and the evolving needs of the field.

- In navigating the challenging political climate, CMJ recognizes the importance of staying true to its core values while also being adaptable to the ever-changing landscape. CMJ understands that authenticity doesn't mean avoiding political complexities, but rather confronting them with transparency, honesty, and a commitment to justice. By authentically engaging with stakeholders across diverse perspectives and advocating for their mission with integrity, CMJ strives to navigate these challenges while staying true to who they are and the marginalized communities they serve.

LESSONS LEARNED

- As a startup nonprofit organization pioneering the justice-oriented measurement space, CMJ is faced with a myriad of challenges. Establishing itself as the anchor in this crucial domain demands not only innovation and dedication but also extensive collaboration and support from various stakeholders.

- The indispensable role of partnerships has been a critical lesson learned. In its journey, CMJ has come

to recognize that it cannot accomplish its mission alone. The complexities and nuances inherent in justice-oriented measurement require a diverse set of expertise, resources, and perspectives.

- Centering and working directly with students to produce assessment content that reflects their lived experiences is a time-consuming process that requires a great deal of intention and iteration. More time/care requires more financial resources. This work cannot be done quickly and with a business-as-usual approach.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- The future of assessment and accountability needs to be profoundly influenced by the pioneering work in the justice-oriented measurement space. CMJ has the opportunity to reshape systems and narratives to better reflect and serve marginalized communities. Its efforts not only aim to measure outcomes but also to drive systems change.

- There is potential for a paradigm shift in how we conceive of and approach assessment and accountability. Moving beyond traditional metrics and methodologies, we have the opportunity to develop more relevant frameworks that capture the multifaceted nature of justice.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2022 - Dec 2024

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://measurementjustice.org/

COGNIA (FORMERLY CENTERPOINT)[1]
ASSESSMENT HUB

Cognia (formerly CenterPoint) envisioned a one-stop shop for educators, an Assessment Hub, with tools including a variety of ready-made assessments, a bank of aligned items of diverse types for educators to build their own assessments and professional learning modules to support assessment literacy and data use.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cognia created a vision and plan for an assessment resource hub that could help educators make instructional decisions that enhance student learning. The Assessment Hub would include a bank of high-quality items and assessment forms, along with model test blueprints, assessment design support services and professional learning support for analyzing and making instructional decisions from the assessment data. The Assessment Hub could be used by districts as a one-stop shop of shared, aligned assessment items and forms that allow for inter-school and inter-district progress monitoring and actionable data to make informed and targeted instructional decisions and planning.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

There were two primary questions that drove the first phase of the work which included visioning and planning for an Assessment Hub:

- What would it take to augment, enhance, and improve the current item bank to ensure future development of high-quality assessment items aligned to high-quality, full-course curriculum that would better support educators in making instructional decisions for student learning? These are some of the findings:

  + By conducting an item bank audit, Cognia

determined (1) the number of items in its bank by subject, grade, standard, and other key categories (2) areas that it wanted to consider expanding, such as standards with lower numbers of items, culturally responsive items with a focus on supporting Rudine Bishop's concept of windows and mirrors.

  + Currently, Cognia has over 11,000 items in its mathematics item bank and over 11,000 items in its ELA/Literacy item bank across grades K-12 from over 1,000 assessments in math and ELA/Literacy.

  + The items are tagged to specific topics, standards, and other metadata to help educators select relevant assessment items with ease.

- Would the current education market find the idea of an Assessment Hub compelling, worthwhile, and a smart investment that would improve the assessment experience and engagement for both students and teachers? Note: In this phase, Cognia and a few technology platform providers collaborated to explore the possibility of using large language AI models to build high-quality assessment items.

  + Cognia conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with educators and district leaders, and from those discussions, heard that educators wanted to have assessment items that were engaging, culturally responsive and most importantly, fair, valid, and reliable. Another consistent message that they heard was the need to make any tool intuitive and easy to use.

  + Interviews and focus groups were complemented by market research from EdSolutions.

CHALLENGES

- Finding the right technology partners for delivery.
- Determining the right timing and prioritization of which features to include in the assessment hub.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Centering the "user interface" in the design is critical.
- The Assessment Hub must be educator friendly and easy to access and use.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Expanding industry current thinking beyond "another" item bank to an innovative assessment system is essential.
- With the Assessment Hub, Cognia is also considering systems that allow lead district educators to create their own items and assessments using a core set of exemplar items as a model. This functionality will help to create ownership and engagement as well as being able to authentically include culturally responsive items.
- Further, educators will have the ability to create assessments from high-quality vetted items to meet the needs of their students in the moment with resulting data that informs next steps in learning.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Feb 2023 - Dec 2023

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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  + *Elizabeth.Gilbert@Cognia.org*

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[1] On July 1, 2024, CenterPoint Education Solutions was acquired by Cognia®, a global school improvement nonprofit committed to helping institutions and other education providers grow learners, teachers, and leaders.

COGNIA (FORMERLY CENTERPOINT)
OPENSCI ED INTERIMS

cognia®

There is a lack of quality middle school science interims, particularly those aligned to the newly completed OpenSciEd curriculum.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Cognia developed and launched interim assessments aligned to the OpenSciEd curriculum along with professional learning materials and supports. These interim assessments are composed of performance tasks that incorporate critical thinking and problem-solving skills and authentically assess core ideas and cross-cutting concepts in science and engineering. These interims demonstrate how aligned, equitable, and multidimensional assessments create more meaningful assessment experiences that give all students the opportunity to showcase their science knowledge and abilities. These interims will also empower educators to adjust their instructional practice in their science classrooms with actionable insights aligned to their curriculum and standards. The timeline is as follows:

- Develop and launch new interim assessments, along with the supporting professional learning materials and supports, first in pencil and paper format for the 2023-24 school year and then in digital format for the 2024-25 school year.

Over the course of the project, Cognia accomplished the following:

- Convened a highly regarded and engaged Advisory Committee of the nation's science education experts. The Advisory Committee reviews and provides guidance on critical assessment documents, e.g., test blueprints, data and reporting documentation, and other related topics.

- Created a "feed-forward" process allowing educators to know where gaps in learning have occurred and to have insights into when students will encounter that core idea again– providing opportunities to address learning gaps while moving forward with curricular content.

- Created a blueprint for these interims, which are estimated to take most students 55-75 minutes.

CHALLENGES

- Cognia needs a robust assessment delivery platform for the digital version of the interims that allows students to interact with and iterate on their previous scientific models and explanations.

- Cognia is working to create asset-based assessment reporting that provides actionable recommendations for teachers and students.

- Cognia needs funding to build comprehensive professional learning for educators connecting the interims and the assessment data.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Market research has confirmed assumptions about interims' potential uses for districts and schools including predicting large-scale assessment outcomes, monitoring OpenSciEd curriculum implementation and tracking students' growth in science sensemaking.

- Market research has shown the importance of situating interims within the broader assessment ecosystem.

- Designing curriculum-aligned assessments is more complicated than designing for NGSS alignment alone.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds significant potential, but it requires comprehensive system development including the creation of an integrated platform, infrastructure and professional learning, in order for AI to play a role in science assessment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Cognia OpenSciEd interims demonstrate that high-quality instructional materials call for high-quality assessments.

- Cognia OpenSciEd interims promote innovative, asset-based learning stories for all students.

- Cognia OpenSciEd interims provide external evaluation tools to determine efficacy of curriculum implementation that could support targeted classroom interventions and adjustment to educators' instructional practice.

- The longitudinal tasks in Cognia OpenSciEd interims provide opportunities to understand students' growth in science.

- Cognia OpenSciEd interims have the potential to provide insights into readiness for state standardized tests and other end-of-year summative assessments.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2022 - 2025

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: current pilots in 25 middle schools in 6 states

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://Cogniaeducation.org

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CHOICE-FILLED LIVES
ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK

CLN
Choice-filled Lives Network

Historically, Black, Brown and Indigenous communities have been strategically harmed by educational and measurement practices.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Choice-Filled Lives (CLN) examined the relationship between school-level ecosystem indicators for human flourishing and students' overall success and well-being through a research study.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- CLN's study investigates the degree to which students have learning experiences they perceive to contain nine key research-grounded indicators/design principles of human flourishing and if those learning experiences lead to the following outcomes:

- Self-reported overall well-being

  + Self-reported resilience

  + Improved Academic Skills (as compared to ecosystems with fewer human flourishing indicators/design principles)

  + Improved Academic Performance (as compared to ecosystems with fewer human flourishing design principles)

  + Improved Academic Attitudes, Beliefs, and Motivations (as compared to ecosystems with fewer human flourishing design principles)

  + Attendance and Persistence in School

- The nine key research-grounded indicators/design principles of human flourishing are:

  + Safety

  + Developmental Relationships

  + Autonomy-Support

  + Intention-, Action-Reflection cycles

  + Authentic Real-world Experiences

  + Rich, Varied Exciting Experiences

  + Beyond-the-Self Learning Experiences

  + Joy-Positive Emotion

  + Culturally and Historically Relevant Language and Literacy practices, and Inclusivity

- CLN found evidence for a clear positive relationship between the degree to which students are immersed in several of the identified human flourishing design principles, their self reported overall well-being, academic attitudes and beliefs about their success in school.

  + They also found a positive relationship between several of the principles with students' documented success in school, as measured by GPA and attendance.

- CLN plans to develop a child-level measure of oral development that is both developmentally accessible to children 2.5 years or older and free from the inherently racist and linguistically biased constructs embedded in current phonemic awareness measures.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2021 - July 2022

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: Georgia

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://choicefilledlives.org/

COLLABORATIVE FOR STUDENT ACCESS

COLLABORATIVE FOR
STUDENT
SUCCESS

Collaborative for Student Success (CSS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to lifting up and defending strong practices and policies driving improved outcomes for all students. Through capacity-building efforts with in-state organizations and collaboration with national partners, CSS promotes fact-based public discourse and amplifies strong K12 policies and practices.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Collaborative for Student Success (CSS) synthesized and amplified the research of national partners with the goal of increasing transparency into how federal COVID-19 relief stimulus funds were used by districts across the country. CSS partnered with organizations including the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at Arizona State University's Mary Lou Felton Teacher College and the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University to collect and display state-by-state recovery information using a user-friendly *Education Recovery Hub*. The Hub features an interactive site designed to showcase state pandemic recovery efforts during the 2021-22 school year and beyond, as well expert reviews and commentary on practices from over fifteen expert individuals and organizations. Armed with data, CSS launched a nationwide amplification and advocacy educational campaign across media channels that drove audiences to the hub and highlighted leading, evidence-based practices being employed by states and districts across seven critical issue areas.

CSS also developed *Assessment HQ*, a resource that displays statewide student performance results in mathematics and English language arts (ELA) by student group and spotlights state by state

adherence to federal law with additional information on participation rates. This data can be used to inform instruction, plan for recovery, and strategically allocate funding and resources to help ensure that all students emerge stronger and prepared for college and career. Furthermore, Assessment HQ features independent, original blog content on leading innovations in the assessment space.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Partnering:
  + CSS partnered with organizations including the Center on Reinventing Public Education (CRPE) at Arizona State University's Mary Lou Felton Teacher College and the Edunomics Lab at Georgetown University to gather data.

- Convening:
  + CSS convened more than 15 organizations representing the civil rights, parent, teacher, special needs, student, business and advocacy communities to push USED to hold states accountable for complying with testing requirements as a means to ensure transparency around student achievement and to deny additional assessment waiver requests.

- CSS is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability, and elevate opportunities to move the field forward.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- *From Assessment HQ:*
  + All 50 states and Washington, D.C. have released their assessment data for the 2022-23 school year, of which 32 are fully compliant with federal law. This marks the third year that Assessment HQ has been able to gather assessment results in order to drive decision making and inform coverage and public discourse around student achievement.

- CSS convened partners and allies to create recommendations on design, implementation, and role of assessments in ensuring educational progress.
  + During the pandemic, CSS worked with a group of stakeholders to push USED to hold states accountable for continued testing administration and accurate public reporting, as well as to underscore the critical importance of continuity with regard to the collection and public reporting of student achievement data.
  + CSS and its allies issued a letter calling for assessment and accountability systems to be resumed following pandemic-related challenges—and advocated for the creation of a task force to support USED-led efforts on improvement and innovation.
  + CSS and its allies met with then-acting Asst. Secretary Ian Rosenblum to discuss widespread concerns about uneven approaches to testing post-pandemic and to hear feedback directly from the department. Though the department was reluctant to pursue the creation of a proposed task force, this meeting helped establish a relationship and strong line of communication with USED.

- CSS named the following challenges in advancing assessment and accountability work, underscoring that each has become more pronounced in the wake of the pandemic:
  + The assessment debate remains highly politicized, while myriad communications challenges about the time, costs and value of assessments persist, without organized pushback.
  + The education system has many competing priorities largely outweighing the costs and time commitment associated with assessment innovation.
  + The big tent coalition that once supported annual testing is seemingly not as steadfast as it once was with civil rights advocates, parents, and educators de-prioritizing assessment as an effective use of their political capital.
  + There's uncertainty and a lack of strong evidence in the field about how best to change or innovate testing and accountability systems, and thus far the field has not coalesced around support for specific alternatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- CSS discouraged assessment waivers during the pandemic.
  + CSS tracked and analyzed state waiver requests through their AssessmentHQ platform and were able to elevate bright spots through a series of commentaries and state "Power Rankings" by Dale Chu, a former educator and policy expert. These rankings provided "equity guardrails" for states as they made decisions about annual assessments

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during the pandemic. The goal of these guardrails is to help ensure the performance of historically marginalized student groups isn't ignored.

» Chu's narrative was specifically cited by the House and Senate authorizing Committee Staff as a tool used to advocate for maintaining statewide summative assessments throughout the pandemic.

• CSS highlighted the following lesson learned on the future of assessment:

+ There's a need to protect assessment and promote leaders who are innovating on assessments, and CSS needs to make both of those aims clear in its work.

FUTURE WORK

In partnership with The Education Trust and the National Parents Union, CSS conducted a study on how stakeholders utilize assessment data to make budgeting, allocation, or programmatic decisions; and to ascertain how those uses resonate with parent and family audiences. Together, the organizations released two one-pagers summarizing the findings and will soon release a full report. The findings and associated resources will be used for state-based efforts and campaigns to shore up support for statewide annual assessments.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://forstudentsuccess.org/

• Publications:

+ *Assessment HQ*

• Contact Information:

+ *Adam Ezring aezring@forstudentsuccess.org)*

COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE EDUCATION
YOUTH WELLNESS INDEX

COMMUNITY
RESPONSIVE
EDUCATION

Community Responsive Education (CRE) is working to improve the way educators address inequity by creating a tool that provides more holistic information about students' overall wellness.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Community Responsive Education (CRE) developed, tested and adapted a Youth Wellness Index and supporting implementation resources. The index will be used to measure classroom and school impact on the overall wellness of children and adolescents with particular attention to students of color and low-income students.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- As of 2021, the CRE team had developed the Youth Wellness Index Questionnaire and was awaiting IRB approval to test and validate it with youth.

- As the CRE team awaited IRB approval, they pivoted from focusing on developing an index implementation methodology for teachers to developing a broader curriculum on youth wellness that teachers can use prior and after the tool is validated.

CHALLENGES

In 2021, CRE identified the following challenges impacting its work:

- Challenging policy context
- Data privacy and security concerns
- The need to fully validate the tool before testing

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2019 - July 2022

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://communityresponsive.org/wellness-movement/

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
RESTORING AND ADVANCING FUTURE INNOVATIOIN IN ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

CCSSO
Council of Chief State School Officers™

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, the Bureau of Indian Education and the five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. Their core priorities as expressed through their 2021-2026 strategic planning framework is focused on three broad areas: 1) Response and Recovery, including ongoing rapid response and assistance with recovery and improvement; 2) Equity, Access and Critical Infrastructure, including work on comprehensive digital access, literacy and high-quality instructional materials and advancing the Leading for Equity Commitments; and 3) Modernizing the Education System, including new education delivery models, updated assessment models and state-of-the-art accountability and reporting.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CCSSO has led work in innovative assessments and in developing and implementing methods of communication, advocacy, and collaboration in a wide variety of areas, including:

- Restoring assessment and accountability systems after pandemic-related disruptions.
- Facilitating coordination with USED on federal compliance concerns and advancing future innovation in assessment and accountability.

In the fall of 2019, CCSSO was in the process of developing a proposal with the Walton Family Foundation outlining a strategy to support states in pursuing innovative assessment approaches. Before the work got fully underway, the pandemic occurred. The

Walton funding was repurposed and CCSSO secured funding from the Gates Foundation and Schusterman Family Philanthropies, along with other funders, to support states to address the impact of the disruption on state assessment and accountability systems, among other things.

CCSSO's initial goal was to support its members in navigating assessment and accountability during and after the wake of the pandemic. CCSSO worked alongside SEAs at every stage to ensure they had the resources and partnerships needed to address the evolving landscape. States were deeply committed to understanding the impact of the disruption to learning, yet they recognized the limitations of traditional approaches due to school closures. CCSSO worked with state members and facilitated collaboration among members to find each state's path forward given the circumstances. Recognizing the pandemic impacted different groups of students in different ways, CCSSO provided tailored resources for supporting students with disabilities and English learners. A fundamental part of CCSSO's work was supporting SEAs to communicate effectively with stakeholders in their states, particularly families and students, to ensure they had clear information about their progress and areas for additional support. CCSSO's support included:

- **Rapid Response Securing Waivers.** Immediate coordination with USED to waive assessment and accountability requirements in the spring of 2020.
- **Assessment Webinar Series** in the Summer of 2020. CCSSO hosted a four-part webinar series for state assessment leaders and technical advisors to collectively address how to approach assessment in the 2020 – 2021 school year, including discussing technical considerations and preparing a backup plan in the event situations changed. Representatives

from the majority of states, along with leading psychometric experts, participated in these 90-minute interactive webinars.

- **Restart & Recovery Technical Assistance and Resource Development.** In partnership with the Center for Assessment, CCSSO released a series of Restart & Recovery resources focused on supporting states through 2020 – 2021. These resources included: *Assessment Considerations for Fall 2020*, *Assessment Considerations for Spring 2021*, *Guidance for Collecting, Evaluating and Reporting Data in 2020-2021*, *COVID-19: Implications for Measuring Student Academic Growth*, *State Guidance for Making Annual Accountability Determinations in School Year 2020-2021 and Beyond*, and *Entry and Exit Guidance for States in School Year 2020-2021*. CCSSO hosted multiple webinars with assessment and accountability directors, along with other SEA staff, to share the resources, answer questions and provide support to state leaders.

- **Supporting Students with Disabilities.** In partnership with the National Center on Educational Outcomes, CCSSO developed guidance specifically tailored to students with disabilities, including recommendations for English learners with disabilities and students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, in the document *Meeting the Assessment Needs of Students with Disabilities During Times of Interrupted Schooling*. The report focused on five areas that were critical to restart and recovery through the lens of students with disabilities: principles to guide restart and recovery decisions, data needs for restart and recovery, logistical considerations for restart-and-recovery assessments, collection and evaluation of data to inform growth measurement, and interpretation and use of state-required summative assessment data.

- **Supporting English Learners.** Recognizing that English learners also faced unique challenges during the pandemic, CCSSO released a resource, *Access and Equity for English Learner Students and Families During COVID-19: Recommendations for State Leaders*, with actions states could take for English learners. Included was a recommendation for state guidance related to assessment for English learners during this time. CCSSO built on these recommendations and went on to publish a *State Leadership Guide for Engaging Stakeholders in Continuous Improvement of English Learner Programs & Services During COVID-19 and Beyond*.

- **Ongoing Engagement with USED**. As states developed strategies to best meet the needs of their students, CCSSO facilitated engagement with USED to find shared solutions for data collection, while also recognizing the practical implications of the disruption on student learning. CCSSO served as a partner as states navigated discussions with USED to apply for – and ultimately receive assessment and accountability waivers. CCSSO also facilitated calls between SEA assessment and accountability leads and USED staff so USED could hear directly about the challenges and opportunities states were facing.

- **Community of Practice for Assessment and Communications Leads.** To help state leaders prepare for reporting data from the 2020 – 2021 school year, CCSSO brought together assessment directors and communications directors to engage in a community of practice. Based on insights from the community of practice, CCSSO developed a toolkit for states to use with districts. It included graphics, FAQs, one-pagers, key messages and website language to support state and district leaders in providing clear and transparent information about student

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COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
RESTORING AND ADVANCING FUTURE INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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progress from the 2020-2021 school year. CCSSO also developed a resource intended for assessment directors to complement the discussions with communications directors. The resource, *Sensible Evaluation of the Pandemic's Impact on Learning and Achievement*, provides guidance for evaluating the impact of the pandemic on student learning and achievement using the data that SEAs have been collecting.

As the immediate impact of the pandemic lessened, CCSSO continued to support states in returning to their educational systems and learning from their experiences to improve their systems. Support to states included:

- **Enhancing Accountability Systems.** CCSSO, in partnership with the Center for Assessment, provided "critical friend" reviews to support states on their design and implementation of accountability solutions.

- **Elevating Innovation.** Building on states' experiences from the previous several years, CCSSO renewed discussions with members about innovative approaches to assessment and accountability. At CCSO's Annual Policy Forum in November 2021, for example, CCSSO hosted a chief-led discussion about states leading in changing assessment systems.

- **Exploring New Indicators.** CCSSO worked with Education First to understand the landscape and opportunities for different opportunity to learn and equity indicators.

Most recently, CCSSO has been working to get a better understanding of the path forward for supporting states on assessment and accountability. Many states continue to move beyond the traditional focus on summative assessments, working to create more comprehensive assessment systems. These systems include the summative assessment, but also seek to provide support on other types of assessments that are more closely aligned to individual student needs and aligned instruction. After several years of stability in their accountability systems, states are increasingly considering how to continue to improve their systems so they better drive support and improvement. CCSSO is actively supporting states that want to pursue more innovative assessment models. For example, in 2023, CCSSO advocated both publicly and behind the scenes at all levels of the federal government in support of Montana's field test waiver request. USED approved the state's waiver request in August 2023, allowing Montana to field test without requiring double-testing or high-stakes accountability consequences. Other states also are interested in pursuing a similar waiver.

In 2024, CCSSO conducted a landscape analysis of both state assessment and accountability systems and surveyed our members to inform our strategy for supporting states on these critical issues moving forward.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Given the nature of the work and the support CCSSO provides to states, it worked closely with experts in the field of measurement to provide support to states on assessment and accountability. The Center for Assessment has been a critical partner in supporting this work, as well as other leading technical experts in the field. CCSSO also worked with GMMB on the reporting community of practice and development of the communications toolkits. CCSSO worked closely with the National Center on Educational Outcomes, as well as leading English learner experts, on the resources and support related to students with disabilities and English language learners.

As part of its broader Coalition to Advance Future Student Success, CCSSO works closely with national organizations representing key stakeholders across the education ecosystem, including AASA, AFT, Chiefs for Change, CGCS, NAESP, NASSP, NASBE, NEA, NGA, NSBA and NCSL. Assessment and accountability are part of its comprehensive effort to support students to recover from the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the critical need for high-quality data about student progress to help provide a clear understanding of how to best target resources to support students, schools and districts. Initially, CCSSO's primary focus was on providing the technical support needed to help states collect whatever data they could to inform how they could help schools and districts. This was particularly important as states determined how to invest ESSER funds and it remains important as states continue to evaluate impact in the face of funding cliffs and difficult decisions about ongoing investments.

With time, CCSSO has found that states are increasingly looking forward to what comes next for their assessment and accountability systems. With respect to assessment, the trend toward creating more coherent systems of assessment has continued. While states remain committed to the underlying purposes of the summative assessment, they are also seeking ways to lessen the footprint it leaves and focus increased time and resources on other types of assessments that serve different purposes. Concerns regarding testing time and instructional relevance appear to drive various state initiatives related to assessment. The momentum around through-year assessments signals one approach that states are adopting to address instructional relevance concerns.

As states go through processes to consider what skills and knowledge they want graduates of their schools to possess, some have developed portraits of a graduate or learner. States are also engaging in discussions about different pathways to graduation and different ways to earn credit, including different ways to demonstrate mastery. These issues will continue to intersect with and influence state assessment discussions.

In terms of accountability, states seem to have renewed interest in system refinement. When states first developed their ESEA plans, they did extensive stakeholder engagement and developed theories of action for how their new systems would work. As they moved on to implementation, the overall posture was one of continuous improvement, with states planning to implement their new systems, evaluate impact and adjust. The pandemic interrupted that trajectory, and it has taken several years to regain stability in these systems.

States now seem ready to return attention to examining the impact of their accountability systems and evaluating if they have had the impact they originally intended. CCSSO has found increased interest in exploring new indicators at the local and/or state level, new ways of thinking about engaging local communities and opportunities to align accountability systems with states' portraits of a graduate/learner. States also continue to want to better connect state accountability systems with their systems of support and ensure information from their systems is clear and meaningful for stakeholders.

Profile continues on next page →

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CCSSO has principles for both high-quality *assessment systems* and *accountability systems*. CCSSO believes the core messages of these principles are still relevant and our focus in recent years has primarily been on supporting states to maintain high-quality systems in the face of disruption. As CCSSO looks forward and reflects on what it has learned, there will be opportunities to consider how these underlying principles have evolved with time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The bulk of CCSSO's recommendations have come in the form of technical assistance. As described above, states work closely with CCSSO for credible, one-on-one technical assistance and guidance to navigate complex challenges. CCSSO's role increased during the pandemic and remains critical today. CCSSO's deliverables in the past five years have included a suite of resources noted above to address both technical considerations, policy considerations and communications strategies.

FUTURE WORK

CCSSO remains committed to supporting states on both assessment and accountability. CCSSO intends to continue to engage with our members about these issues, elevate common opportunities and concerns, and identify ways to support states' progress in the future. As CCSSO contemplates how to supports states in the areas of assessment and accountability, it plans to implement the following strategies as funding and resources allow:

- **Support states** in developing an **effective, coherent assessment system** that addresses the needs of all learners and stakeholders across the system through

CCSSO's National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA) and existing CCSSO Collaboratives such as:

- + Technical Issues in Large Scale Assessment (TILSA)
- + Balanced Assessment Systems (BAS)
- + Assessment, Standards, and Education for Students with Disabilities (ASES)
- + English Learners (EL)
- + CIO Network/Education Information Management Advisory (EIMAC).

- Review existing **assessment resources** and develop strategies to address emerging state needs, technologies and trends.

- Explore considerations for moving toward **effective, coherent assessment system for states in the IMPD Network.**

- **Identify policy changes to better align accountability system** with a **state's vision for student success.**

- Create opportunities for state teams to engage in conversation **on accountability as a problem of practice** as states are generating ideas for why and how they want to change their systems.

- Increase **content** and **sessions related to accountability at CCSSO's NCSA Conference.**

- Support states in navigating federal law and policy that achieves their visions for innovation.

Additionally, in the short term, CCSSO has several structures in place to continue working with states.

- **CCSSO Collaboratives.** CCSSO has 17 *collaboratives* for SEA members. Although this work touches multiple collaboratives, the three most relevant are:

- + **Accountability Systems and Reporting (ASR).** This collaborative has 46 states represented. The group discusses both technical issues and policy considerations. Over the past year, for example, ASR has worked with the Supports and Interventions collaborative to develop a set of five principles to strengthen ties between accountability and school improvement. In the coming year, CCSSO plans to use this network to create working groups focused on state priority areas.

- + **Balanced Assessment Systems.** This collaborative has 24 states represented. The purpose of this group is to support states to advance balanced assessment systems. This work is grounded in supporting states to develop theories of action, and then build aligned systems.

- + **Technical Issues in Large Scale Assessment.** This collaborative has 42 states represented. This group focuses more explicitly on summative assessment and supporting states in effectively using high-quality summative assessment data to inform accountability and drive school improvement and resource decisions.

- **CCSSO's National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA).** *NCSA* is a national forum for K-12 assessment. Over the past decade, the conference has expanded to include sessions related to accountability, reporting, data systems and school improvement. This conference often helps shape the national dialogue and CCSSO will continue to use the conference as an opportunity to elevate promising practices in assessment and accountability to a broad audience, including many state leaders.

These structures, along with its member meetings and ongoing member engagement, will help CCSSO continue to support states on these issues. CCSSO believes that high-quality assessment and accountability systems play a critical role in providing students, schools and districts with the necessary information and support. CCSSO will continue to work with and learn from our members to enhance these systems to ensure students have everything they need to succeed and thrive.

FAST FACTS
Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://ccsso.org/

CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATION OUTCOMES
PARENT INFORMATION HUB

Performance assessments are inadequate. Exploring parents' preferences for receiving assessment information can empower them to better support their students' growth and learning.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Stanford University's Center for Research on Education Outcomes (CREDO) conducted market research to better understand demand among parents and families for direct access to assessment information for their students on a variety of measures. The research will inform the creation of the Parent Information Hub which is a direct-to-family marketplace that allows parents to directly access a wide range of assessments for their children and provides access to resources to take action based on their children's results.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- The grant is in its discovery phase with a goal to use the market research to inform the creation of the Hub.
- Parents seek trustworthy and secure sources that provide accurate, reliable, and relevant information about their children's development.
- Parents are interested in a holistic view of their children's progress, not just academics.
- Parents support their children regardless of demographics, but their reasons may vary.

CHALLENGES

- Finding qualified personnel to conduct the study may take longer than expected.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Adequate resources are required to conduct the study, including funds and personnel.
- Effective communication with funders and other stakeholders is crucial.
- Planning ahead is important, but some flexibility should be allowed.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- CREDO notes that this is an ongoing project, so it hasn't had all of its questions answered yet. However, they have found a significant gap between what parents want to know about their children's education and what they receive from the school. It's clear that parents don't always trust the official assessment results and that they are willing to go the extra mile to support their children's learning.
- Given this situation, CREDO finds that it needs to consider what can be done to improve the existing state of affairs. What steps can be taken to bridge the gap between what parents want to know and what they receive from the school? These are the important questions that need to be answered as it move forward with this project.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2022 - Aug 2024

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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THE CENTER FOR YOUTH & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP at ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

SCORE PROJECT

Cycle

Historically, school accountability measures have been created via top-down processes that do not include community input. The Center for Youth & Community Leadership's (CYCLE) Schools and Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE) Project aims to measure what matters to students and families most directly impacted by inequities, and transform district and school improvement systems to center community-driven accountability.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CYCLE is conducting a three-year evaluation of Schools & Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE). SCORE is an action-oriented research project, driven by an intergenerational Community Research Team of students and caregivers, that:

- Identifies community priorities for educational and racial equity;
- Identifies indicators to measure a school or district's progress on these priorities;
- Develops a SCOREcard to communicate these priorities, indicators, and related data.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

SCORE began in 2021 in Providence, RI and has been implemented in several other communities in Rhode Island and Connecticut.

- 2021-22: First SCORE launched (Providence, RI)

- 2022-23: SCORE launched in Newport and Central Falls, RI
- 2023-24: SCORE adaptation launching in Manchester, CT

CHALLENGES

- There is a lack of publicly available data for many of SCORE's community-driven indicators, and obtaining non-public district data has been a challenge.
- Close partnerships with community-based organizations are essential to the work, but their capacity is often very limited.
- Uneven support at the district level is exacerbated by ongoing turnover, competing priorities, and internal dysfunction.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Community-based equity priorities often focus on learning conditions, whole-child approaches and supports for students and families.
- Data accessibility is essential and works on multiple levels: acquiring data that isn't public, creating community-friendly language and visualizations, and translating into languages other than English.
- Capacity-building for community-based organizations should include funding/fundraising to enable stronger partnership.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

The Gates Foundation has funded a three-year evaluation of SCORE to assess the impact that SCORE has had on school districts and communities. Major questions in the evaluation, which have implications for the field, include:

- How can a community-driven accountability model support school and district improvement?
- How can the SCORE process, including partnership between institutions of higher education, community organizations, and school districts, impact equity-oriented change in school districts?
- How can community-derived equity indicators aid parents and youth in effectively advocating for equitable learning environments?
- How can the SCORE process foster increased trust and stronger partnerships between school districts and communities?

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2021 – Present

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Rhode Island, Connecticut

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://cycle-rwu.org/score

- Publications:
  - + *SCORE Stories: Providence & Central Falls*
  - + *SCORE Toolkit*
- Contact Information:
  - + cycle@rwu.edu

DIGITAL PROMISE
MINDPRINT LEARNING

Educators and students need new tools to better support student learning and teacher efficacy. MindPrint Learning has created a solution that uses a valid, reliable cognitive assessment to develop metacognition, show students how they learn best, and help teachers and students use personalized strategy recommendations in reading, math and study skills.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Digital Promise (DP) is researching the efficacy of the MindPrint solution. MindPrint has commercialized a valid, reliable assessment to measure cognitive skills (complex reasoning, executive functions, memory, processing) at scale. Research is designed to show that educating students and teachers about their cognitive variability and which learning strategies will be most effective will lead to improvements in teacher efficacy, student self-efficacy and, ultimately, student outcomes.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- The pilot for MindPrint learning is ongoing and is expected to be completed at the end of the 2023-24 school year.

- Preliminary results show a 67-71% increase in teacher self-efficacy in one semester and a 52% increase in student self-efficacy.

- 85% of teachers wanted their school to adopt the pilot as a permanent solution.

CHALLENGES

- Completing the group testing of all students is time consuming (it requires one hour, every three years).

- Gaining initial teacher buy-in for a new initiative can be difficult.

- Scheduling teacher coaching sessions, even in schools that have regular professional learning can also be difficult.

- Schools find it difficult to find time in the schedule to deliver the student course on metacognition (approximately 10 hours) and have teachers follow the teaching protocol with fidelity.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Teacher engagement is critical. When teachers participated in an initial Science of Learning training, teacher and student results improved.

- Introducing the student class in a positive way is critical. When the metacognition class substituted for an already unpopular class mid-year, students' results were not as strong.

- Improvements in teacher self-efficacy are a much quicker/precursor to student self-efficacy.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Metacognition is established to be one of the most effective learning strategies to improve achievement scores. This is potentially the first effective, affordable, and scalable solution that is equally effective in high and low SES populations with an enormous potential to improve math and reading achievement across all populations.

- Given the teaching shortage and a decline in teacher tenure, this solution has significant potential to meet a universal need to improve teacher effectiveness. Teacher self-efficacy improved meaningfully with just 2-5 hours of professional development and coaching. Administrators observed it was equally effective with both novice and experienced teachers.

FAST FACTS
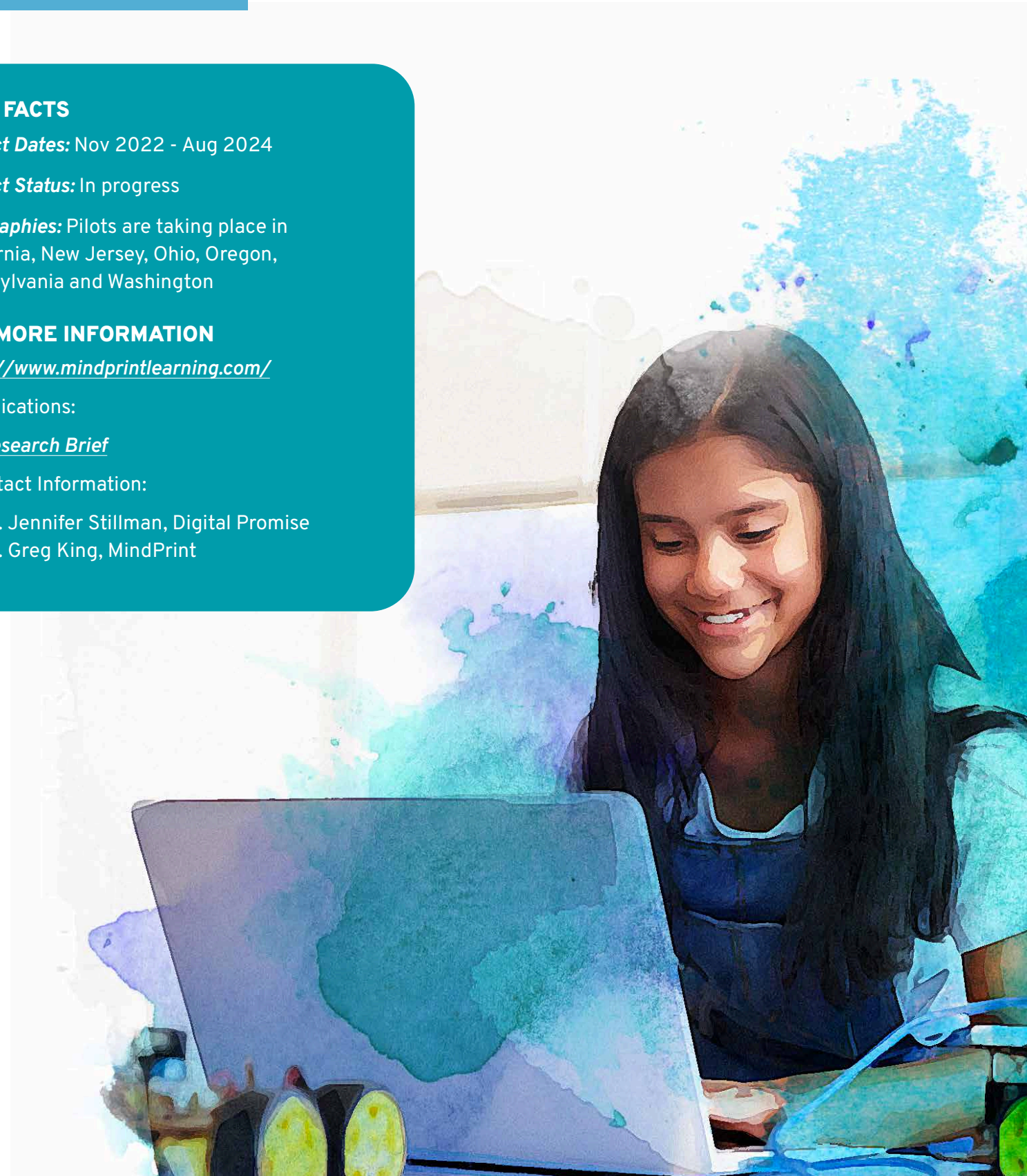
Project Dates: Nov 2022 - Aug 2024

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Pilots are taking place in California, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.mindprintlearning.com/

- Publications:
  + *Research Brief*
- Contact Information:
  + Dr. Jennifer Stillman, Digital Promise
    Dr. Greg King, MindPrint

DUCKWORTH LAB—UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE IN ADOLESCENCE

While it is understood that a successful transition to adulthood requires learning particular mindsets and skillsets, it is not yet fully known how to equip young people with such capabilities, nor how to do so at scale. Duckworth Lab has set out to create high-quality, cost-effective measures and interventions that advance equity and excellence for all adolescents.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Duckworth Lab developed and validated the Necessities Index (an assessment of the conditions required for adolescents to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically) and the evaluation and scale of Grit Lab 101 (a program designed to improve adolescents' skillsets and mindsets around perseverance to achieve long-term goals).

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- As part of the pilot for the Grit Lab 101 program, DL enrolled 935 Title I High School students to take the course in the fall of 2022 or spring of 2023. Analysis of the results is ongoing.

- The items for the Necessities Index have been developed. Through focus groups, feedback from experts, collection of samples, and literature reviews, DL is confident that the content of the scale is both relevant and sufficient.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Adults who can create a safe learning space and who can be a model/reference in terms of content/life experience are critical factors and an integral part of the Grit Lab course's success.

- The best way to scale the course is to focus on teachers.

- The development of the Necessities Index revealed how adolescents specifically respond to survey items, the significance and import of acquiescence bias, and that online panel data may have more limitations than are immediately evident.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2022 - Oct 2025

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National
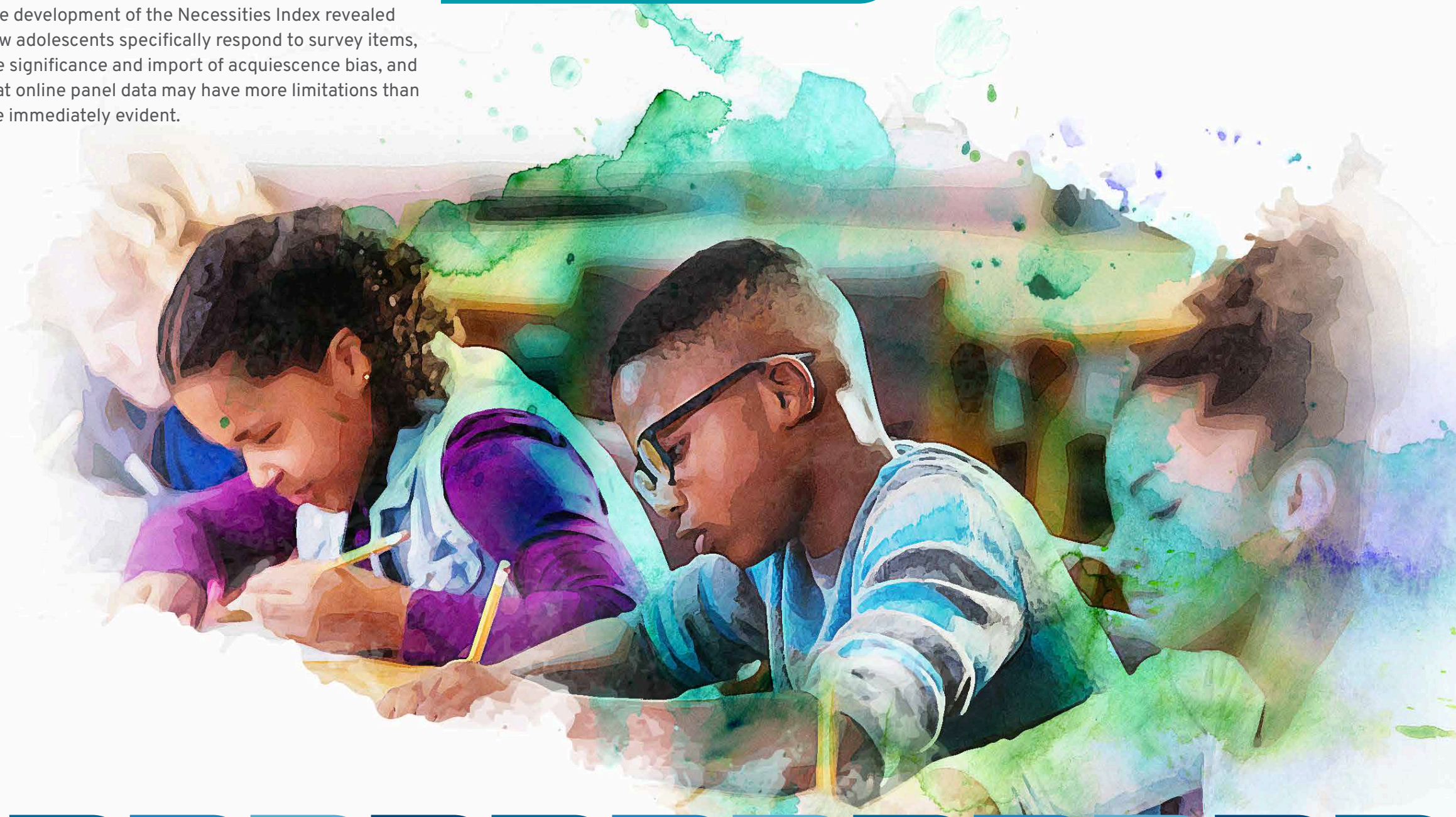
EDUCATION FIRST
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY LEARNING NETWORK

educationfirst

Education First is a national, mission-driven education consultancy with national and regionally-specific expertise in education improvement. EF helps education system leaders and policymakers cultivate the conditions–including people, knowledge, resources, policies and programs–that ensure equity and excellence for all educators and students.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First is leading a learning network for current and recent policy and advocacy grantees to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years. This Learning Network will help build national advocacy organizations' knowledge base about the proof points and research fueling the next generation of assessment and accountability systems.

Fourteen policy and advocacy organizations are part of this Learning Network: Collaborative for Student Success; The Education Trust; ExcelinED; All4Ed; PIE Network; US Chamber of Commerce Foundation; National Association of Charter School Authorizers; Education Reform Now; Fordham Institute; National Urban League; UnidosUS; Teach Plus; Center for American Progress; National Center for Learning Disabilities; and Migration Policy Institute

The network is currently organized in a set of working groups reviewing current and possible policy solutions to address pain points and improve federal policy in four key areas: 1) Indicators, measures and weights, 2) policy revisions for better tests, 3) accountability incentives, consequences and supports and 4) evolving technologies.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Many of the organizations' efforts were supported leading up to and during the COVID-19 pandemic to advocate for the continued use and protection of statewide summative assessments amid opt-out movements and calls to suspend their use over the past five years.

- The majority of this group largely see statewide assessments as an important tool to help schools, policymakers, educators and parents monitor student learning, allocate resources and identify students in need of additional support. During the pandemic, many organizations and their stakeholders felt it critical to continue to collect data on student performance to track the pandemic's impact on student learning, particularly for students from historically marginalized groups. While this moment highlighted the need to defend statewide assessments, several organizations noted that at the same time, the "accountability pause" in many states and resulting conversations around assessments created an opportunity to reevaluate the purpose of statewide summative assessments and address longstanding issues with assessments and accountability systems. Prior to and during the pandemic, these organizations each offered new insights and advocated for various recommendations related to longstanding issues in assessments.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD AND FUTURE WORK

As we look ahead, the network and individual organizations will continue refining policy ideas and supporting states and leaders in reform efforts to improve implementation of ESSA and systems of assessment and accountability. The Network and many of the organizations are also undertaking new research, continuing to engage and uplift parent, family and community voices and preparing policy proposals in advance of an ESEA Reauthorization.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

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EDUCATION FIRST
ASSESSMENT DESIGN CRITERIA

educationfirst

The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First created a set of "design criteria" for the next generation of summative assessment systems. Education First proposed six scenarios that included multiple criteria/options that would tackle different criticisms of and challenges with the current federal assessment and accountability system. To develop these criteria and scenarios, Education First interviewed and iterated on the criteria and scenarios in three rounds with 27 policy, civil rights and advocacy organizations who have been involved in reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The six recommended scenarios, are:

- **Scenario A: Smaller testing footprint:** Significantly reduce the footprint of academic measures and refocus on these as a "dipstick" of performance

- **Scenario B: Expand school and district accountability measures:** Add new context, access, and outcome measures to accountability system to balance the weight of academic measures

- **Scenario C: Assess higher-order thinking:** Summative footprint may be heavier overall, but values measurement of cognitively complex standards and interdisciplinary standards utilizing broader methods and reflecting more subject areas.

- **Scenario D: Balanced systems of assessment:** Balance summative assessments with high-quality classroom formative assessment practice and reduce other measures

- **Scenario E: Curriculum-connected systems of assessment:** Recenter summative assessments as "instructionally useful" by closely aligning what is taught and tested

- **Scenario F: Strengthen college and career readiness coalition:** Get ahead of potential splintering of the widespread belief that the HS diploma signifies college and career readiness by developing new career ready measures and broadening HS accountability in alignment with different pathways

- **Scenario G: Liberatory measurement for equity:** In partnership with educators, families, and students, reimagine the core beliefs, philosophies and methodologies of standardized assessment to decenter Whiteness and use items, tests and results to liberate students' potential and support equity

The scenarios as a group range from incremental improvements that will make assessments less burdensome, to truly transformative, generational changes to systems of summative assessment and accountability systems. The scenarios are organized by this range of systems change, from the most incremental change in Scenario A to the most transformative change in Scenario G. In assigning the scenarios to their order, Education First considered how different the scenario is from the current state of the field of assessment, as well as the degree of difficulty of achieving the change, considering the financial cost, political capital, public demand and research and development needed for each.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Nearly all of the organizations interviewed remain strongly committed to producing disaggregated student achievement data that is comparable across schools and school systems within a state. This primary objective drove most of the feedback about potential incremental-to-transformative changes to summative assessment.

- Most interviewees named a few components of the current assessment system as non-negotiable, such as testing every student, every year in every subject in order to create comparable, student-level results.

- Some of the civil rights organizations that we interviewed were in the process of engaging their communities to understand how the assessments have been working in practice, the unintended consequences of the assessments and accountability systems, and what additional research might need to be conducted to inform recommendations for future improvement.

CHALLENGES

- Overall, Education First found limited interest in the substantial transformation of summative assessment and accountability systems. Most organizations interviewed were interested in incremental assessment improvements rather than an overhaul or redesign of summative assessment systems. For example, while most organizations were unsure about the viability in full of the most transformative scenario G, liberatory measurement for equity, nearly all interviewees agreed that assessment items, tasks and texts should be more culturally responsive.

- Many organizations were concerned about losing assessment altogether during potential ESEA reauthorization.

LESSONS LEARNED

- We found a greater appetite for change at the high school level than for K-8.

- Education First entered this project expecting that advocates would be further in their thinking on the future of summative assessment. Instead, we found that, because the advocates had been focused on the return to testing after the COVID-19 pandemic, many had paused or slowed their work on state summatives and were eager to learn more.

  + Subsequent initiatives, such as the Assessment and Accountability Learning Network led by Education First, proved beneficial in advancing advocates' perspectives on summative assessment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- **Innovation:** In the interviews, Education First found that many of the policy leaders prefer incremental improvements within the current end-of-year summative assessments framework, in part because of concerns that innovative measures may not meet technical or legal standards included in the federal statute. At the same time, the project surfaced that many organizations had been prioritizing maintaining a full return to summative assessments for SY 2020-2021 and SY 2021-2022 after all state assessment was paused in spring 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic—and many had not yet turned their attention to future opportunities to consider improvements or transformations to assessment.

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+ Similarly, given the high visibility and use of student assessment in the public sphere, there is not enough space for innovation or opportunity to consider new approaches to policy or try them out in practice.

- **Infrastructure:** The SEA capacity (people, time, resources) for innovation is low. Nearly all capacity is dedicated to operating current systems.

- **Resources:** There are limited sources for funding and time to come together as a field. The funding does not match the scale of change needed and for the duration it takes to scale new solutions.

FAST FACTS
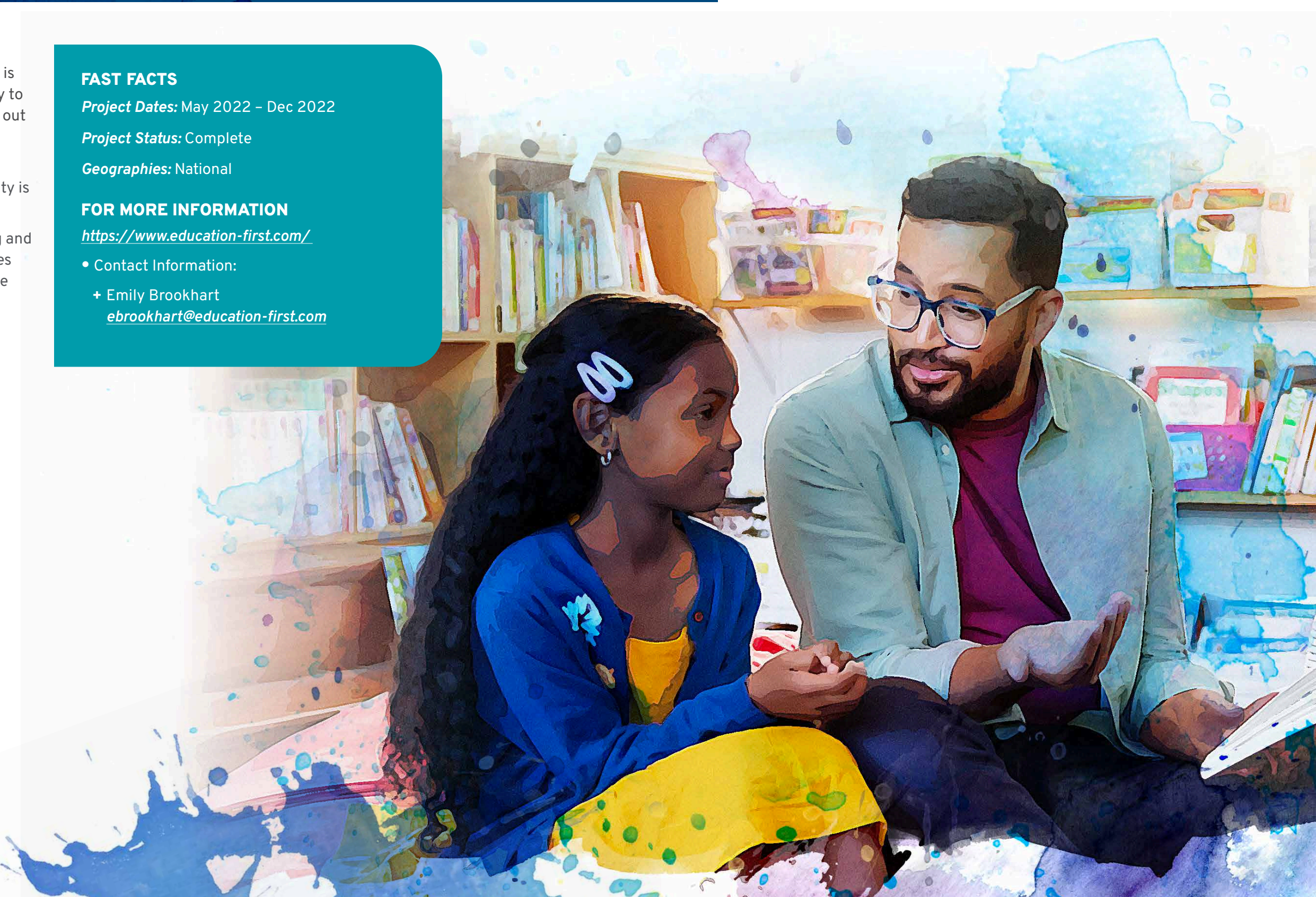
Project Dates: May 2022 – Dec 2022

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

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EDUCATION FIRST
COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR STATE ASSESSMENT GRANT WRITING

educationfirst

The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First provided intensive technical assistance for up to five State Education Agencies (SEAs) seeking to apply for the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) Competitive Grants for State Assessment (CGSA). Education First provided support to three states: Illinois, Louisiana and Montana. This support included a grant writer, assistance in drafting the narrative application based on the state team's needs, a coach to provide guidance on strategy/positioning, project management and critical friend reviews. All three states submitted CGSA applications for innovations around through-year assessments.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- All three states supported by Education First won CGSA grant awards:
  - Illinois secured $3 million to develop and field test computer-based through-course Spanish Language Arts assessments for grades 9 and 10, administered at the end of each semester, complementing assessments for grades 3-8 and 11.
  - Louisiana secured $2.95 million to develop and field test Math and ELA curriculum-relevant though-year assessments in elementary and middle school, aligned with the state's high-quality curriculum and flexible across various curriculum sets.
  - Montana secured $3 million to develop and scale a flexible assessment system of short "testlets" in grades 3-8 Math and ELA, designed to align more closely with learning and administrable throughout the year.

CHALLENGES

- USED's approach to the competition process generates barriers to states being able to strategically develop and submit plans for innovative assessments. Specifically, the competition windows are ill-timed, too short and do not provide states enough lead time to consider how their vision for future assessments align with the funding opportunity. For example, in 2022, the competition window overlapped with when state assessment departments are administering statewide assessments, priorities for the grant competition were not shared in advance to the competition window opening, and the competition window was initially only open for 9 weeks (before USED decided to extend the competition window by 2 weeks). This approach exacerbates the existing challenge of SEAs lacking capacity to effectively apply for the CGSA grants.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Developing a clear theory of action or logic model is critical to the success of CGSA applications and states benefit from outside counsel to support them in turning ideas into such clear theories of action.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- CGSA creates a powerful signaling mechanism for USED to influence the direction of state assessment innovation. States respond to the competitive nature of the grant competition and the priorities set within it as evidenced by the number of applications and states alignment to the priorities–providing evidence states are interested in exploring innovation when incentivized and resourced to do so.

- Developing new assessment systems is expensive with CGSA being the federal government's only financial mechanism for supporting assessment R&D. This mechanism alone is insufficient for meeting the cost of developing new assessments.

- Capacity within SEA assessment and accountability offices remains a challenge to developing innovative assessment models–not only for creating CGSA applications, but in the on-going work of developing and implementing innovative models alongside supporting existing assessments. Funding from CGSA can support alleviating some of these capacity concerns but does not address a more widespread systematic challenge.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: April 2022 - May 2022

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: Illinois, Louisiana, Montana

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EDUCATION FIRST
CURRICULUM-CONNECTED THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First launched a grant program to seed multiple new through-year assessment designs and test prototypes across the country that could provide alternatives to current summative assessment models. More specifically, this grant has three goals:

- Invest in initial R&D for assessment developers to prove the concept of through-year curriculum-connected assessment models producing comparable results to summative assessments, and do so in partnership with state and district leaders and with direct input from people most proximate to the problem.

- Cultivate state interest in innovation with summative systems and build knowledge around possibilities of through-year curriculum-connected models by

convening an advisory group of states to inform R&D efforts, solve challenges, advise on design, and build capacity for participation in prototyping.

- Partner with technical experts, researchers and system leaders in the field to define the why, what and how for through-year models with a goal of inspiring action and providing recommendations for design, implementation and policy.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- NWEA and New Meridian developed and tested two new ELA through-year models:

  + NWEA developed a curriculum relevant model that can connect across the most used curricula in Louisiana. The model was tested in grade 5 during the 2022-2023 school year.

  + New Meridian developed an instructionally aligned ELA model that can be flexibly adapted to local curriculum and scope and sequences in Montana. The model was tested in grades 5 and 7 during the 2022-2023 school year and is currently being tested in grades 3-8 in Montana.

- New Meridian developed and tested one new math through-year model:

  + New Meridian developed an instructionally aligned math model that can be flexibly adapted to local curriculum and scope and sequence. The model was tested in grades 5 and 7 in Montana and Louisiana during the 2022-2023 school year and is currently being tested in grades 3-8 in Montana.

- Research has been completed on the feasibility of a curriculum embedded through-year model aligned to Illustrative Math (IM) and yielding a summative achievement score:

  + Cognia Education completed an analysis of data from IM interims administered in two large districts to calculate a summative score, engaged educators in design interviews, and shared findings for how the existing interim designs could be used or adapted to predict or certify achievement of a state's annual academic goals.

- Education First has convened 10 states in a community of practice exploring technical, policy, implementation and design opportunities and challenges for developing and scaling through-year models. Education First has brought states together in-person and virtually since 2021 to learn from each other, explore opportunities to advance and scale their various models and support each other in scaling viable through-year solutions.

- Education First set out to make progress on a research agenda that would contribute thought leadership, generate knowledge and elevate discourse around through-year assessments. Over the course of the past three years, Education First made progress on developing and building practical knowledge for state leaders and policymakers. They also supported state and federal advocates, the Department of Education and partner organizations in advancing knowledge and understanding of the evolving landscape of through-year models.

Key publications include: *What Are Through-Year Assessments? Opportunities to connect state summative tests to teaching and learning*, *A Pilot Year in Review* and mapping *pathways for states preparing to transition to a through-year system*.

CHALLENGES

- Technical challenges and issues of local control

  + SEAs often cite local control as a barrier to effective through-year implementation. Specifically, states often struggle to navigate tying state assessment to curricula used across the state, which requires an additional layer of coherence, data collection and fidelity of curriculum implementation. Even if there is not a single curriculum used across a state, shared elements of quality, rigor and fidelity of implementation between districts and schools is a necessary enabling condition.

  + States have a responsibility to provide valid, reliable, comparable, transparent and disaggregated information about student achievement as mandated by federal law. For years, it has been widely accepted that when an assessment has a clear and singular purpose, it is easier to ensure consistency in administration, scoring, and interpretation. And, users can better understand and trust the results when they know precisely what the assessment is designed to measure. Through-year assessments often challenge this fundamental belief about the purpose of summative assessments requiring shifts in both experts' mindsets as well as new ways of maintaining validity, reliability and interpretability.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

EDUCATION FIRST
CURRICULUM-CONNECTED THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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- Capacity
  + Ongoing pandemic-related disruption and political challenges constrain state and district capacity.
  + Technical and operational concerns impede state leaders' ability to take risks and innovate amidst limited capacity.
- Policy and regulation barriers
  + Uncertainty regarding federal regulations, peer review, state procurement and developer intellectual property can hinder research and design grant processes.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is possible for a summative test design to link to local scope and sequences or multiple curricula across a state without dictating local curricular choices.

Instructional utility of summative assessments is a core issue that needs to be addressed by states and developers. In order to address challenges experienced by educators and students, through-year models must link results to instructional resources, inform instruction and interventions, or provide the level of detail needed for educators, school and district leaders to guide teaching and learning.

There is a deep desire and appetite for innovating with summative assessment systems across states and among assessment vendors. However, pathways for

innovation often require collaborative efforts from a diverse coalition, including state and district leaders, advocates, policymakers, developers and funders.

State leaders look to each other for proof points of what is possible. Bringing leaders together to grapple with implementation, policy and technical issues has been an effective way to advance the field's learning and enable scaling the model.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

As more states consider developing or scaling through-year models, it is critical that they link the problems they aim to solve, purposes they hope their new assessment will serve and the design choices they make. SEAs need to be clear on the "why" for their through-year system and create a test design accordingly.

When philanthropic resources are leveraged effectively to seed innovative ideas and incent research and design efforts, and federal resources and supports (CGSA, IADA) are leveraged to accelerate development and provide regulatory cover in alignment, states have a pathway to change. More investment is needed from both public and private resources to help states and states and developers cross the finish line and scale new operational models of summative assessment.

Profile continues on next page →

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Nov 2021 - Ongoing

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: Louisiana, Montana, Maryland and Wisconsin

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.education-first.com/

- Publications
  + *What Are Through-Year Assessments?*
  + *Opportunities to connect state summative tests to teaching and learning*
  + *A Pilot Year in Review*
  + *Pathways for states preparing to transition to a through-year system.*
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EDUCATION FIRST
CURRICULUM-CONNECTED THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROBLEM	GOALS	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE
NEW MERIDIAN New Meridian partnered with Louisiana and Montana to build out Louisiana's Math through-year model for grades 5th and 7th and Montana's Math and ELA models for grades 5th and 7th.	**Louisiana** The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) does not inform instruction. Overall, systems of academics and accountability are not coherent. **Montana** The Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAP) does not inform instruction and is burdensome on teachers and students.	**Louisiana: Math, grades 5th and 7th** Louisiana's goal is to build a coherent system of academics and accountability, in which standards, curriculum, instruction, professional learning, assessments, reporting and school improvement are all in alignment. **Montana: Math and ELA, grades 5th and 7th** Montana's goal is to use through-year assessments as a driver of instruction, accountability, and learning equity across the state, and to replace more restrictive and burdensome summative tests. **Goals for both:** • To create a coherent, continuous and useful assessment to better meet the goals of assessment for learning by administering frequent, mini-assessments aligned to local curriculum that provide actionable data to inform instruction throughout the year. • To replace traditional EOY statewide assessments and interims.	**Louisiana** In SY 23-24, Louisiana expanded their pilot to Grades 3-8. **Montana** • New Meridian plans to develop summative and predictive scoring models to help Montana's OPI incorporate testlets into the state accountability system by the 2024-2025 school year. • In SY 23-24, Montana expanded their pilot to Grades 3, 5, 6 and 7. • The creation of a Configurator Tool that will allow teachers or schools to enter their individual scope and sequence and receive a recommended order and batching (e.g., the number of testlets administered per window). This innovation allows teachers and schools to retain local control while also allowing for consistent use of testlets.

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CURRICULUM-CONNECTED THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROBLEM	GOALS	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE
NWEA NWEA partnered with Louisiana via the Innovative Assessment Program (IAP) to develop their CrawFish Project, an ELA curriculum-relevant through-year model.	**Louisiana** Louisiana hopes assessing students on content related to what they were taught will promote deeper engagement with texts and reduce disparities generated from students' varying levels of background knowledge. **More specifically, Louisiana is hoping to improve:** • **Integration:** Assessment design strengthens the connection between instruction and assessment by using several brief curriculum-connected assessments throughout the year, which measure students' comprehension of materials and texts that they have studied in class. • **Focus:** Teachers can focus instruction on background knowledge and making meaning of full texts. • **Equal Access:** All students have the opportunity to develop background knowledge together so that no student is at a disadvantage due to a lack of life experiences. • **Preservation of Local Control:** School systems continue to decide which ELA curriculum is used during instruction and which Innovative Assessments students take.	**Louisiana: ELA** Louisiana and NWEA aim to accomplish the following goals through their work: • Provide the same level of, or better, information to educators (instructionally-oriented and practical, actionable information) • Incentivize deep engagement in the material and texts throughout the year.	**Louisiana** In SY 23-24, Louisiana expanded their pilot to Grades 3-8 • In partnership with Louisiana, NWEA created the CrawFish model so that the state's through-year assessments for ELA could work for two HQIM: Guidebooks and Wit & Wisdom. • Louisiana has implemented the CrawFish model in 23 districts. In SY 23-24, the CrawFish model was expanded to: • A full-year pilot with three windows of administration • Continue with Grade 5 • Connect to additional HQIM

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CURRICULUM-CONNECTED THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENT GRANT PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROBLEM	GOALS	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE
COGNIA (FORMERLY CENTERPOINT) Cognia Education partnered with a large district in Maryland and a small district in Wisconsin to research a curriculum-connected through-year design.	Cognia believes that students can effectively demonstrate their knowledge through assessments that are closely tied to curriculum and instruction.	Cognia answered the following research questions in this study: • Do the Cognia IM Interim assessments measure similar learning outcomes as summative assessments? • Do the Cognia IM Interim assessments predict students' performance on summative assessments?	• Cognia collaborated with two K-12 urban districts located in distinct regions of the U.S. collectively serving around 160,000 students. They engaged educators to gain a deeper understanding of their interests in and needs to inform assessment designs. • Their analysis of data from IM interims administered in two large districts confirmed that existing interim designs could be used or adapted to predict or certify achievement of a state's annual academic goals.

EDUCATION FIRST
INNOVATIONS IN ASSESSMENT & NEW MEASURES, PHASE I AND II

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Students, parents, teachers and community members all have a right to know if their schools are meeting their individual and collective needs. High-quality, standards-aligned assessments are an important component of making this a reality. At the same time, current annual, end-of-year and high school exams are imperfect, and oftentimes create persistent challenges and unintended consequences for students, teachers and systems.

When asked what data sources are most important for understanding a child's achievement, parents rank the results of annual tests last and teachers rank them second to last. And these tests sometimes overlook important elements that we know are integral to life and professional success, such as critical thinking, creativity and judgment and decision-making. With the goal of improving assessments and identifying new measures of student and school success that are more meaningful, actionable and equitable, Education First designed and managed a pooled invitational

fund with three objectives: 1) seed new research and development efforts and develop new measures; 2) build new capacity for innovative assessment and accountability systems; and 3) advance equitable new approaches, measures or improvement. Proposed new innovations had to meet only these minimum criteria: generate disaggregated data for multiple student populations; generate data that can be compared across schools; and integrate into statewide or organization-wide school accountability and improvement frameworks.

Education First invited a total of 26 state education agencies (SEAs) and charter management organizations (CMOs) to apply for planning grants to 1) generate more options to gather summative student data with increased validity; 2) improve current summative assessment design, administration, reporting and/or 3) create better or more diverse measures of different skills and knowledge or for different student populations. We awarded planning grants (implemented between February and November 2020) to AK, CO, FL, LA, MA NB, NH, ND, TN, TX, KIPP, Achievement First, IDEA and Summit to adapt equitable design processes to clarify the problems to be solved, listen to perspectives of students, families and educators on these problems; and ideate new solution options. These Phase I grantees received substantial technical assistance from the Center for Assessment (including feedback and advice on the technical feasibility of the solutions) and Education First (coaching each team through the process and equitable design). Nine grantees completed a brief concept paper to seek the Phase II implementation grants.

In early 2021, Phase II launched when Education First awarded implementation grants and coaching/

technical assistance to the KIPP Foundation, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, New Mexico Public Education Department, Summit Public Schools and Texas Education Agency. Each grantee completed four steps: 1) a deeper exploration of the problem from Phase I, 2) the full development of inclusive solutions, 3) the rapid prototyping of these innovations and 4) the building of stakeholder engagement and buy-in and planning for field testing or piloting.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Five new measures or assessment models developed in SY 2021-22 were designed with a human-centered design and equity lens, in collaboration with students, families and educators.

  + **KIPP:** As part of ongoing efforts to become an anti-racist organization, KIPP created a new school-culture metric. This assessment tool measures school quality according to major priorities identified by parents and students: positive indicators of student engagement, safety, and nurtured, authentic success.

  + **Massachusetts:** the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education worked with teachers and students to create new standardized science tests that include computer-based science simulation tasks, to build on ongoing efforts to expand deeper learning opportunities more equitably across the state.

  + **New Mexico:** The New Mexico Public Education Department and advocates partnered to revamp high-school graduation requirements to better meet the needs of culturally and linguistically

diverse students. This includes holistic new graduate profiles and capstone projects, which allow communities to articulate what high school graduates should know and be able to do and give students the opportunity to demonstrate competency in a relevant local context.

  + **Summit:** Summit worked with teachers and student design teams to expand its focus on post-graduation pathways and sharpen students' experiences during career-connected community-based learning opportunities that are part of its core model. That included establishing new methods of feedback and assessment for these non-graded experiences to measure the knowledge, skills and habits that students need to succeed after high school.

  + **Texas:** the state education agency surveyed a broad array of students, teachers and system leaders to develop new standards-aligned through-year assessments, or interim statewide tests that give teachers insights into student learning throughout the school year. Tests taken three times a year can help monitor student progress, inform classroom instruction and potentially replace once-a-year summative exams.

CHALLENGES

- Roadblocks to the Equitable Design Process:

  + Challenges posed by COVID-19, including disruptions to normal operations which posed limitations to grantees.

  + Competing priorities within agencies or organizations affected focus and resources.

Profile continues on next page ➜

EDUCATION FIRST
INNOVATIONS IN ASSESSMENT & NEW MEASURES, PHASE I AND II

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- Challenges across grantees:
  + Project Management: Ensuring proper coordination with state education agencies and making sure the right people are involved at the right time.
  + Scaling & Piloting: Addressing considerations such as how schools will be selected for piloting and the implications for scalability.
  + Mindset Shifts: Recognizing the need for shifts in mindset to fully embrace innovative approaches to education.
- Grantees named several barriers to innovation:
  + Limited capacity
  + Lack of political buy-in
  + Constricting federal guidelines
  + Starting with a solution in mind and then shifting expectations
  + Replicating high-quality classroom experiences in simulations, and educators need to understand that increasing the use of simulations will not replace high-quality classroom experiences

LESSONS LEARNED
- Lessons learned across grantee organizations:
  + **Structural support is needed for innovation**
    » Grantees are motivated to innovate when supported by structured frameworks or political backing from key decision-makers.
  + **Relationships are key to innovation**
    » Relationships with key stakeholders, designated project managers and technical assistance providers contributed to success.

+ **People most proximate to the problem (PPP) and traditional experts can provide input at different stages**
  » Teams prioritized input from PPP for problem identification, while they prioritized input from traditional experts during solution-building.
+ **Capacity is key**
  » Technical support providers can facilitate implementation and alleviate capacity limitations
+ **Valuing assessment**
  » SEAs and CMOs need to articulate the value of assessments for innovation in assessments to occur

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD
No reform happens in a vacuum. Revising any assessment effort will occur in a political environment, follow a legislative and regulatory calendar, and need to accommodate standing accountability regulations and high-school graduation requirements. Innovation also relies on trusting relationships, clear communication and systemwide collaboration. Coherence is an approach and mindset that consciously addresses fragmentation and shapes successful policies and solutions. (For specifics, a toolkit and more, *visit Coherence Lab*).

To ensure equitably designed new approaches could scale, grantees need the support of key decisionmakers at the system and state level, along with the people proximate to the problem. This helps protect innovations from common roadblocks, such as insufficient funding, time or political will. Grantees' major insight: Building relationships and buy-in for assessment innovation, including by explicitly incorporating this work into other systemwide or organization-wide initiatives or priorities, is critical to ensure it is successfully adopted.

FAST FACTS
Project Dates: 2021 - 2022

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

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Profile continues on next page →

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

EDUCATION FIRST
INNOVATIONS IN ASSESSMENT & NEW MEASURES, PHASE I AND II

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PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROBLEM	GOALS	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE
MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION New, standardized science tests that include computer-based science simulation tasks and measure deeper critical thinking skills.	The state assessment system created two central problems: • BIPOC students, students from families experiencing poverty, students with disabilities and English-language learners were far less likely to be on grade level, graduate high school, or persist through college. • Many teachers reported feeling pressure to spend time preparing students for annual exams and move away from problem-solving activities.	• To develop a technology-based solution to address the problem of measuring deeper critical thinking skills. • To create an innovative test to include performance-based tasks to expand access to high-quality curriculum and support professional development for teachers.	• DESE applied for and was granted approval for Innovative Assessment and Demonstration Authority (IADA.) • The creation and piloting of the Innovative Science Assessment (ISA) in grades 5 and 8 as an alternative to Massachusetts' traditional state science assessment. • Data analysis from the first three years of ISA shows the potential effectiveness of simulation-based assessment as well as its potential to narrow achievement gaps.
NEW MEXICO PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT Locally developed Graduate Profiles that are culturally and linguistically sensitive measures of high school performance and Capstone projects that provide an alternative way to demonstrate competency in a local context.	A landmark court ruling in 2018 declared that New Mexico was failing to provide all students with a sufficient and uniform system of education, in violation of the state constitution. • The court ordered New Mexico to fully fund and deliver the programs and services needed to meet the needs of all students, particularly students who are Native American, have disabilities, are experiencing poverty, or are English-language learners. • The decision also required the state to "ensure teaching is tailored to the unique cultural and linguistic needs of students, including English-language learners and indigenous communities."	Support communities to replace high-school graduation requirements with more relevant paths that connect to students' lives, including by developing: • Unique, district-level graduate profiles that meet state requirements and reflect local cultural values and goals. • Aligned community-based capstone projects.	• NM PED's 2022 strategic plan explicitly names graduate profiles and cpastones as part of their strategy moving forward. • Now, graduation requirements allow for local demonstration of competency via capstone projects. • NM PED conducted extensive stakeholder engagement to build relationships with stakeholders and resist rapid-cycle prototyping. • Four capstone models have emerged, each created in the context of their local community. These designs include capstones tailored to: 1) students who are currently incarcerated, 2) career research and planning, 3) community healing and 4) re-engaging students who left high school before graduation.

Profile continues on next page ➡

EDUCATION FIRST
INNOVATIONS IN ASSESSMENT & NEW MEASURES, PHASE I AND II

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PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION	PROBLEM	GOALS	KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE
TEXAS EDUCATION AGENCY A standards-aligned through-year assessment model.	In 2019, the Texas Legislature unanimously passed House Bill 3906, which mandated a host of changes to annual standardized tests. • The law directed the state education agency to create and pilot an integrated through-year assessment that would monitor student progress, inform classroom instruction, and potentially replace once-a-year summative assessments.	Developing a new through-year assessment pilot as a potential replacement for the current summative testing program. This pilot would test the feasibility of a model that would: • Establish multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their growth and learning throughout the school year • Provide actionable information that can immediately inform classroom instruction.	• Texas' work is part of the Innovative Assessment Program (IAP). • Texas' team focused on understanding the needs of the people most proximate to the problem and convened 15 focus groups of teachers, parents, and students to identify their priorities for new through-year tests. • The creation of a prototype that was piloted in 2022-23 SY.
KIPP PUBLIC SCHOOLS A new school culture metric to measure school quality using positive indicators of student engagement, safety and nurtured, authentic success.	KIPP's demanding college-preparatory programs reinforced a singular understanding of post-secondary success that did not fully reflect its BIPOC students' diverse visions for the future, and aspects of the KIPP model reinforced oppressive policies and practices.	• A stakeholder-led process to clarify an evolving new vision for school culture that prioritizes the perspectives of people most proximate to the problem, is explicitly anti-racist, and serves the holistic needs of BIPOC students to thrive in whatever post-secondary path they choose. • A school culture assessment tool to "measure what matters."	• KIPP gathered "empathy data" through surveys, focus groups, and a study of female leaders in the network to identify examples of student experiences that did and did not support its new vision. It then convened "Community Boards" of students, parents, teachers, and leaders, led by alumni, to test and modify aspects of the measurement system. • The KIPP CARE360 Assessment tool gained specificity, was refocused to measure positive rather than negative outcomes, and was expanded to include culturally responsive curriculum and instruction, among other changes.
SUMMIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS An assessment of professional skills with accompanying instruction and curriculum.	Community-based career prep is seen and treated as a "break" from academics instead of the core experience of students.	Enhance and expand the impact of Expeditions, a career-focused experiential learning program that is a core part of the Summit model in grades 6-12 by creating… • Structured opportunities for students to explore the world and themselves through active learning experiences. • Cycles of teacher and student feedback and reflection on professional skills related to self-direction, curiosity and sense of purpose.	• Summit conducted stakeholder engagement with those who would be most immediately affected by new measures and accordingly narrowed their scope in two meaningful ways: + Prioritize Summit needs + Focus on developing students' professional skills, defined in terms of their curiosity, self-direction, and sense of purpose.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

EDUCATION FIRST
MEASUREMENT FOR FAMILIES

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First synthesized research on the most promising test and non-test measures, how parents and families* use them and what support might be needed to increase adoption and use of current measures or develop new measures more aligned to parent needs. Education First did this by: 1) conducting research and analysis on what families want to know about their children's academic, social and emotional developmental progress and success; and how these align to the evidence base; 3) reviewing market analyses of the indicators and measures currently available to families, districts and states; and 3) offering actionable recommendations about where new investments are needed to support creation of new measures, incentivize district and state adoption of new/existing measures and increase the use by families of measures that matter to parents and families.

*Note: We use "families" to refer to any adult/adults who is/are responsible for supporting a child; this includes parents, family members, non-related caregivers and other relatives or responsible adults.

The scan was used to present options to inform grantmaking strategy. Education First identified three recommended areas of investment: 1) the design and evaluation of family-oriented measures, 2) the building of partnerships and family engagement and 3) the strengthening of systems capacity and coherence. According to Education First's research, these three elements have the potential to create greater autonomy and data-based decisionmaking for families which can then put pressure on education systems to become more equitable.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Current assessment systems are not necessarily designed to engage parents and families as active participants in their children's learning. Assessment systems also tend to outline a narrow pathway to success that does not necessarily align to student abilities or desires, or to changing workforce and employment needs.

- Families want a wide range of information about how students are progressing in school and how the school supports their learning. Information that families want to know about their student's learning and progress include:
  + What their children should be learning
  + What parental support their children need to succeed
  + Where their children stand in relation to standards and other students
  + Where their children need extra help
  + How prepared their children are with practical and life skills.

- Information that families want to know about their student's learning environment includes:
  + How well the school is supporting their children's social and emotional skill development
  + How well the school is monitoring and supporting their children's mental health
  + Whether the school climate and culture provide their children with a safe, culturally relevant and nurturing learning environment
  + Whether the school provides a range of supports and services
  + Whether the school is providing a high-quality and rigorous learning environment
  + How well schools and teachers engage parents and families.

- This holistic set of information could be measured through a variety of measurement tools including state summative assessments and accountability measures, classroom academic assessments, non-academic assessments and measures, school climate measures, and career and professional skills. However, not all states and districts are measuring data in this way. Often, data are available but not user-friendly or accessible, data collection across districts and schools can be uneven and sometimes excludes important measures, use of district or school-based measures is not uniform across all school districts, or there are few or no measures for non-academic skills and attributes.

- Moving toward more equitable and responsive measurements as well as addressing gaps in systems alignment will require investments in designing and evaluating measures, strengthening systems capacity and coherence and building partnerships and family engagement.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Our national experience over the last year has raised the volume on the need to rethink our assessment systems. To do that, and to ensure a more equitable and responsive system, assessment designers, funders, states, districts, schools and educators need to seek out and collaborate with parents, families and students—those closest to the problem—to create a more holistic school system that serves all children and offers them the widest possible opportunities for their lives after schooling.

FAST FACTS
Project Dates: 2021

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: National

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EDUCATION FIRST
PEER REVIEW RESEARCH

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First conducted research to understand and enhance the federal peer review process. Education First partnered with Foresight Law & Policy to investigate the extent to which the federal peer review process encourages and allows for innovation in assessments. They explored three overarching topics:

- Origins, purpose, requirements and design of the peer review process
- The current approach to peer review
- Opportunities for the future

Education First set out to create the following from the findings of the research:

- Detailed list of ways federal peer review supports and hinders assessment innovation.
- Dissemination of research findings and recommendations for improving the federal peer-review procedure.

- Establishment of the foundation for policy recommendations and a long-term strategy to address necessary changes in peer review or other federal constraints.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Key findings from Education First's research include the following:
  + Stakeholders recognize the importance of peer review for quality control in state assessments and perceive the U.S.E.D as a collaborative partner invested in state success.
  + Current peer review guidance primarily aligns with traditional summative assessment models, which may not adequately support innovative assessment approaches.
  + Ambiguities in the guidance regarding multiple assessments, alignment to state standards, use of sub-domains and sub-scores and interpretation of the "same assessment" requirements pose challenges for states seeking to implement innovative assessment models.
- Based on its research, Education First developed the following recommendations for the Department and states
  + Short-term recommendations for the Department include providing clearer guidance on innovative assessment possibilities within current regulatory parameters, enhancing engagement opportunities with state leaders, updating guidance documents and refining the peer reviewer recruitment and training process.
  + Short-term recommendations for states include early engagement with the Department, viewing examples of evidence as flexible guidelines rather than strict checklists and actively participating in the peer review process.

CHALLENGES

- The translation of technical quality requirements referenced in statute into regulations and then guidance to states preparing for peer review creates multiple opportunities for the requirements to be defined and interpreted by different sets of actors–elevating risks for bias, assumptions, and misunderstandings.
- Our research identified clear differences in perceptions between USED, states, and other stakeholders–leading to ambiguities and misunderstandings on technical requirements.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Including representatives from both USED and state agencies in an advisory committee to shape the research questions and findings, as well as including both in research interviews, allowed us to better understand the perceptions, opportunities, and constraints acting on different levels in the system.
- Supporting stakeholders' perception of USED as a collaborative partner invested in state success, USED has been responsive to recommendations. For example, since receiving recommendations from Ed First and other partners, USED has issued a Dear Colleague letter communicating clarifications on some requirements and hosted a conference for states on peer review and IADA. In other words, the project's approach to the research and development and communication of findings.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- The high-stakes nature of the peer review process creates a "who goes first" challenge that dampens the appetite for innovation. States are hesitant to spend the resources necessary to develop innovative assessments models that differ from approaches that have successfully gone through peer review in the past. Clarity around peer review guidance can help alleviate, but not remove entirely, this hesitancy by elevating states' confidence that an approach will pass peer review.

FAST FACTS
Project Dates: Sept 2022 - May 2023

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: National

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EDUCATION FIRST
STUDENT SUCCESS INDICATORS

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Education First identified and profiled examples of student success indicators used by states or districts to contextualize different students' outcomes and highlight the inequities faced by students of color and students from lower-income families.

- Education First has been examining innovative approaches to measuring student success and education equity with a goal to complement traditional student achievement measures with insights into a range of important outcomes and opportunities for learning.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Education First's initial scan identified student success indicators used by states and districts can be grouped into three categories: outcomes, access and context. Some examples are listed below.

- **Outcomes:** Kindergarten readiness; On-track course completion and graduation; Financial literacy; and Educational attainment

- **Access:** Qualified teachers; Funding; High-quality curricula and instructional materials; and Supportive school and classroom environments

- **Context:** Student demographics and learning needs; Neighborhood safety, healthcare and crime; Family assets; and Community resources

The use of these indicators varies across states and districts. To learn more, the project looked at three places with different approaches, politics and needs: Illinois and their use of the 5Essentials Survey, Indiana and their implementation of the Graduates Prepared to Succeed Dashboard, and Tulsa, Oklahoma's Child Equity Index. See *case studies, opportunities and learnings for each summarized here.*

CHALLENGES

As required by federal law, every state accountability system already includes some indicators beyond test scores, and states' school report cards already report a variety of additional data. However, these data don't necessarily provide context for the root causes of persistent disparities. They don't inform the understanding of policymakers and educators in envisioning new approaches. Some of the challenges go beyond school systems' locus of control, and for those that are within the control of schools, there is limited guidance or follow through on implementing the most effective interventions or supports needed.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Current approaches aren't consistently leading to better outcomes or reduced disparities, especially in marginalized communities. Gathering data that provides a more comprehensive, holistic and actionable view of student success could be part of the solution.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Many states and districts collect or have access to a range of data and information beyond academic achievement scores and graduation rates. There is a gap in how this data is consistently communicated, used to drive improvement or aligned to evidence-based interventions or supports. The field could benefit from both an uptake in expanding the types of data and information gathered and better support for consistent implementation and support to drive improvement.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2021 - Feb 2022; Aug 2022 - Dec 2023

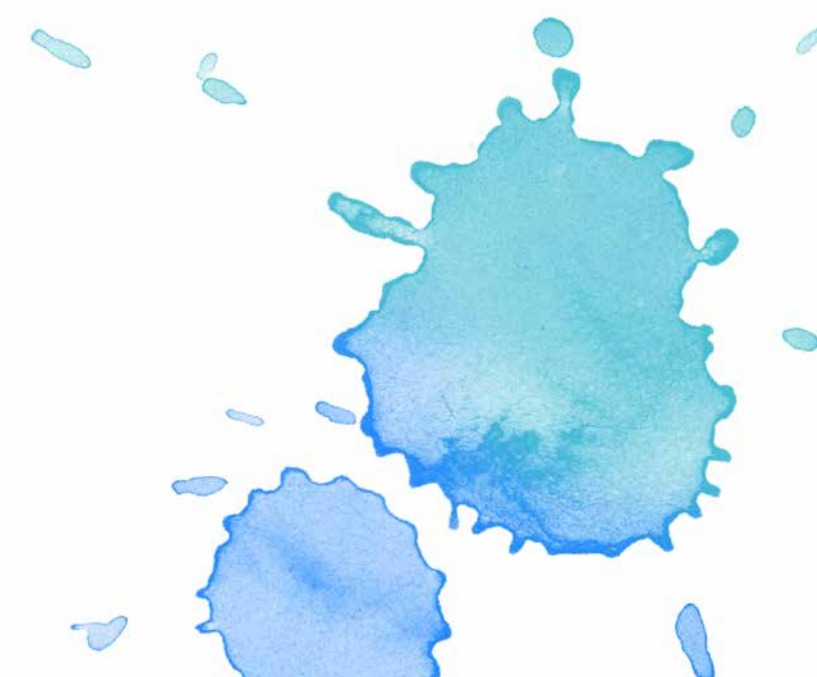*Project Status:* Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.education-first.com/insights/our-resources/student-success-indicators/

- Publications:
  + *Addressing root causes with data and action*
  + *"There is a Bigger Story Going on Here:" How are States Using Broader Measures of Student Success to Address Education Disparities?*

EDUCATION FIRST
EQUITABLE DESIGN AND PRACTICE IN WHOLE CHILD ASSESSMENT

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The education field needs 1) proof points of innovative assessment models that advance student learning and address utility, time and relevance concerns of educators, families and school systems; 2) research and organizing frameworks that support practitioners and policymakers to better understand the current state of assessment and accountability issues and advance ambitious and transformative ideas to resolve them; and 3) opportunities to engage in cross-sector dialogue, collaboration and partnership to address mindsets, policies, regulations and capacity issues that can present barriers to adoption and implementation of new, better ideas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Education First developed a framework and rubric that describes opportunities for the research community to shift its approach to the development and implementation of assessments for K12 education. The Education First team co-created this framework with a group of leading-edge researchers working to advance equity in measurement.

Education First also established a Community of Practice (CoP) of leading-edge researchers and practitioners to share problems of practice related to assessment and measurement and to provide resources for education system leaders and decision-makers. As part of this project, a select set of participating organizations received funding to develop public goods that describe their work, aligned to the framework. The Education First team curated these public goods into a new website (communitypoweredassessments. com). The EF team also conducted a landscape scan of districts focused on better understanding district needs and appetite for using tools and practices aligned to the work.

In the current phase of work, the Education First team is partnering with CoP members to disseminate the public goods and contents of the website through a series of webinars and conference presentations. Education First is also convening a group of districts to engage in learning opportunities focused on advancing principles of co-creation and justice in assessment and measurement, from a practitioner perspective. This work is ongoing and will continue through June 2025.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Education First, in partnership with field leaders, developed a framework that articulates a set of core beliefs and a theory of action towards advancing new approaches to assessment. Core principles of the framework included:

- Our current assessment systems and structures are designed to produce inequity. But they can be redesigned to promote educational justice
- Young people and the adults who serve them are whole, not broken
- Youth, families, and the community are experts and co-creators of knowledge and must be mutually accountable to one another for supporting human flourishing

The project's Theory of Action:

- **If…** assessment and accountability systems are co-designed in partnership with and reflect the values, goals and contexts of local communities
- **And…** Our systems of continuous improvement broaden their focus beyond individual student outcomes to holding systems accountable for policies and practices that support student learning and flourishing
- **Then…** community values and assets will be

represented in the design and use of high quality, rigorous assessments that impacts all students, especially those historically furthest from opportunity

- **Which will…** improve the learning outcomes of students and increase student, family and community engagement in our education systems.

Key Results included:

- Education First convened 11 organizations. Those 11 organizations received funding to document their work, develop resources and share their learnings to support practitioners across the country. Education First also partnered with these organizations as other expert advisers to develop a shared set of principles and a theory of action to describe a new vision for assessment, grounded in community co-creation.

- CoP members collaborated with Education First and with one another to create resources and tools such as videos, mini case studies, virtual training and other forms of storytelling.

  + The work of the community of practices is documented on this *microsite* and includes the tools, resources and learnings of our time as a CoP. The microsite provides a wealth of information for practitioners who wish to advance equitable assessments and offers different entry points.

  + Over the coming year, we will work to disseminate this body of work alongside members of the CoP to ensure that it reaches practitioners and pushes the field to implement equitable practices in assessments.

- Education First also conducted a *landscape scan of equitable assessment practices* during the summer of 2023. The findings show that:

  + Many districts are at different points in their journey of designing, implementing and learning about advancing equitable assessment tools and practice.

  + Districts across the U.S. are leveraging co-creation and other equitable approaches to assessments despite restrictive conditions and barriers to implementation.

  + Across districts that are designing and implementing more equitable, student centered and community driven approaches to assessment, there are key policy, practice and tool levers that enable their work.

- Education First is currently building on the district landscape scan findings to convene districts interested in advancing their practice into a learning network.

CHALLENGES

- The field needs examples of what co-created, holistic and equitable assessments look like in practice. For many district leaders, political contexts, capacity and resource constraints do not enable them to be the first to take risks, move in a direction that may diverge from historically held beliefs or process.

- Many of the organizations we partnered with to develop the tools and resources contained in the microsite need sustained support — funding and/or technical assistance - to translate their work for broader audiences.

- Community co-creation is a rigorous and time-consuming process. Our systems are not designed to enable this kind of engagement between students, educators, technical experts and communities. It also requires a paradigm shift in how we think about expertise, scale and adaptability of new ideas.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

EDUCATION FIRST
EQUITABLE DESIGN AND PRACTICE IN WHOLE CHILD ASSESSMENT

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LESSONS LEARNED

Some of the key lessons learned include:

- There is a continued need for new, innovative processes and tools that:
  + Reconceptualize measurement practices;
  + Change approaches to data use and interpretation;
  + Expand the unit of analysis beyond individual students and focus on the conditions for learning;
  + Shift the role of community, students and families as co-creators and generators of knowledge.
- There is also a disconnect between developing a new tool or product and its implementation, leading to the need for more focus on discussing the process of implementation and the practices used.
- When thinking about district engagement, there are many different entry points, dynamics and needs that districts and their partners have to navigate.
- Partners need to develop agile processes with districts and create space to support local innovation, customization and scale.
- Schools, districts and states are navigating complex political and policy contexts that are further hindered by federal policy, implementation challenges and need to rebuild trust and buy-in at all levels of the system.
  + What are districts' experiences of going through the co-creation process, who gets to decide and when has enough engagement been done to make the decision?
  + What is the life-cycle of a district's process from identifying the need, developing the vision, accessing a network or resource, developing and implementing a tool or process and then actually using the data to make decisions?

PROJECT DETAILS

PUBLIC GOODS ON THE MICROSITE	
Project Title	**Project Description**
Adult & Child Agency Inventories	Beloved Community is partnering with K-12 schools to pilot its Adult & Child Agency Inventories. Nearly 600 organizations, including K-12 schools, corporations/companies, non-profit organizations, and public agencies have completed Beloved Community's organizational self-assessment — the Equity Audit.
Culturally Affirming Practices Criteria	Village of Wisdom (VOW) partners with schools to support their assessment of the learning environments they provide to Black learners. Schools report that VOW assessments helped them learn about their strengths and areas for improvement in supporting Black learners; however, there was always the question of how schools could improve their practices.
Equal Opportunity Badge & Designing a National Registry of Equitable Enrollment Patterns	GreatSchools and Equal Opportunity Schools are developing a first of its kind national registry of equitable enrollment patterns and solutions focused on Advanced Placement specifically. Together, we believe we can create an innovative, public facing suite of tools that can shine daylight on this essential topic.
Georgia Deeper Learning Network - Public Exhibitions Process	At The Center for Innovation in Education we facilitate connections, build relationships, and share learning among those who must work in concert to bring about equity-seeking change in education. We often, but not always, orient this work around innovation in assessment and accountability systems as a key lever for systems change.
The Justice-Oriented, Antiracist (JOAR) Approach to Scenario-Based Assessments	The JOAR approach integrates the process of assessment, teaching, and learning by engaging students in co-designing context-based, antiracist math assessments. Students, teachers, and researchers work together to co-design assessment tasks, using real-life scenarios supported by digital media.
Mission-Aligned Stories and Profiles	One Generation (OneGen) and NISN collaborate to enhance and share holistic and equitable student assessment systems within learning environments that support student academic growth through culturally relevant curriculum, community-led school design, holistic wellness, and identity development.
Project Flourish	Researchers at Yale University work in partnership with school communities nationwide to identify, innovate, and evaluate discrete SEL assessments designed to address needs in SEL implementation and evaluation. These partnerships result in novel and realistic school-based tools with strong evidence of reliability, validity, and measurement equivalence.

Profile continues on next page ➜

EDUCATION FIRST
EQUITABLE DESIGN AND PRACTICE IN WHOLE CHILD ASSESSMENT

education first

PROJECT DETAILS

PUBLIC GOODS ON THE MICROSITE	
Project Title	**Project Description**
Positive Deviance for Educators	In 2020, the K12 Lab began exploring positive deviance, a community-driven approach that looks to local positive outliers for sustainable, scalable solutions to intractable problems. The goal was to explore how positive deviance, through the lens of human-centered design and equity, can complement measurement, improvement practices, and pedagogical approaches educators are using, to make it easier for school communities to use data to create more equitable learning environments.
Redefining Student and School Success & Flourishing - New Approaches to Ecosystem Design and Measurement	As part of its Accreditation, Choice-Filled Lives Network (CLN) has developed research-grounded learning condition standards and aligned professional learning standards. In partnership with Mursion Education, CLN is developing immersive mixed-reality professional learning and self-assessment modules aligned to these standards.
Schools and Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE)	Schools and Communities Organizing for Racial Equity (SCORE) is a community-driven, action-oriented research project that brings together an intergenerational Community Research Team consisting of students and parents/caregivers recruited in partnership with community-based organizations.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2020 – Ongoing

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

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https://www.education-first.com/

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A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

EDUCATION REFORM NOW
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ERN

Education Reform Now (ERN) is a non-partisan, nonprofit think tank and advocacy organization that promotes increased resources and innovative reforms in K-16 public education, particularly for students of color and students from low-income families. ERN seeks forward progress in public education—at the federal, state, and local levels—developing and advocating for new, bold ideas and mutually reinforcing policies in elementary, secondary and post-secondary education. ERN has seven state chapters (Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Texas) and one in Washington D.C.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ERN, among other things, works to strengthen relationships with aligned policymakers; drive the national education conversation at the state and national levels through enhanced and targeted media and communications efforts; cultivate and strengthen critical partnerships necessary to advance their work; and advocate for innovative student-centered policies. ERN's primary focus areas currently include:

- Expanding ERN's policy agenda to ensure more students are on the path to economic mobility.
- Growing and strengthening their network of reform-minded allies.
- Enhancing their communications infrastructure.
- Strengthening their Leaders of Color (LOC) program.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

• 2024

ERN is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

+ **Spotlight Schools – Celebrating Success, Highlighting What Works.** We're all hearing a lot about what's not working in education right now. And that's legit. ERN thinks there should be more focus on what is working. That's why they're excited about their newest policy brief series — "*Spotlight Schools: High-Poverty Schools That Are Raising The Bar*." The ties between school poverty and academic outcomes are undeniably strong, but there are some schools across the country that are defying the odds and driving high achievement in academic proficiency, academic growth, or both. Demography need not be destiny. In the first report, published in early April, ERN celebrated the accomplishments of 39 high-performing, high-poverty schools in Colorado, and collaborated with principals to discover the programs and policies that set these schools apart. ERN believes the findings can inform the accountability discussion around what works in school improvement and school turnarounds. The Colorado paper is the first in a series. Coming next: Massachusetts and Texas.

+ **School Turnarounds: U.S. Department of Education Falling Short.** Even though the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law more than 8 years ago, the casual observer might be surprised to learn that we know precious little

about its implementation. After two years working with two Congressional champions on assessment and accountability issues (Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senate Appropriations Education Subcommittee Chair Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)) ERN saw the publication of *a GAO report* in January showing that *states, districts, and the U.S. Department are all falling woefully short* in efforts to turn around chronically low-performing schools. ERN drafted and proposed the study and secured support in coalition with other education reform organizations including the Education Trust and All4Ed to advance it on the Hill. Now comes the hard part: getting the feds, states and locals to step up their efforts. Stay tuned for further developments.

• 2023

+ **Defense of MCAS.** In 2023, ERN Massachusetts served as the convener of the Voices for Academic Equity Coalition focused on defending the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System, including publishing the report "*Towards a Better MCAS*."

• 2022

+ **Statewide Data Update: Too Many States Falling Short on Full Data Transparency.** Data on key student outcomes such as performance on state assessments, chronic absenteeism and high school graduation are crucial to identifying areas of concern, informing interventions, and channeling resources to where they are most needed – but only if they are reported and rendered intelligible to a wide variety of audiences. *ERN's 2022 analyses indicate* a big gap between states that merely make data available in some form and those that

compile it in an accessible and interpretable format as required under the Every Student Succeeds Act. These analyses are available in interactive maps, which summarize which states have publicly reported data on assessments, chronic absenteeism and graduation rates – and whether they have done so in an accessible and ESSA-compliant manner.

+ **Assessment Toolkit.** Misinformation abounds when it comes to annual, summative assessments. ERN helped set the record straight through its *Essential Assessment Toolkit* — a go-to guide for families, advocates, district and school leaders, and State Education Agencies. These resources are intended to support critical conversations on why students take an annual, summative assessment, why this assessment matters, and how districts and states can improve their assessment systems to better support student achievement.

+ **COVID and Summative Assessments.** In January of 2022, in response to the U.S. Department of Education's (USED) request for public comments on its draft guidance (Frequently Asked Questions Impact of COVID-19 on 2021-2022 Accountability Systems Required under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA)), ERN *joined with 40+ coalition partners (including the Education Trust, the National Urban League, UnidosUS, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce) to reiterate* the importance of statewide accountability, school improvement and public reporting systems and the crucial role of assessment data as a necessary tool to allow leaders to identify the districts, schools and students that require differentiated and additional supplemental resources.

- 2021

  + **Assessment Bootcamps.** From July to September, ERN hosted *a series of webinars that we dubbed "assessment bootcamps,"* featuring a wide variety of experts and advocates, that focused primarily on statewide, summative assessments and their role within the broader context of state and local assessment systems.

    » This first session was designed to provide advocates and policymakers with a shared language and knowledge base about different types of assessments and the purposes they are—and are not—designed for and how these various assessments can work together to create coherent, balanced assessment systems.

    » The second session was devoted to discussing potential changes, improvements and innovations in state testing systems, including the creation of anti-racist assessments.

    » The third session was dedicated to making the case for statewide assessments as a tool for providing information on the performance of state, district and school-level education systems, for identifying and addressing achievement and opportunity gaps and for channeling resources and support to schools in need of improvement.

  + **Convening for a Common Cause.** Throughout the fall of 2020, ERN, in partnership with NWEA, hosted a series of discussions among more than 100 experts from 60+ organizations to "engage in productive discourse about how to ensure systems are driving deeper learning and providing educators and policymakers with data that is useful for supporting students, improving student outcomes, targeting resources, and guiding new

instructional policies and practices." ERN notes that the stakeholders they engaged represented a wide spectrum of backgrounds, perspectives, beliefs and experiences. *A product of these discussions was the whitepaper "Convening for a Common Cause: Reimagining Assessment and Accountability to Improve Student Learning,"* which outlines several challenges identified in the field, ideas currently under debate and policy recommendations for federal and state policymakers.

- 2020

  + **Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA).** In 2020, ERN published four papers on the main IADA pilots underway at that time: *Georgia*, *Louisiana*, *New Hampshire* and *North Carolina*. Note that all of these pilots have changed somewhat over the past four years, some to greater degrees (like New Hampshire, which was discontinued) and others to lesser degrees. ERN noted that while innovation is to be valued and encouraged, we should be mindful of the reasons that statewide standards and assessment systems were implemented in the first place: ensuring equitable educational opportunity by holding all students to high standards and measuring their progress against them through means that are comparable and allow for the disaggregation of outcomes for students from historically disadvantaged groups.

CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Key challenges ERN identified in the field include:

- ESSA places a great deal of the onus for change at the level of individual schools when it may be that systemic policies at the district and state levels—including determinations of allocations of funds, staff, and other resources—are most in need of change.

+ Recommendations:

  » Reform accountability and improvement so accountability reflects actions that actually influence student success. Need to establish better feedback loops between schools, districts and states.

  » Congress and USED should reform policy to incentivize states to better target funding based on student needs and other outcomes including Opportunity to Learn (OTL) indicators.

  » USED should increase oversight on ensure equity compliance.

  » USED should ensure that states are engaging families and community stakeholder groups to inform identification and selection of data used in support of evidence-based interventions.

- Many states are struggling to close gaps, suggesting that for some states data from statewide assessments may not be as actionable as intended.

+ Recommendations:

  » Federal government should allocate more funding for assessment innovation and provide more guidance and technical assistance to states in interpreting what law and requirements allow.

  » Make changes to IADA to incentivize innovation.

    ◦ Create a funded planning grant opportunity for states that are interested in pursuing IADA so they can consult and engage with stakeholders before participating in the pilot.

    ◦ Provide sufficient funding and technical assistance to IADA program participants.

    ◦ Convene states pursuing innovation to share learnings and problem-solve together.

    ◦ Require a description of the professional learning and assessment literacy that will be provided as part of innovative assessment plans.

    ◦ Provide funding and support to incentivize innovation efforts beyond IADA and to improve engagement with communities in the innovation process.

    ◦ Increase funding available to states to improve their assessment systems through activities such as assessment audits and statewide implementation of innovative assessments— approaches that do not require participation in the IADA program.

    ◦ Allocate funding for educator training and professional development on the effective use of assessment data and design to empower educators to meaningfully participate in and benefit from the innovation process.

- There is tension between the need for instructionally relevant data for educators and parents and comparable systems-level data for administrators, parents, and policymakers

+ Recommendations:

  » Take advantage of existing opportunities to improve assessments including ESEA's assessment audit option, CGSA, implementing innovative assessments outside of IADA.

+ There is tension between technical requirements and innovation goals

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» Recommendations:

◦ USED could extend the IADA pilots to allow for two initial funded "planning" years. During the planning phase, states could focus on developing a theory of action that clearly articulates how the innovation fits into and advances that state's vision for teaching and learning.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: Chapters in Colorado, Connecticut, Louisiana, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Texas and Washington D.C

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://edreformnow.org

• Publications:

+ *Spotlight Schools: High-Poverty Schools That Are Raising The Bar.*

+ *GAO Report on ESSA implementation: Most Plans Fall Short, Responsibility for Monitoring and Oversight is Diffuse and Muddled*

+ *Statewide Data Update: Too Many States Falling Short on Full Data Transparency*

+ *Assessment Bootcamps*

+ *Convening for a Common Cause: Reimagining Assessment and Accountability to Improve Student Learning*

+ *Toward a Better MCAS*

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A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

ED TRUST
ASSESSMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

edtrust

EdTrust is a research and advocacy organization committed to advancing policies and practices to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the American education system. EdTrust holds four core beliefs: 1) that education has the power to close the gaps that separate students from low-income backgrounds and students of color from other young Americans; 2) that schools and colleges, appropriately organized, can help virtually all students master the knowledge they need to succeed; 3) that long-standing gaps in opportunity, achievement, and attainment have roots inside and outside of schools, and though these gaps are stubborn, they are not inevitable; and 4) that a strong education improves the lives of young people, is vital to sustaining our democracy and strengthens America.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION
EdTrust's assessment and accountability work includes:

- *Future of Assessments: Centering Equity and the Lived Experiences of Students, Families, and Educators*
  + This paper centers the lived experiences of students, families, educators and district and state leaders, so that their perspectives can be used to design assessments that provide data to promote equitable learning opportunities and improve outcomes for all students.

- *Advocates' Guide to Demanding Racially and Culturally Inclusive State Assessments*
  + In this guide, EdTrust argues for annual federally required assessments to be more inclusive, explaining why these changes are necessary, how they can provide more accurate data and how policymakers can exert consumer pressure on vendors to create more inclusive assessments.

- *Making Assessment Reports More Meaningful for Students and Families*
  + In this brief, EdTrust outlines best practices to improve the reports on individual student results on state assessments including the need for clear takeaways, asset-based language, and suggestions for action steps based on the results. The report also highlights the need to integrate the results of state assessments into existing family communication with trusted voices, particularly educators.

- State-level advocacy efforts
  + EdTrust works on state advocacy and monitoring efforts in ten states (CA, DE, KY, LA, MA, MD, MI, NY, TN, TX) on accountability (among other topics).

- EdTrust plays a lead role in advising USED on assessment and accountability regulatory and administrative decisions. For example, in 2023, EdTrust helped lead the crafting of coalition letters to USED supporting Montana's request for a one-year waiver from assessment and accountability requirements, responding to USED's Request for Information Regarding the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority and making recommendations on the priorities for the 2024 Competitive Grants for State Assessments competition.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT
- *From the Future of Assessments paper:*
  + EdTrust conducted 50 focus groups between November 2021 and April 2022. The sample included 169 individuals from Illinois, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Texas, and Washington.
  + In particular, EdTrust spoke to stakeholders who are often underserved or who work in a school or district in which the majority of students are underserved. This included Black or Latino students, Pell Grant recipients, former English learners, caregivers of Black and Latino students, students from low-income backgrounds and current English learners in grades 6 -12. EdTrust also included educators, state and district administrators if they worked in a public-school system in which at least 50% of the students are students of color, students from low-income backgrounds or English learners.

- *From forthcoming Data for Equity Report*
  + EdTrust, in partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success conducted listening sessions with 20 district leaders in Illinois, Massachusetts, Tennessee, Texas and Washington between November 2023 and January 2024. They discussed how districts use data from statewide summative assessments to make decisions about how to allocate resources to address student needs and how they engage families about the results of state assessments and include them in decision making processes using these data. We are also currently conducting a nationally representative poll of parents in collaboration with the National Parents Union to understand how parents react to the information and findings from the district listening sessions. A report outlining the results from both of these engagements will be released Summer 2024.

EdTrust is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS
- *From the Future of Assessments paper:*
  + Findings:
    » Data from multiple sources, including and not solely assessment data, is important for understanding students' opportunities and progress toward state standards for college readiness.
    » Stakeholders currently use, or want to use, summative assessments for different purposes, and many expressed confusion or frustration about how assessments are used.
    » Assessments are only one indicator of college readiness, and stakeholders are eager for additional information on student knowledge and skills.
    » There are common recommendations for improvement, including the need to have timely assessment results, remove racial and/or cultural bias from assessments, and make assessment results more useful and accessible.

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» All stakeholder groups said that they would like to see better follow-through on resource allocation. They noted that education systems often fall short when it comes to using assessment systems to allocate resources and supports to the schools that need them most.

+ Frameworks: This work led to the creation of "equity pillars" that provide a framework for forthcoming federal policy action on assessments.

» Pillar 1: Ensure consistent, high expectations for student success

» Pillar 2: Encourage relevant, inclusive assessments

» Pillar 3: Provide timely, actionable and easily accessible results

» Pillar 4: Make assessment results more meaningful

Based on the insights from the Future of Assessments paper, EdTrust is developing a short series of papers designed to support state level advocates advance the principles in the Equity Pillars. In addition to the two reports below, we will be releasing a report on the potential of through-year assessments and how they can be designed to support equity.

• *From the Advocates' Guide:*

+ The report lays out five elements of racially and culturally inclusive large-scale state assessments, including:

» Authentically reflect students' own cultures and identities

» Authentically represent cultures and identities of others

» Intentionally include important contextual and cultural information

» Reflect student interests and intersecting elements of identity

» Honesty about students' realities, both opportunities and challenges

• *From Making Assessment Results More Meaningful*

+ The report lays out five elements of strong assessment reporting design:

» Involve students and families in the report design process

» Use asset-framing language to acknowledge system-level responsibility and highlight student strengths

» Clearly communicate the purpose of assessments

» Help users make sense of the data, so they can reach accurate conclusions

» Provide actionable information, including potential next steps and questions to ask educators

RECOMMENDATIONS

• *From the Future of Assessments paper:*

+ EdTrust outlines several recommendations for federal policy, centered around their equity pillars.

» Pillar 1: Ensure consistent, high expectations for student success

  ◦ Maintain existing, equity-centered federal assessment policies

  ◦ Strengthen assessment proficiency as a predictor of college and career readiness

» Pillar 2: Encourage relevant, inclusive assessments

  ◦ Expand access to high-quality assessment content

  ◦ Ensure that all state assessments are racially and culturally inclusive

  ◦ Encourage the use of multiple assessments over the course of the school year that result in a single summative score

  ◦ Reform the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) to increase its usefulness

» Pillar 3: Provide timely, actionable and easily accessible results

  ◦ Dedicate federal funds to efforts to improve student-level score reports based on best practices

  ◦ Increase transparency on state assessment practices to encourage better state/local decision-making

  ◦ Stop improper uses of assessments that undermine confidence in state assessment and accountability systems

  ◦ Promote equitable resource allocation based on students' academic needs

» Pillar 4: Make assessment results more meaningful

  ◦ Spotlight effective examples of assessment data transparency and family engagement

  ◦ Provide support to increase assessment literacy

  ◦ Ensure that state report cards provide understandable and valuable information

• *From the Advocates' Guide:*

+ Advocates can take the following actions to put pressure on state actors to do so:

» Mobilize students and educators to share their experiences with assessments, underscoring instances where their interests, cultures, and ethnicities are not captured in large scale assessment.

» Call attention to the ways bias and sensitivity guidelines are limiting representation of real life, including culture and interests, in assessments.

» Urge state departments of education to require assessment development vendors to engage in practices that will result in more inclusive assessments.

» Push state legislators to allocate additional assessment funding specifically to developing inclusive content and improving processes to allow for inclusive content.

» Urge state legislators or state department of education to create a task force of experts and community members to ensure inclusive curricula and assessments.

• *From Making Assessment Results More Meaningful*

+ Advocates can take urge state leaders to take the following actions to improve assessment report and the assessment literacy of trusted voices:

» Require vendors to user test assessment reports

» Provide PD funds for assessment literacy and family engagement training and resources for teacher and principals

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» Invest in programs, resources, and communication strategies to help families understand and use individual assessment results

» Engage organizations that mobilize communities to be messengers about assessment

» Include assessment results alongside students' final end-of-grade report cards

• From EdTrust's work in New York:

+ This project seeks to protect gains made in NY State's assessment and accountability systems (despite setbacks due to COVID). Such protections include:

» Protecting annual state assessments

» Protecting accountability designations and school improvement requirements

» Improving course access equity as a core element of school improvement

» Increasing transparency about college outcomes for each high school

» Promoting new dashboards and report cards that are parents-friendly and actionable

FUTURE WORK

• EdTrust is currently working on a number of upcoming publications on assessment and accountability, including on through-year assessments and a landscape scan of all 50-states' most recent ESSA plans. In partnership with the Collaborative for Student Success, EdTrust is also conducting a study on how decision-makers utilize assessment data. Following these reports, EdTrust plans to focus its research agenda on learning how systems are supporting school improvement including potentially: conducting interviews with SEA staff, examining how

states are using Title I school improvement funds and their impact, analyze the alignment of state and federal deadlines with both data availability and district processes, and understanding the implementation of state systems for district reviews and accountability.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: California, Delaware, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New York, Tennessee, Texas

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://edtrust.org/

• Publications:

+ *Future of Assessments: Centering Equity and the Lived Experiences of Students, Families, and Educators*

+ *Advocates' Guide to Demanding Racially and Culturally Inclusive State Assessments*

+ *Making Assessment Results More Meaningful for Students and Families*

• Contact Information:

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EDUDREAM
K12 RESEARCH FOR EQUITY HUB (THE HUB)

EDUDREAM
Champions of Educational Equity

The field does not have a dedicated entity focused on policy research in the assessment and accountability domain. This creates a gap in assessing the opportunities, challenges, feasibility, and implications of emerging policy ideas and innovations. EduDream is working to fill that gap.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

EduDream established the K12 Research for Equity Hub (The Hub) in the spring of 2022. The Hub is a multi-year actionable research initiative generating evidence to advance policy dialogue on K12 education assessment and accountability systems. Hub research teams lead individual projects to evaluate emerging innovations in assessment and accountability and deliver research reports with relevant findings and clear policy implications. The research aims to stimulate new thinking and understand how innovations impact proximate stakeholders and advance policy conversations.

As the Hub coordinator, EduDream worked with The Hub's advisory group members to craft a research agenda for each of its two research cycles. In addition, EduDream actively engages in a co-creative process with Hub research teams to refine research questions, provide thought partnership and technical research feedback, and apply a culturally responsive and equity-centered lens.

Through this grant, the primary outcomes and impact EduDream aims to achieve include:

- Launching a research hub (Completed)
- Creating a research agenda (Completed)
- Managing research projects (Completed for Cycle 1- In Progress For Cycle 2)
- Supporting research dissemination (In Progress for Cycle 1)

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- EduDream has accomplished the first two primary outcomes. The third outcome has been achieved for Cycle 1 and is in progress for Cycle 2. Research dissemination is currently in progress for Cycle 1 and will commence for Cycle 2 in late 2025.

- The Cycle 1 research agenda focused on three areas exploring the potential opportunities, challenges, and policy and equity implications of reimagining the U.S. K12 education assessment and accountability systems. The three focus areas include:

  + Alternative Accountability Models
  + Innovative Assessment Approaches
  + Community Experiences, Efforts and Needs

These focus areas explore opportunities and challenges from different, yet interconnected perspectives to inform policy.

- Four research teams were awarded to participate in Cycle 1 and focused on the following research topics:

  + **Bellwether** led an examination of new through-year testing structures piloted in four states: Delaware, Florida, Nebraska, and Texas. Their project elevates the perspectives of assessment directors, district leaders, and parents regarding how the tests work for students, families, and educators.

  + **Choice Filled Lives Network's** research focused on human-flourishing design principle accountability considerations. It looked into the correlation between human-flourishing design principles and practices in schools and students' well-being and academic success.

  + **Education Analytics** studied early warning systems in school accountability systems. Their report provides an understanding of how incorporating predictive analytics and measures from early warning systems into school accountability systems is helpful to teachers, school administrators, students, and parents.

  + **Migration Policy Institute** studied state accountability system implications for English language learners. It examined schools' expectations of English Learners' language growth in language proficiency and academic content areas while also exploring the potential role of opportunity-to-learn indicators for English Learners.

- The Hub's second research cycle explores state and local accountability systems' measures of student achievement and school quality, how families and communities understand and use the measures, and how the systems inform school improvement. Furthermore, the research seeks to understand the context and conditions under which alternative accountability systems are developed and used, developed but abandoned, or viewed as unnecessary. The research aims to understand how the federal education policy, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), encourages or impedes the development and use of alternative accountability systems. Cycle 2 research projects will conclude in late 2025.

- Three Cycle 2 research teams are conducting projects on the following topics:

  + **Lyons Assessment Consulting** is partnering with the Wisconsin Center for Education Products and Services and KnowledgeWorks Research Team to evaluate the compatibility of a fully performance-based assessment system with federal assessment

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K12 RESEARCH FOR EQUITY HUB (THE HUB)

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requirements related to comparability and alignment. This project is studying the Portfolios of Performance Pilot led by the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Educational Assessment (MCIEA) to inform federal policy recommendations as well as develop lessons learned for states seeking to innovate in their statewide assessment systems.

+ **The Houston Education Research Consortium** is evaluating the impact changes to Texas' state accountability system and the implementation of a new College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR) measure have on students, notably those who have been historically underrepresented and underserved.

Through extensive co-design processes, **Allen County Schools** (ACS) in Kentucky has been working with impacted students, families, community members, and educators to design a performance assessment system and a community-facing accountability dashboard that better reflect the knowledge, skills, and mindsets its graduates need to address the unique economic, social, and workforce needs of the community. The Center for Innovation in Education is partnering with the Partnering with the University of Kentucky to lead a project using a community-based, mixed methods approach to understand how ACS' processes of "inclusive design" with diverse stakeholders impacts stakeholder understanding, ownership, and ongoing engagement with the new assessment and accountability systems.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2022 -2025
Pre-launch Cycle 1: March - July 2022
Cycle 1: October 2022-December 2023
Pre-launch Cycle 2: Sept 2023 - Feb 2024;
Cycle 2: March 2024 - Oct 2025

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://edudream.org/

• Publications: Published Cycle 1 Reports

+ *Testing the waters: Insight into Parent Perspectives on Through Year Assessment Implementation* by Bellwether

+ *Refining State Accountability Systems for English Learner Success* by The Migration Policy Institute

+ *Ecosystem Level Predictors of student Flourishing in Diverse Student Populations* by Choice-filled Lives Network

• Contact Information:

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EXCELINED
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

ExcelinEd is a 501(c)(3) organization that supports state leaders in transforming education to unlock opportunity and lifelong success for each and every child. Focused on educational quality, innovation and opportunity—both within and outside of the traditional system—ExcelinEd advances a broad range of student-centered policy solutions to: 1) increase student learning, 2) eliminate inequities and 3) ready graduates for college and career.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

ExcelinEd helps transform state accountability. systems to ensure that students are ready for college and career by the time they graduate high school. ExcelinEd's work aims to create accountability systems that will prepare students to successfully compete with their peers from around the world.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- In 2023, ExcelinEd supported work in 27 states in various capacities–including serving on technical advisory committees (TAC) and task forces as well as advising state boards, state education agencies, legislatures, and state level policy and advocacy organizations. Examples of its work include:

  + Appointed member of the **Arizona** Accountability Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)

  + Gubernatorial appointment to the **Nebraska** Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

  + Member of the **Mississippi** Accountability Taskforce and Assessment Appeals Committee

  + **Louisiana** Bof Elementary and Secondary Education Growth Technical Advisory Panel (G-TAP)

+ **Tennessee** Department of Education A-F workgroup Fall 2023

+ Collaborator in the **Minnesota** Education Stakeholders strategy group

+ **Florida** Reactor Panel for assessment cut scores August 2023

+ **Arkansas** A-F workgroup to redesign school accountability

+ **Missouri** Quality Schools Coalition growth and accountability work group

+ **Brightbeam (formerly EdPost)** achievement gap data collection and analysis, data visualization and communication campaign around NAEP achievement gaps in all 50 states and nationally—reimagined this project after the initial request was to replicate the Why Proficiency Matters website.

+ Participant in the **United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation** Data and Assessment Work Group and Future of Data Design Challenge Report Card contest reviewer

+ **Education Trust** Assessment Workgroup participant to develop the Assessment Guardrails

+ **PIE Network** Accountability Steering Committee member

- ExcelinEd is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- Accountability: Why bother?

  + The purpose of a school accountability system is to spur school improvement and increase student performance by providing transparent, objective information to parents, educators, and the public about school effectiveness. A, B, C, D and F school grading recognizes success and exposes failure in a way that everyone can understand.

- Why use A-F?

  + Federal law requires all states to publicly report school performance information. Letter grades do not need an explanation. Everyone understands the difference between an A and a F. This transparency is the catalyst for reform that improves student achievement.

- **Accountability itself does not improve student outcomes, but the data it produces should inspire action that will improve student outcomes.**

  + Rigorous school accountability must be reinstituted.

  + It is undeniable that the most robust decade of NAEP score improvement occurred when states were required to hold schools accountable for students meeting proficiency on state standards.

  + Not only did scores improve, but achievement gaps narrowed from 2000 to 2011.

  + Loosening accountability requirements resulted in a decade of slow decline leading up to COVID.

- *Without accountability there is no pressure to progress.*

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://excelined.org/

- Publications:

  + *School Accountability (excelined.org)*

  + *ExcelinEd.PolicyToolkit.AFSchoolGrading. PolicySummary.2018.pdf*

- Publications:

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A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

2000 to 2011, 4th grade Black, Hispanic and FRL reading scores improved by more than a one and a half grade levels —narrowing achievement gaps!

							PreNCLB	NCLB	ESEA/ESSA	COVID-19
Grade 4 Reading: National Public Average	1992	1998	2000	2011	2019	2022	Difference 2000 to 1992	Difference 2011 to 2000	Difference 2019 to 2011	Difference 2022 to 2019
All Students	215	213	211	220	219	216	-4	9	-1	-3
Black	191	192	189	205	203	198	-2	16	-2	-5
Hispanic	194	192	188	205	208	204	-6	17	3	-4
White	223	223	223	230	229	226	0	7	0	-3
Low-income Students		195	192	207	207	203		15	0	-4

							PreNCLB	NCLB	ESEA/ESSA	COVID-19
Grade 8 Reading: National Public Average	1992	1998	2000	2011	2019	2022	Difference 1998 to 1992	Difference 2011 to 1998	Difference 2019 to 2011	Difference 2022 to 2019
All Students	258	261		264	262	259	3	3	-2	-3
Black	236	242		248	244	243	6	6	-4	-1
Hispanic	238	241		251	251	250	3	10	0	-1
White	265	268		272	271	267	3	4	-1	-4
Low-income Students		245		251	249	248		7	-2	-2

RECOMMENDATIONS

ExcelinEd recommends the following to create a strong accountability system:

- Set high expectations for students
- Measure what matters
- Provide clear, transparent and intuitive data for parents, policymakers and the public

ExcelinEd more generally provides the following policy recommendations for assessment and accountability systems:

- Implement an A-F grading system for schools based on ExcelinEd's Fundamental Principles.
- Reinvent school report cards to empower families by helping them understand school data, make informed choices and engage with schools to discuss academic achievement.
- Have fewer but better tests. Assessment should serve the purpose of measuring student achievement and providing actionable results.

FUTURE WORK

- ExcelinEd will be conducting a 50-state accountability review.
- We will continue to work with state assessment and accountability leaders on policy and provide technical assistance.

EXCELINED
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

From 2000 to 2011, 4th grade Black, Hispanic and low-income student reading scores improved by more than a two grade levels – narrowing achievement gaps!

						PreNCLB	NCLB	ESEA/ESSA	COVID-19
Grade 4 Math: National Public Average	1990	1992	2000	2011	2019	2022	Difference 2000 to 1992	Difference 2011 to 2000	Difference 2019 to 2011	Difference 2022 to 2019
All Students		219	224	240	240	235	6	16	0	-5
Black		192	203	224	224	216	11	21	0	-7
Hispanic		201	207	229	231	224	6	22	2	-7
White		227	233	249	249	245	7	15	0	-4
Low-income Students			208	229	229	223		21	0	-6

						PreNCLB	NCLB	ESEA/ESSA	COVID-19
Grade 8 Math: National Public Average	1990	1992	2000	2011	2019	2022	Difference 2000 to 1990	Difference 2011 to 2000	Difference 2019 to 2011	Difference 2022 to 2019
All Students	262	267	272	283	281	273	10	11	-2	-8
Black	236	236	243	262	259	252	7	19	-3	-7
Hispanic	245	247	252	269	268	261	7	18	-1	-7
White	269	276	283	293	291	284	14	10	-1	-8
Low-income Students			253	269	266	260		16	-3	-7

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

FUTURE FOCUSED EDUCATION
GRADUATION EQUITY INITIATIVE, THE CAPSTONE GRADUATION PATHWAY IN NEW MEXICO

FUTURE FOCUSED EDUCATION

New Mexico has removed demonstrations of competency and has now moved to a system where schools and districts, design, comprehensive and meaningful assessment systems that go be on test scores. Future Focused Education's (FFE) work is addressing New Mexico's capacity needs to increase buy-in, demand, implementation and coherence at the state and local level for Capstones.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Future Focused Education (FFE) supports the implementation of capstones based on locally created profiles of a graduate in New Mexico by:
  + Seeding demand for capstones
  + Developing the field of educators and leaders implementing these innovations
  + Creating a variety of capstone models
  + Identifying policy barriers to this work
  + Incorporating cultural contexts into key high school competencies

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- FFE has gathered cohorts of educators to learn about and/or develop Capstones.
- Four capstone models have emerged, each created in the context of their local community. These designs include capstones tailored to: 1) students who are currently incarcerated, 2) career research and planning, 3) community healing and 4) re-engaging students who left high school before graduation.
- Capstones can now be used as one of the Local Demonstrations of Competency to satisfy graduation requirements.

CHALLENGES

- FFE is facing a number of challenges as it supports the development and implementation of Capstones:
  + Scaling this work remains a challenge, particularly when additional capacity is needed at the local level to implement.
  + The comparability of community-developed (and therefore unique) Capstones remains a question.
  + Working within a state's unique political landscape may provide unforeseen challenges.

LESSONS LEARNED

- New Mexicans work through relationships, which requires an intermediary and more capacity.
- FFE values solutions by New Mexicans, for New Mexicans because of our unique history and context.
- Prototyping with early adopters has helped to influence the policy landscape and funding the work to scale.
- FFE's vertical approach–engaging youth, educators, community, and school/district leaders–allows them to scale and develop deep relationships.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Policy development has come from engaging youth voice and all rights holders, using Grounded Theory and AI tools.
- Changing policy at the state level to create enabling conditions schools need to innovate requires a mix of state and philanthropy funding.
- Change requires coherence between teachers, school, and district level–bottom up works, starting with student advocacy.
- By integrating SEL practices in meetings, teachers and school/district leaders can feel the safety needed to escape their compliance mindset.
- By focusing on only academic outcomes for so long, students are disengaged from school and work–hasn't correlated with community development in the social determinants of health or economic development.

FAST FACTS

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: New Mexico

Project Dates: 2021 - 2025 (incl. CZI and WFF funding)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://futurefocusededucation.org/

- Publications:
  + *2022-2023: Innovation Zone Initiative Year 1 Evaluation; Innovation Zone Learnings*

GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FOUNDATION & THE LEARNING AGENCY LAB
OPEN DATA FOR ASSESSMENT FUND (ODAF)

THE LEARNING AGENCY LAB

There is limited availability of open assessment datasets despite their potential to enhance K12 student assessments and data utilization processes. This scarcity is attributed to various factors, including the proprietary nature of large educational assessment datasets held by testing companies, limited federal funding prioritizing education interventions and research over open dataset development and logistical obstacles hindering researchers from creating datasets due to funding constraints and lack of support.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Dr. Scott Crossley and his team at The Georgia State University Research Foundation (GSU), in partnership with the Learning Agency lab, led a project to identify, release and share open assessment datasets. As part of the project GSU:

- Released six open assessment dataset.
- Ran competitions where competitors would create new assessment algorithms that assessment and product developers could easily integrate into existing systems to enhance assessment products.
- Ensured vendors leveraged new data and algorithms.
- Established a long-term structure and secure funding to sustain ODAF.

The ultimate goal of the project was to ensure that the datasets were accessible, representative of our student population, and responsive to educator and student challenges.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- By 2022, GSU had identified 3 datasets to prepare for use in the competitions:
  + **Dataset of student written summaries:** will support automated assessment of student summaries which will make grading easier for teachers.
  + **Dataset of question and answer pairs from online reading assessment platform:** will support reading comprehension testing.
  + **Dataset capturing student interaction within an online game that encourages students to develop reading comprehension skills:** will support further innovation in response to "budding interest around gamification within education.
- Other datasets approved for future competitions include:
  + Dataset to understand process features of student writing.
  + Human v. AI detection in essay writing dataset.
  + ASAP 2.0 dataset that captures holistic scores on a writing assessment as well as demographic information.
  + Personal identifiable information identification dataset.
- By 2023, GSU found two high-quality algorithms through their competitions and identified vendors to incorporate them. They will continue to build out the list of vendors integrating these algorithms.

CHALLENGES

- Data security concerns.
- Logistics of running a competition due to its lengthy process.
- Complexity of algorithms, with winning algorithms initially so complex that they wouldn't be able to be easily integrated into vendor platforms.

LESSONS LEARNED

- GSU and The Learning Agency have successfully engaged stakeholders, including end-users, developers, researchers and vendors. GSU and The Learning Agency Lab realize that there is growing momentum and interest in the datasets and rethinking how we can assess student work (particularly given the rise of AI).
- Key lessons learned throughout the grant cycle include:
- Year 1:
  + **Coordination and collaboration:** There are benefits to synergistic evaluation that involves all stakeholders from the start to identify discrepancies in datasets and research early. More synergy also leads to better alignment around tasks and goals. GSU notes, "[Synergistic evaluation] allows us to identify possible discrepancies much earlier in the process and ensures that the final data science competition task aligns as closely as possible to the goals of the ODAF, the needs of the educational community, and the resource constraints associated with large-scale implementation."

- Year 2:
  + **Importance of close relationships:** Reconnecting with researchers builds trust and facilitates data publication.
  + **Cross communication:** Improved communication between data providers and competition participants is important to producing the best quality product.
  + **Capitalizing on momentum:** Consistently running competitions is crucial for continued success.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2021 - Aug 2023

Project Status: In progress

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Publications:
  + *https://the-learning-agency-lab.com/the-open-data-for-assessment-fund/*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

GOVLAB
DISCOVERY WORK

THEGOVLAB

The assessment of non-academic skills is a challenge, including (but not limited to): the development of and demand for new measures (Action Memo 1), the collection, storage, sharing, integration and use of non-academic assessment data into state and independent data systems (Action Memo 5), the data and technology infrastructure necessary for the effective design and implementation of career pathways policies and programs (Action Memo 7) and the advancement of the field of individualized education and assessment (Action Memo 9).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GovLab developed recommendations to inform future grantmaking in the field of education. GovLab interviewed 120 experts across the field of education to source solutions and held an additional 55 interviews to turn those ideas into implementable solutions. This work led to nine action memos that outline concrete and specific plans to implement projects related to the measurement of non-academic skills. These memos were created in order to better inform grantmaking in assessment.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- The GovLab engaged 120 experts from 15 countries to source the ideas in their memos. These individuals had expertise in a variety of fields, including assessment, measurement/psychometrics, community engagement, economic mobility, labor and workforce development, policy, computer science, AI/ML and VR/AR. As a result of those interviews, The GovLab created nine action memos; a subset is outlined below.

+ Action Memo 1: Civic Infrastructure
  » This action memo stems from the interview session titled: Innovations in Community Engagement During Times of Crisis.
  » Proposal to invest in building infrastructure for representative and non-representative forms of engagement for education policymakers, researchers and activists to use in the design and implementation of new measures

+ Action Memo 5: Administrative Data Infrastructure
  » This action memo stems from interview sessions titled: Leading Indicators of Economic and Social Mobility and Innovations in Community Engagement During Times of Crisis.
  » Proposal to expand administrative data infrastructure to share and link assessment data at national, state and local levels to foster the evaluation of new assessments and better understand mobility and other outcomes
    ◦ Prioritized suggestions include funding state-level integrated data systems and educating public officials in data analytics.

+ Action Memo 7: Comprehensive Career Pathways
  » This action memo stems from interview sessions titled: Future Skills 2030 and Leading Indicators of Economic and Social Mobility.
  » Proposal to fund programs, tools and projects to identify comprehensive career pathways. Examples include skills libraries, digital credentials and education/career decision-making tools.

+ Action Memo 9: The Underlay
  » This action memo stems from an interview session titled: Innovations in Uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to Create More Effective, Inexpensive and Inclusive Assessments.
  » Investment in the development of a catalog of public knowledge.
    ◦ The Underlay aims to share public knowledge in a machine-readable form and enable innovation in education and assessment.

- From these memos, 26 specific funding proposals and funding practices were selected for implementation.

FAST FACTS
Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://thegovlab.org

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

GREATSCHOOLS
SCHOOL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Great!SCHOOLS

Great schools is seeking to explore how we can expand the information used to describe school quality to get a better picture of how schools are serving students, and better align with what parents' and students' are seeking.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

GreatSchools developed a school quality framework by adding new data sets and by expanding the impact of community voices.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Data such as advanced course offerings and special programs is very popular and helps serve as a proxy for parents' general interests.

- Priming parents about effective school practices before they leave a school review increases completion across different demographic groups, and produces more useful information for other parents.

CHALLENGES

- Lack of consistency in information from district to district or state to state makes collection at scale very difficult. (E.g.- the wide array of ways to measure "school climate").

- Pandemic era data was inconsistent, and parent perception/ behavior was less consistent as well.

- Targeted outreach is expensive and difficult to support.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Parents value what they hear from others. If it's easier to crowdsource specific responses, there's much broader awareness of what matters to parents.

- Parents are only getting more interested and involved in what's happening in schools. This presents a huge opportunity for a better feedback loop between parents and the system as a whole.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- Parents want to know if their kids' are learning, are happy and are safe. They don't get actionable, clear data most of the time, so they use what's available. The better we get at gathering and sharing information that aligns with parent interests, the more parents can engage with and support their children.

- Data sets can be effective proxies in helping parents connect the dots. If parents want "rigor" or "project-based learning", we have to tell them about programs and not just give them academic outcomes. Knowing that a school offers something is a critical step towards changing perception about school quality.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Sept 2021 - Sept 2023

Project Status: Grant complete. Project continues.

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

GreatSchools Website

- Publications:
  + *The Promise - and Pitfalls - of Crowdsourced Info in K12 Ed*

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION (ISTE)
IMPROVING DISTRICT DIGITAL ASSESSMENT DISCOVERY AND SELECTION

Schools face challenges due to a lack of access to relevant information and the capacity required to make informed decisions regarding the selection of education technology products. Additionally, selected ed-tech products often fail to deliver on their claimed functionalities and may not align well with the school's needs or be implemented effectively.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) spearheaded a market research and product development project for improving district digital assessment discovery and selection. ISTE seeks to help districts build stronger discovery and selection processes by offering community-informed, evidence-based resources so that more teachers and students have access to high-quality digital assessment products.

ISTE conducted preliminary research to better understand buying trends and strategic priorities of district leaders who make edtech purchasing decisions. ISTE then conducted market research to uncover existing market dynamics and identify areas where additional tools and resources could strengthen discovery and selection processes, helping to bring more high-quality digital assessment tools into classrooms. ISTE piloted the newly developed resources in six public school districts, bringing together assessment/ed-tech experts and district partners to test and refine resources.

The primary resources that ISTE is developing to support this project include:

- EdSurge Product Index: An Ed-Tech Buyer's Guide for Digital Assessments
  - Developing and refining a buyers guide for districts that would include descriptions of digital assessment products and their key functionalities.
  - Building an interface that highlights key features of digital assessment products that are most critical to educators.
- ISTE Seal for Assessment Products
  - Expanding formative assessment products with Seal, a key quality indicator that helps district buyers more easily find high-quality assessment products.
  - Identifying and recruiting interim assessment products to undergo ISTE Seal evaluation.
- Technical assistance to districts
  - Working with six school districts to provide technical assistance aimed at improving discovery and evaluation of digital assessment edtech solutions.
  - Leveraging edtech evaluation resources available at *https://iste.org/edtech-product-selection* for the project.
- Assessment Culture
  - Working with assessment experts to develop resources for districts to evaluate and improve upon assessment culture and correlated components at the district level.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- This project included four main phases. The phases and their related findings are as follows:
  - Preliminary research key findings:
    - Importance of considering various stakeholder perspectives – including curriculum and technology directors, teachers, families, and students.
    - Flexibility and applicability of products/resources are crucial to reach a variety of contexts, subjects, and digital assessment needs.
    - Decision-making often relies on peer recommendations and inconsistent evaluation criteria, including interoperability, usability, cost and alignment with district needs
    - Challenges in procurement include shifting funding and policies, frustration with vendors, and market saturation.
  - Market analysis key findings:
    - Peer networks/recommendations are primary information sources.
    - Key evaluation criteria align with previous research and include user experience, learning design, digital pedagogy, inclusivity, and data/feedback.
    - Edtech purchasing decisions are primarily made by committees that represent curriculum leaders, technology leaders, and often educators.
    - Teachers need training, resources, and support to develop data literacy in order to effectively implement data-informed instruction using information from digital assessment products.
  - Product and resource development
    - The Edtech Index added an 'Evaluation' landing page that helps edtech buyers more quickly and effectively discover, compare, and evaluate edtech products, including assessments.
    - The Edtech Index added several third-party validations (Instructure ESSA Evidence Badges, Leanlab Codesign Product Certification, Leanlab Building Evidence Certification, and Ed-Fi Certifications and Badges) to help buyers consider additional market signals in their evaluations of digital assessments and other edtech products.
    - ISTE partnered with EdSurge to publish a four-part series on assessment culture, district technical assistance, edtech purchasing, and product evaluation.
    - Through Benchmark, ISTE was able to expand the number of vetted formative assessment products that earned the ISTE Seal, a quality marker for edtech.
    - The coalition on edtech quality indicators announced at ISTELive 24 helps to establish common quality indicators for edtech and emphasize validations as a standard for indicating quality within an edtech product.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR TECHNOLOGY IN EDUCATION (ISTE)
IMPROVING DISTRICT DIGITAL ASSESSMENT DISCOVERY AND SELECTION

+ Technical assistance

  » ISTE implemented a light-touch technical assistance (TA) program during the 2023-24 school year to help district-level decision-makers discover, evaluate, select, and procure digital assessment products and explore problems of practice related to assessment culture within their districts.

  » TA support resulted in increased confidence in evaluating or rating edtech products and making edtech purchasing decisions.

  » Take a systems level approach to design and implement practitioner resources that support a balanced, positive assessment culture.

CHALLENGES

• Participant recruitment

  + Recruiting and selecting participants online for research activities poses challenges and risks. It is essential to verify participants' identities and roles to ensure that their feedback and perspectives are credible.

• Identifying target subject areas for digital assessments

  + The project initially sought to identify a specific digital assessment subject focus area (e.g., ELA, Math, SEL). However, districts have broad and diverse needs related to digital assessments. For this project to meet the needs of the largest group of educators, the resources, products, and technical assistance created through this project will be applicable to K12 digital assessment products across all subject areas.

• Edtech procurement and implementation processes are both procedural and cultural, and involve a variety of stakeholder input. As such, they are resilient to change.

LESSONS LEARNED

• Effective technical assistance offerings should include an element of co-design or incorporate user feedback to allow district leaders and teachers to define their goals and express their needs within their local context. This helps ensure that the technical assistance offerings are customized to meet the unique needs of a locality.

• While product evaluation, selection, and procurement processes exist in all districts, the policies, practices, and implementation fidelity varies significantly between districts.

• Peer networks play an important role in evaluating and selecting edtech products.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

• Systematizing edtech product evaluation and selection can help improve the quality of edtech resources used in schools/districts.

• Education leaders at the classroom, school, and district level will have access to research-backed tools and user-centered resources designed to help them make more informed decisions when evaluating digital assessment and other edtech products.

• This project will build awareness of relevant and useful best practices in product evaluation, selection, and implementation for districts and schools across the country.

• Conceptualizing "assessment culture" in ways that reflect key elements of school culture and resonate with educators and education leaders can offer an onramp to moving the needle around assessment practice.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: June 2023 - Aug 2024

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://iste.org/

• Contact Information:

  + Dr. Brandon Olszewski, Director of Research, ISTE, *brandon@iste.org*

  + Caitlin McLemore, Ed.D., Senior Research Associate, ISTE, *cmclemore@iste.org*]

KNOWLEDGEWORKS
KENTUCKY EXPLORATION

KnowledgeWorks

KnowledgeWorks' work in Kentucky supports the creation of a redesigned state and local accountability system envisioned by the leadership of the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky State Board of Education, and a diverse council of stakeholders convened as the Kentucky United We Learn Council. A group of national and state partners including the Center for Innovation in Education, Lyons Assessment Consulting, the National Center on Assessment, HuMRRO, KnowledgeWorks, the University of Kentucky's Center for Next Generational Leadership and the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative convene to provide expertise in community co-design, technical assessment expertise, and policy supports to help Kentucky address the lack of coherence between state and local systems of accountability, the lack of alignment between state and local accountability policy and what students, families, teachers and communities actually want to know and the lack of trust between stakeholders and state/federal accountability systems.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- KnowledgeWorks participated in an inclusive effort to help the department work with the field to redesign accountability for the state of Kentucky as a leader within the Kentucky United We Learn Council (KUWL). KnowledgeWorks co-leads committees and working groups in addition to providing ongoing guidance to the department. The Council has charged this standing committee to create and adopt a shared policy agenda that supports local innovations in assessment and accountability aligned to the KUWL and Profile of a Learner initiatives.

+ Additional funding supports a coordinated statewide storytelling effort in partnership with the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and the KY Chamber of Commerce as well as the Center for Innovation in Education through its leadership convening Local Laboratories of Learning (L3s) across the state.

+ In partnership with Center for Innovation in Education (CIE), there is also work underway to teach KUWL Council members how to go out and go short interviews to gather stories from students, teachers, families, business leaders and school leaders about deeper learning, the profile of a graduate, partnership, inclusion and accountability. These voices are shared at KUWL Council meetings to keep the stakeholders' needs and hopes at the center of the work.

+ This work is in concert with Kentucky's Competitive Grants for State Assessments (CGSA) application to build a statewide competency-based education system.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- KnowledgeWorks helped launch the Building a Bold New Future (BNF) with Communities standing committee, staffed with diverse stakeholder perspectives.

- KnowledgeWorks completed an Opportunity Analysis of Kentucky's current assessment and accountability policy.

- KnowledgeWorks is providing policy supports to help KDE, KBE and the KUWL Council explore possibilities for a "system of systems" amendment to the state's accountability system. State interest in a "system of system's approach" includes support for local development of competency-based education,

implementation of local and state aligned ortraits of a learner based on those competencies and the co-creation of accountability structures between the state and districts.

- Multiple partners involved in the storytelling effort have been enthusiastic about sharing micro-scale stories about the way in which United We Learn is showing up in their every day experiences. While macro changes like assessment and accountability reforms can feel slow, the gathering and retelling of small stories can accelerate a sense of collective change.

CHALLENGES

State-level politics influenced KnowledgeWorks' approach in several ways:

- Tensions from KDE opposition to an anti-transgender youth bill shifted confirmation authority for the state education commission and state board members to the legislature. This prompted the existing state board members to work more quickly on a portrait of a learner-aligned graduation requirement amendment in a manner that moved too fast for many KUWL Council members and local community members and superintendents. While the board did back away, it raised questions about how to balance the need for political expediency with the goal of co-creation as this work moves into the heavier policy work around accountability redesign.

- The project lost its original champion when state commissioner Dr. Jason Glass stepped down from his position due to political polarization around equity in education. While some elements of the project have slowed as the department seeks new leadership, the state board has indicated a desire for a replacement that supports the KUWL initiative.

KnowledgeWorks and CIE pursued potential partnerships with other organizations to launch a state advocacy coalition, but both organizations preferred to engage in aligned storytelling instead to support the goals of the initiative without engaging in the political tensions at the state level.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Dec 2022 - Oct 2024

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Kentucky

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://knowledgeworks.org/

- Publications:

+ *United We Learn Report; Whose Accountability System is this Anyway: Kentucky's Journey Toward Shared Ownership of Assessment and Accountability System*

KNOWLEDGEWORKS
TRAILBLAZERS SUMMIT

KnowledgeWorks

The current assessment and accountability systems have failed to deliver on their promise of high-quality education for each student. To address this problem, many different states and groups are working on learner-centered school quality systems, but they are often working in silos. KnowledgeWorks Foundation held the Trailblazers Summit in order to bring these peers together to learn from each other and to develop a field-level agenda to move towards learner-centered school quality systems.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- KnowledgeWorks led The Trailblazers Summit, a national convening that brought together advocates, policymakers and district and state leaders working on learner-centered school quality systems. At this summit, participants learned from and about each other and built a field-level agenda for their shared aims.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- KnowledgeWorks published *Beyond the Horizon: Blazing a Trail Toward Learner-Centered School Quality Systems* to share learnings from the summit and to lay out a field-level agenda for transforming the current accountability system to a learner-centered school quality system.

- This report offers five themes for this transformation, two of which are:
  - » Shared Purpose: Shift from top-down school quality systems to reciprocal systems that center those closest to the learning.
  - » Data and Improvement: Shift from the punitive use of data to data use for continuous improvement.

CHALLENGES

- KnowledgeWorks names the challenge of ensuring a field-level impact through a convening.

- KnowledgeWorks utilized a representative and collaborative partnership model to gather organizations at the Trailblazers Summit. This model intended to bring together both a diverse array of organizations and role diversity within those organizations.

- Gathering and coordinating with these partners was a notable challenge.

- Achieving role diversity was a challenge.

LESSONS LEARNED

- KnowledgeWorks used an immersive approach where participants lived in different potential realities during a portion of the convening to play out different scenarios. A post-convening survey noted both a positive experience of the convening and a need for more time to process and network.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- At the field-level, there is consensus that federal and state accountability is necessary, but that the current systems are not serving those closest to the learning. There is a desire for these systems to serve as a lever of equity.

- 17 organizations (7 placed-based and 10 national) signed-on to the report published after this convening, *Beyond the Horizon: Blazing a Trail Toward Learner-Centered School Quality Systems*. This indicates an increase in momentum around the future of accountability, as well as demonstrates the need for coalition-building across organizations.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: The convening was held in June 2023; the project closed Dec 2023.

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National partners are from across the country

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://knowledgeworks.org/

- *Publications:*
  - + *Beyond the Horizon: Blazing a Trail Toward Learner-Centered School Quality Systems*
  - + *Youth Pieces:*
    - » *Elevating Youth Voice in Learner-Centered School Quality Systems*
    - » *Three Mindset Shifts for Successful Youth-Adult Partnerships*
    - » *Three Strategies for Effective Youth-Adult Partnerships*

LATINOS FOR EDUCATION
NATIONAL ADVOCACY PLANNING

LATINOS *for* **EDUCATION**

Latinos for Education (L4E) is an advocacy organization committed to developing, placing and connecting essential Latino leaders in the education sector. They are building an ecosystem of Latino advocates by infusing Latino talent into positions of influence. Latinos for Education believes that Latino leaders should be at the forefront of creating an equitable education for Latino students. Latinos for Education prepares nuestra comunidad to break down barriers to educational opportunity for the next generation of Latino students.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Latinos for Education (L4E) led two streams of work:

- Strategic planning: L4E plans to grow in order to engage nationally in policy discussions and advocacy.

- Conducting polling and focus groups with diverse constituencies: L4E will conduct this stakeholder engagement in order to develop coherent positioning related to assessments and accountability and to infuse the perspective of Latino classroom teachers, administrators and parents into the national policy discussions around assessment and accountability.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

L4E engaged stakeholders via a survey and focus groups. The goal of these engagements is to understand how Latino parents, educators and nonprofit leaders view the role of assessments and accountability in the public education system.

- Survey
  + 500 Latino parents, guardians and educators nationwide

- Focus groups
  + 37 participants total
    » 1 national focus group comprised of educators and nonprofit leaders in the education space
    » 2 regional focus groups (Massachusetts and Houston, TX) with Latino teachers and monolingual parents and guardians

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

As part of this work, L4E names several successes, key findings and lessons learned.

- **Successes**
  + 15 meetings with members of the Biden-Harris administration
  + Conversations with partner organizations (like UnidosUS)
  + Secured funding from the Joyce Foundation

- **Key findings**
  + The stakeholder group most in need of support related to assessments and accountability is Latino parents and families, especially those who are monolingual.
    » Nearly 1 in 10 parents were unable to understand the most important information about their children's standardized tests.
  + Latinos (and Latino parents and guardians in particular) overwhelmingly support assessments and agree that they can be useful in understanding student outcomes and ability.

- **Lessons learned**
  + Creating and adopting equitable policy is not an intuitive process.

+ The current thinking in education about assessment and accountability is highly polarized.
  » L4E received pushback from stakeholders when surveying them, as stakeholders perceived that asking about testing implied that the organization was taking the side of those who want to keep assessments, not dismantle them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

L4E recommends the following:

- More comprehensive data from more stakeholders, including students.

- More capacity to collect and interpret the gathered data.

- More capacity to disseminate the information accumulated in language that is accessible to different stakeholder groups.
  + Investment is needed to broaden the reach of the narrative around assessment and accountability.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National; Massachusetts; Houston, TX

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.latinosforeducation.org/

- Publications:
  + *Latinos Speak: A Candid Reflection on Assessments and Accountability*

LEARNING HEROES
PILOT OF FAMILY ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES / GO BEYOND GRADES CAMPAIGN

LEARNING HEROES

Parents and caregivers often have limited or inaccurate information about their students' achievement and progress in schools. Without this information, families aren't able to fully advocate on behalf of their children, and aren't able to hold schools accountable for teaching their children. Learning Heroes (LH) is working to address this challenge through their research-based resources, training and supports for communicating data to families.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pilot of Family Engagement Resources

- Learning Heroes developed family engagement tools, resources and training to help strengthen partnership between homes and schools rooted in trust and based on a shared and accurate understanding of student data and progress . As part of their grant, LH piloted its Parent-Teacher Planning Tool at a DC Charter School, helped customize the tool, and determined whether, and how, the tool can change parent understanding and actions related to their children's achievement and development.

Go Beyond Grades Ad Campaign

- Learning Heroes led a campaign to increase awareness of their resource, Go Beyond Grades, and to study the impact of their campaign. Go Beyond Grades is a site for parents and teachers to provide actionable information to help these stakeholders better understand their students' achievement and progress in schools. LH launched an ad campaign to raise awareness for their site, Go Beyond Grades, as well as the disconnect between parents' perceptions of student performance and the reality.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Pilot of Family Engagement Resources

- In its final grant report, LH finds that the grant largely achieved its desired outcomes. Key successes they note include:

  + **Provides valuable structure to parent-teacher conversations.** LH notes that parents, teachers and school leaders really liked the tool. **It was so successful that the school ended up expanding it to other grade levels that it wasn't initially going to pilot.**

  + **Builds educator capacity to share and discuss student data:**

    » One teacher noted that they "like that it moves toward a goal and ends with momentum to move forward."

    » Teachers like that it made interactions with parents less subjective.

    » The Assistant Principal shared: ""The tool takes the [MAP] score and breaks it down so that teachers can talk about how [students are] performing in regards to what we're learning and then they can say, 'that means that they have mastered multi-digit multiplication, but they have not mastered subtracting within thousands.' It takes the number and the percentile from just being a number of research to the actual [student] context."

  + **Enhances the quality of parent-teacher conferences:** Parents reported that the two-way conversation prompted by the tool was helpful; while most did not receive it in advance of the conference, they found the flow provided detailed information and example data to help them understand their child's progress.

  + **Pushes thinking around improved systems:** They were able to customize the tool to create other support structures that aligned with the schools' efforts around creating end of year parent-teacher conference guidelines for teachers. Also supported information sharing across teachers as students transitioned into new grades with new teachers.

Go Beyond Grades Ad Campaign

- LH conducted custom surveys among parents of students in public schools in Boston, Chicago, Houston, New York City, Sacramento County and Washington, DC.

  + They found that parents who recalled Go Beyond Grades ads were much more likely to take action, such as asking their child's teacher if their child is on grade level or having a conversation with their child's teachers to learn what areas their child may need to improve.

  + Some cities have seen a decrease in parental perception that their child is performing above grade level, based on this campaign.

  + LH reports that significant numbers of parents recall the campaign for Go Beyond Grades, predominantly on social media. Parents reported feeling informed, surprised and curious based on the campaign.

CHALLENGES

Pilot of Family Engagement Resources

- While LH' parent-teacher planning tool has been highly effective as a parent-teacher protocol to engage with teachers, they did find that execution and implementation fidelity requires school leadership buy-in and training for teachers. One significant challenge was covid-related restrictions and bandwidth issues that hindered teacher training on the tool.

Go Beyond Grades Ad Campaign

- LH notes that in order to campaign in a given city, they need to be invited into the city. This often means their work progresses one city at a time.

LESSONS LEARNED

Pilot of Family Engagement Resources

- Training and Time is Key. Even with a school that prioritizes family engagement, ongoing professional development and training around some of the most challenging aspects of parent-teacher communications is important.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: May 2020 - Dec 2021

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: Piloted in Washington, D.C.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://bealearninghero.org

https://gobeyondgrades.org/

STATE COLLECTIVE FOCUSED ON INSTRUCTIONALLY RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS IN SCIENCE

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
Research. Action. Impact.

A major challenge with the current assessment system is the lack of high-quality assessment tasks that signal, measure, and incentivize the deeper learning that educators, leaders, and families are calling for and expect for their young people. This is true across subject areas, but has been particularly pressing in science, given the widespread adoption of science standards that center authentic engagement in "doing science" as the way students learn and demonstrate progress.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Learning Policy Institute (LPI) to supports states in building and prototyping new, instructionally relevant assessment systems in science. These assessment systems are responsive to state needs with regard to design (e.g., could be a modification to the summative assessment, include interim assessment components, engage a through-year design, etc), but share some common features:

1. They include high-quality curriculum-anchored performance assessments that center authentic scientific sensemaking along with other deeper learning and 21st century skills, such as collaboration and problem-solving, that are embedded in state science standards.

2. They are designed to be used coherently with curriculum, including high-quality instructional materials like OpenSciEd (OSE).

3. They are intended to, over time, make a meaningful change to a state's science assessment system, including scores on the federally-mandated state assessment.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Common features of instructionally relevant

(instructionally impactful) large-scale systems.

+ As states and partners have undertaken new assessment systems, some common design principles for instructionally relevant assessment systems have emerged.

+ Instructionally relevant assessment systems are intentionally designed to be:

  » **Authentic.** Assessments should highlight and center the key concepts, modes of inquiry, and ways of learning in the discipline.

  » **Curriculum-anchored.** Assessments are designed such that high-quality curriculum better prepares students for success on the assessment, the assessment incentivizes the adoption and use of high-quality curriculum materials, and the assessment supports implementation of high-quality materials

  » **Educative.** Assessments build educator and student understanding of and experience with high-quality teaching and learning in the discipline.

  » **Developmental and Asset-oriented.** Assessments recognize what students do know, can do, and surface progress relative to students' own performance and along appropriate learning progressions

  » **Reflective of and responsive to learners.** Assessments follow principles of universal design and cultural responsiveness to ensure each learner is supported in making their thinking visible.

  » **Useful for informing decisions that impact instruction.** Assessments are designed to

produce relevant information at appropriate times to support decision-making

+ While the state work supported through this grant focuses on science, the design principles reflect conversations and evidence across disciplines.

- State models:

  + States have been exploring multiple models for assessment system design. Generally, states are favoring models that focus on enabling and including classroom-based performance tasks as a way to balance federal policy and capacity constraints with systems that incentivize high-quality instructional materials in science and improve performance on the summative assessment.

  + Models that are emerging:

    » Model 1: "Bridging" state summative assessments with high-quality instructional materials like OSE using curriculum-embedded performance tasks that are reflective of effective classroom practice and include key elements of the summative (e.g., common phenomena or scenarios, classroom tasks produce investigations or data that students interrogate on the summative, classroom tasks and summative use common design elements like simulations)

    » Model 2: Through-year assessments that use tasks aligned with (or directly from) OSE scope and sequence

    » Model 3: Reducing the footprint of the on-demand state summative assessment substantially, with state-provided support for classroom performance assessments that are coordinated and made available centrally by the state, and are

bundled with state-provided curriculum-based professional learning.

- Policy support. As LPI has worked with states and conducted state and federal policy analyses, several recommendations have emerged, including for updating the federal peer review process, improving federal innovative assessment initiatives (e.g., Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority), and guidance for funding and capacity support.

CHALLENGES

- The state interactions with the federal approval process for state assessment systems poses barriers to innovation. In particular, common interpretations (or expected interpretations) of the peer review criteria around depth and breadth of standards representation, expectations for test security and standardization, and expectations for reporting and subscores pose challenges for adopting and implementing new assessment systems.

- The limited availability of assessment developers/vendors and technical assistance partners who can provide sustained, systemic support is a challenge for moving toward systems that can be implemented and scaled over time.

LESSONS LEARNED

- States are understandably wary of pursuing changes to their large-scale assessment systems without signals from USED that their new systems will be supported.

- Authentic engagement with teachers and administrators is crucial for creating demand, overcoming skepticism, and ensuring the adoption of new assessment systems.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
STATE COLLECTIVE FOCUSED ON INSTRUCTIONALLY RELEVANT ASSESSMENTS IN SCIENCE

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE
Research. Action. Impact.

- There are two critical features of innovative, instructionally relevant assessments: coherence and value-add.

  + Innovations must make assessments **coherent with high-quality instruction**. In other words, assessments should not be experienced by teachers, leaders, students, or families as encouraging actions that are at odds with what research tells us about meaningful learning in the discipline.

  + Innovations must position assessments to clearly provide information that is a s**ubstantial value-add over information already provided through other elements of the system**. If educators, and teachers in particular, see a substantial value-add in the assessment over information that they are already getting from curriculum-embedded and other local assessments, then they are willing to make a different set of tradeoffs. This includes putting in the work for more robust, deeper learning assessments.

- Like students, teachers are a heterogeneous group with dynamic needs depending on their own growth toward mastery of their craft. Assessment systems that are designed to be instructionally relevant must attend to this diversity, and design for a wide range of users and needs.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2021 - 2025

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/

- *Publications:*

  + *Developing Assessment Systems that Support Teaching and Learning: Recommendations for Federal Support*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

ORGANIZATIONAL
PROFILES
M–S

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

MASTERY TRANSCRIPT CONSORTIUM
UTA/MTC DEMONSTRATION SITE

MASTERY TRANSCRIPT CONSORTIUM

State accountability systems often lack the infrastructure to scale competency-based assessments, particularly in terms of technical knowledge (e.g., how to read and compare these assessments) and their compatibility with institutes of higher education (IHEs). Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC) is addressing both the technical component and the systems-level alignment to IHEs in order to implement competency-based assessments in Utah.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Mastery Transcript Consortium (MTC) piloted with a cohort of school districts to create a personalized competency-based assessment system and develop a state-systems framework to establish system alignment and coherence among educational institutions and coherence in the state to guide effective implementation of the master learning records (MLRs). Specifically, this grant developed MLRs for students, worked with IHEs to make MLRs a valid alternative for college admission and provided training to educators and IHEs alike to use mastery transcripts and understand competency-based learning.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Four of the seven pilot schools participating in Spring 2023 have continued to issue MLRs in Fall 2023, and they have expanded the number of records issued to a larger group of learners.

- For SY23-24, 43 pilot school learners will be issued a MLR.

CHALLENGES

- The Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) stepped back from their interest in personalized, competency-based learning, which meant that MTC was forced to cultivate their relationships and partnerships with IHEs themselves.

- There needs to be a readiness for change at the school level. Without that appetite, engaging schools is challenging.

LESSONS LEARNED

- When students are given greater agency to use MLRs, their use scales more quickly than in a teacher-driven process.

- Stipends are key to compensate and incentivize educators to implement MLRs, as it is a time-intensive process.
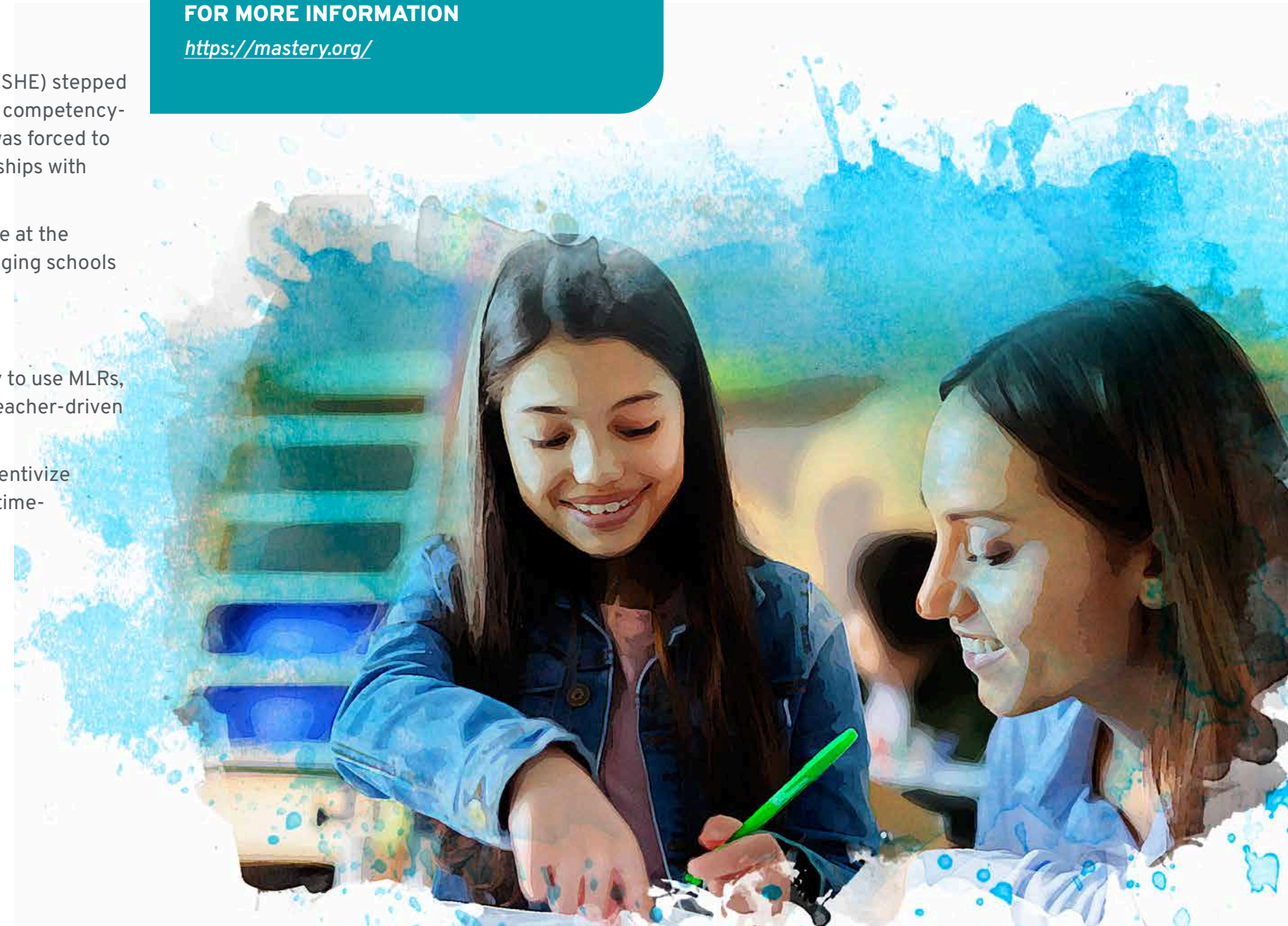
FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Nov 2022 - Nov 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: Utah

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://mastery.org/

MIGRATION POLICY INSTITUTE
REFINING STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS FOR ENGLISH LEARNER SUCCESS

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) is an independent, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to improve immigration and integration policies through authoritative research and analysis, opportunities for learning and dialogue, and the development of new ideas to address complex policy questions. The Institute is guided by the belief that countries need to have sensible, well thought-out immigration and integration policies in order to ensure the best outcomes for both immigrants and receiving communities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Assessment and accountability are major areas of focus for MPI's work in K-12 education. More specifically, MPI centers its work on immigrant-background students and English learners (ELs). Issues explored in the past five years related to assessment and accountability include analyses of state ESSA plans for EL accountability, EL subgroup definitions used in ESSA reporting, native language assessments, the impact of 4-year graduation rate indicators on ELs, opportunity-to-learn indicators, communication with families of ELs around assessments, and refining state accountability systems for more nuanced understandings of EL student outcomes.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

As part of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (NCIIP), MPI's K-12 team founded and facilitates convenings of the National Partnership to Improve PreK-12 Success for Immigrant Children and Youth. Currently, there are seven state-level immigrant- and EL-focused organizations that partner with MPI: Californians Together (CA), Conexión Americas (TN),

Intercultural Development Research Association (TX), Latino Community Fund (GA), Latino Policy Forum (IL), Minnesota Education Equity Partnership (MN), and the New York Immigration Coalition (NY). MPI holds monthly meetings with partners to share information relevant to the field and to gain insight on issues and challenges impacting immigrant-background students, ELs, and their families. Partners also contribute to MPI projects by assisting MPI researchers with local-level focus groups, surveys, and/or interviews. MPI also provides policy analysis, research, and other technical assistance to support partners' own policy initiatives.

In addition, MPI's K-12 staff also participate in a variety of national networks and convenings, including the Council of Chief State School Officers Assessment Advisory Committee, National EL Roundtable, National Association of English Learner Program Administrators, and the Rapid Response Desk. MPI is also participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

Together, MPI's research, policy analysis, and ongoing stakeholder engagement focused on assessment and accountability indicate agreement across EL stakeholder groups that there are needs for (1) clearly defined EL subgroups; (2) improved assessment reporting and communication for families and communities; (3) improved content assessments for ELs; (4) research on effective tools and practices for assessing young ELs (PreK-2); and (5) refined accountability systems for more nuanced understandings of EL student outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below is a sample of policy recommendations from MPI publications over the past five years:

- Increasing a state's maximum age of enrollment in free, public education could help expand older immigrant newcomers' access to a standard high school diploma.

- Research has shown that ELs are systematically underenrolled in advanced coursework and overenrolled in remedial courses. States can set policies requiring schools to ensure ELs are not automatically placed in low-level coursework solely due to their English proficiency level.

- As an issue of national concern, the U.S. Department of Education's Institute for Education Sciences could make EL test accommodations and native language assessments a priority for its research funding. Private funders whose interests include equity and ESSA might also consider this topic relevant.

- Requiring states to include one or more program quality indicators in their accountability system that are flexible enough to accommodate diverse contexts but provide critical information to support decision-making about resources, policies and instruction.

- Creating pilot programs and competitive grants to support states' creation of new ways to analyze academic outcomes using more nuanced statistical models that include ELP.

- Supporting states' development of enhanced data systems to allow deeper data analysis and connection of program quality and outcome data.

- Providing guidance for states on school improvement strategies for ELs that could be used to respond to more nuanced accountability measures for ELs.

- Creating common definitions of EL subgroups in order to allow disaggregation of student outcome data and comparison of these data across contexts in order to improve understanding of student needs and appropriate targeting of school improvement responses.

- Encouraging states that do not currently use extended-year graduation rates in their accountability calculations to investigate whether their exclusion disproportionately disadvantages schools serving large numbers of ELs.

FUTURE WORK

MPI's K-12 team will be exploring the following issues in the next year:

- Newcomer definitions
- PreK-2 assessment policies and practices for young ELs

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Publications
  + *Migration Policy Institute | migrationpolicy.org*
  + *Refining State Accountability Systems*
  + *Impact of Key State High School Policies*
  + *Native Language Assessments for K-12*
  + *English Learner Policies under ESSA*
- Contact information
  + Delia Pompa, Senior Fellow *dpompa@migrationpolicy.org*
  + Lorena Mancilla, Associate Director *lmancilla@migrationpolicy.org*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

MIT BLUEPRINT LABS
EXPLORING NON-TEST SCORE MEASURES OF STUDENT SUCCESS

Blueprint Labs

While the field would like to use new, more holistic measures of student learning (school climate, behavioral skills, GPA, on-time grade progression, and credits), limited evidence links many of these new measures to long-term student success at scale. MIT Blueprint Labs (MBL) is working to understand the extent to which these new measures can be used to better predict student success "above and beyond" existing test score measures.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

MIT Blueprint Labs (MBL) conducted research to better understand non-test score measures of student success. MBL aims to answer the following research questions:

- What non-test score measures causally predict student achievement, including students' long-term success?

- Do non-test measures predict student success better than test score measures? Do "effective" schools as rated by test and non-test measures differ?

- How do schools compare on non-test score measures?

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Analysis on this project still in progress.

- MBL's past work examined connections between school quality measures and student demographics (e.g., race and income). Findings from past work include:

  + Achievement levels are strongly correlated with race, while progress ratings are much less so.

  + School causal effects on student achievement are uncorrelated with race in NYC and Denver.

- Progress ratings predict school quality much more accurately than levels ratings.

- We can create a new measure that eliminates the correlation with race and performs as well or better than progress measures: balanced progress.

CHALLENGES

- Finding new research partners

  + Finding partners who are a match in opportunity, interests, relevance, and feasibility remains a challenge.

- Implementation and communication

  + Figuring out how to best communicate multiple measures to families and other stakeholders and how to effectively communicate somewhat complicated statistical techniques to families and other stakeholders remains a challenge.

LESSONS LEARNED

- What to do differently:

  + Prioritize practicality and scale early

    » Consider balanced levels ratings

- Consider political barriers faced by partners to participate in this research

- Oftentimes, an inherent tension between research's time lags and practitioners' urgent needs

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- It's important to think about what a rating evaluates: a school or its students' backgrounds?

- Based on MBL's findings in NYC and Denver, levels are highly biased, progress is better in accuracy and equity.

- Balanced Progress offers a way to improve on both accuracy and equity at the same time (at least in NYC and Denver).

- Questions unanswered:

  + How do these findings generalize to other regions?

  + Are these findings similar to non-test score measures? (our current project!)

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: July 2023 - June 2026

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: New York City, planning to expand to other cities

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://blueprintlabs.mit.edu/

- Publications:

  + Race and the Mismeasure of School Quality: *paper* & *policy brief*

- Contact Information:

  + Talia Gerstle, *tgerstle@mit.edu*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES
MEASURING AND MOBILIZING FOR SUCCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY; SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL ADVOCACY AND COALITION BUILDING HIGHLIGHTING DISABILITY AND INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES

National Center for Learning Disabilities

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) is a non-profit organization focused on building community, sharing resources and shaping policy to help individuals with learning and attention issues. NCLD focuses on fueling the disability rights movement, investing in bright futures, championing research and understanding and supporting equitable policies.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) led a number of projects, including:

- **Measuring and Mobilizing for Success in the 21st Century**

  + Inclusive, Innovative Assessments for Students With Learning Disabilities - In January 2023, NCLD published a report on statewide summative assessments based on surveys and focus groups with educators, caregivers, and students to understand their perceptions toward statewide summative assessments. In addition, NCLD interviewed various assessment and disability rights experts to identify trends in innovative assessments as well as the benefits and risks for all learners — especially students with disabilities.

  + Planning Your Future: A Guide to Transition - In August 2022, NCLD developed and published a suite of resources specifically for transition-aged students or young adults based on feedback from the community. This go-at-your-own pace guide enables students to learn about the education and civil rights laws that protect them in K-12, higher education, and workforce settings, how to be a strong self-advocate during transition planning, and opportunities for additional support that may be available to them. Throughout the guide, there are additional resources available to download to help students explore and reflect on the opportunities available to them.

- **Support for Federal Advocacy and Coalition Building Highlighting Disability and Intersectional Issues**

  + NCLD supports policies that create responsive, supportive systems and transform mindsets to dismantle the impact of ableism and racism and 2) maintain needed civil and disability rights.

    » To achieve this goal, NCLD builds coalitions of new champions, manages policy and federal coalitions, and develops new communications messaging.

    » NCLD's Director of Policy and Advocacy is a co-chair of the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Education Taskforce, a Board Member of the Title IV-Part A Coalition, and a representative for the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. In addition, NCLD's Policy Manager is a co-chair of the IDEA Full Funding coalition, a board member of the Committee for Education Funding (CEF), and a co-chair of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE). The policy and advocacy team are also active members in eight other coalitions ensuring disability rights and civil rights remain at the forefront of these issues.

    » NCLD's CEO sits on the Gordon Commission Study Group, whose focus on Measurement and Assessment System Innovation is key to a systems change approach for students with disabilities. She and NCLD staff also participate in the PIE Network (Policy Innovators in Education) with a focus on K12 assessment and accountability systems.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- **Measuring and Mobilizing for Success in the 21st Century**

  + NCLD interviewed 39 industry experts and 12 additional experts for intersectional focus including SEARAC, UnidosUS, National Urban League, COPAA, NDRN, Turnaround for Children, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, and CASEL. We also synthesized more than 60 articles to develop seven principles to support complex learners. Our later interviews focused on how implementation of social-emotional learning and science of learning initiatives can best account for the diverse needs of students with disabilities, including those who are also Black, English language learners, and/or identify with other key systematically marginalized groups in addition to their disability. We developed a set of "7 Principles for Serving Students With Disabilities and Intersectional Identities Through Social-Emotional Learning Approaches."

  + NCLD conducted 14 interviews with experts/ organizations on the topic of "acceleration". In addition, we have hosted two focus groups made up of experts from NCLD's Professional Advisory Board and NCLD's Policy Committee to discuss acceleration and other issues related to the academic implications of COVID-19. Further, NCLD hosted a meeting with 10 disability partners to discuss acceleration and opportunities in light of COVID-19. NCLD produced a report highlighting 4 models of acceleration and included recommendations about how to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Finally, NCLD and 8 partners also developed a set of recommendations for how COVID-19 learning recovery efforts can be inclusive of students with disabilities.

- **NCLD is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network**, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- **Measuring and Mobilizing for Success in the 21st Century**

  + COVID-19

    » The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has greatly amplified existing inequities in the education system for students with disabilities, students of color, and other systematically marginalized populations.

    » COVID-19 impacted how NCLD could interact with their audiences. NCLD has learned that we can reach more of their audience when engaging with our stakeholders in various formats, such as with online resources.

Profile continues on next page ➔

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

NATIONAL CENTER FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES

MEASURING AND MOBILIZING FOR SUCCESS IN THE 21ST CENTURY; SUPPORT FOR FEDERAL ADVOCACY AND COALITION BUILDING HIGHLIGHTING DISABILITY AND INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES

National Center for Learning Disabilities

» The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as post-COVID academic recovery, had significant implications for NCLD's assessments and accountability work in 2022 (culminating in the 2023 publication).

+ Assessments/Accountability

  » NCLD conducted a survey of caregivers and educators of students with disabilities. The survey found that:

    ◦ 78% of caregivers reported believing that the federal government should request that states administer assessments at least once per year.

    ◦ 73% of caregivers "agree" or "somewhat agree" that these assessments provide important information to compare their child's performance in school.

    ◦ Among caregivers, 66% reported that these assessments are "extremely important" or "mostly important" to measure student success, while only 27% of educators considered the same.

• Support for Federal Advocacy and Coalition Building Highlighting Disability and Intersectional Issues

  + NCLD worked closely with All4Ed, Education Reform Now, National Urban League, ET and UnidosUS to provide collective feedback to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) on their draft of an FAQ document around accountability systems. In response, ED issued a final FAQ document that included many of our recommendations. In particular, the final document provided information on alternative assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

+ Unlocking Futures: Youth with Learning Disabilities and the Juvenile Justice System - NCLD published a report called "Unlocking Futures: You with Learning Disabilities and the Juvenile Justice System" in December 2022. In it, we highlight that there are nearly 240,000 instances of juvenile detention in the US every year. It is estimated that 60%-75% of those within the system have a disability. This report sheds light on the many ways our juvenile justice system fails youth with disabilities and concludes with policy recommendations to improve these issues moving forward. NCLD's goal is for this report to be the foundation of our future work to support youth with disabilities impacted by the juvenile legal system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Measuring and Mobilizing for Success in the 21st Century

  + COVID has underscored the need for flexible funding. Organizations need to be adaptable and be able to respond to needs as they arrive.

  + We outline in our report "Inclusive, Innovative Assessments for Students With Learning Disabilities" we outline the following actions:

    » The federal government should:

      ◦ Preserve requirements that states must develop and administer assessment systems to allow families, educators, and policymakers to compare both individual students and subgroups of students to grade-level performance targets.

      ◦ Publish guidance or provide technical assistance to ensure that states and districts provide equitable access to standardized assessments, including the necessity of accommodations

      ◦ Allocate additional funds toward assessment innovation, and prioritize development and research on models that apply to subgroups traditionally excluded from standardized assessment systems.

      ◦ Incentivize cross-state, district, and test provider collaboration to drive innovation in assessments at scale

    » States and districts should:

      ◦ Allocate sufficient funding to drive innovative assessment systems.

      ◦ Bring together stakeholders to refine assessment systems and make them more accessible and inclusive

      ◦ Apply the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to assessments of all kinds.

      ◦ Refine how assessment results are communicated and shared with families and educators.

• Support for Federal Advocacy and Coalition Building Highlighting Disability and Intersectional Issues

  + Continued focus on including representation from the disability community in different coalitions and advocacy efforts.

FUTURE WORK

• In addition to their continued focus on federal advocacy, NCLD will also build out a robust state policy program by:

+ Creating model legislation for advocates to use across the country;

+ Tracking policies at the state level such as equitable assessment and accountability systems, higher education accommodations, early screening for learning difficulties, AI and disability-related issues, and private school vouchers;

+ Supporting young adults and other advocates on state-level issues aligned to NCLD's policy priorities; and

+ Elevating the needs of individuals with LD by leveraging a broad reach and subject matter expertise

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.ncld.org/

• Publications

  + *Inclusive, Innovative Assessments for Students with Learning Disabilities*

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A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE & UNIDOS US
PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

National Urban League

UNIDOS US
STRONGER COMMUNITIES. STRONGER AMERICA.

The National Urban League (NUL) is a historic civil rights organization dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underserved urban communities. The National Urban League has 92 affiliates serving 300 communities in 37 states and the District of Columbia, providing direct services that impact and improve the lives of more than two million people nationwide. NUL's mission is to help African-Americans and others in underserved communities achieve their highest true social parity, economic self- reliance, power and civil rights. The League promotes economic empowerment through education and job training, housing and community development, workforce development, entrepreneurship, health and quality of life.

UnidosUS, previously known as NCLR (National Council of La Raza) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves as the nation's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization. Through their unique combination of expert research, advocacy programs,and an Affiliate Network of nearly 300 community-based organizations across the United States and Puerto Rico, UnidosUS simultaneously challenges the social, economic, and political barriers that affect Latinos at the national and local levels. UnidosUS wants to see a strong America where economic, political, and social advancement is a reality for all Latinos, where all Hispanics thrive and our community's contributions are recognized.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

UnidosUS (UUS) and the National Urban League (NUL) launched and co-chaired a national civil rights coalition focused on informing the federal policy debate on the importance of assessments and accountability through research, education and awareness. Phase I of this work is complete, and NUL and UUS are engaged in Phase II of this work. Phase I resulted in a series of findings (see final report) and other collateral that will be used to guide future conversations with stakeholders and with civil rights & education equity leaders. Phase 2 will focus on 1) continuing conversations with stakeholders to build awareness of the issue and potential solutions via state-level convenings and virtual conversations and 2) the creation of equity principles and guidelines and a clear policy agenda to guide our advocacy in 2025.

- Areas of Focus & Inquiry - Assessment
  + Format (end of year v. interim/periodic assessments)
  + Culturally responsive assessments
  + Assessments for Multilingual learners
- Areas of Focus & Inquiry - Accountability
  + Rethinking accountability - who is being held accountable and how - reciprocal accountability. It can't just be schools, but how are states being held accountable for ensuring that struggling learners and educators are adequately supported and making meaningful improvements
  + Federal role in accountability - Notable changes from NCLB to ESSA that may have weakened oversight; how should the federal government play a role in accountability?
  + Growth to proficiency

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- UUS and NUL engaged a variety of stakeholders in two main ways: 1) focus groups and interviews and 2) a series of close-door roundtable discussions. The former included stakeholders such as: Black and brown students, parents and guardians, teachers, youth development staff and leaders, high school and college admissions counselors, assessment directors, state board of education members, African-American researchers, education equity leaders and civil rights leaders. The latter included stakeholders such as experts and leaders with diverse backgrounds and perspectives representing the civil rights and education equity community. Across all of these methods, UnidosUS and NUL engaged over 250 individuals. Page 8 of the final report provides more detail about the people who participated in the listening sessions and interviews. Listening sessions and interviews were primarily virtual, with each running for approximately an hour.

- NUL and UUS are participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

Stakeholders identified a number of problems with the current assessment and accountability systems. These issues were shared across multiple stakeholder groups.

- Recurring themes about assessments
  + There is bias in state standardized testing. These tests measure knowledge related to White-American culture. They also reflect a student's ability to effectively take those tests, rather than measuring a student's mastery of the material. These tests also do not adequately account for learning differences or accommodate students with learning disabilities.
  + There is the potential for an unfair impact on student opportunity based on these narrow and biased state standardized tests. For example, many districts require certain scores on state tests to matriculate into AP courses or dual enrollment programs, effectively barring many Black and Latino students from participating.
  + There is a negative psychological impact of assessments and state standardized tests on students. These tests often cause stress and anxiety.
  + There is a weak and uneven understanding of the role and use of standardized state tests. There is limited communication and a lack of clarity from schools and districts about the purpose and use of the test's results.
- Recurring themes about accountability systems
  + There is an overreliance on state standardized test results as the driver of change. Stakeholders note a need for additional assessment and measures to determine what works in a school or a district.
  + Inadequate accountability measures negatively impact teachers and instruction. Educators report a feeling of pressure to raise their students' scores on tests, which leads to their inability to be creative, teach other topics or address other student needs. State standardized tests also often create distance from the curriculum, because teachers are teaching to the content of the test.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE & UNIDOS US
PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF ASSESSMENTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

National Urban League

UNIDOS US — STRONGER COMMUNITIES. STRONGER AMERICA.

» Teachers are leaving the profession because of the amount of time spent on assessments and pressure they receive about state standardized tests.

+ Resources are not directed where they are needed most. In theory, low-performing schools should receive state funds to make changes and improve scores. However, stakeholders report that this is often not the case.

While stakeholders were largely aligned on the above problems with state assessment and accountability systems, this stakeholder engagement resulted in two main areas of divergence.

• No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

+ Stakeholders were evenly split when asked if NCLB was successful. Stakeholders noted that NCLB helped narrow state standardized assessment outcomes and that NCLB led to a "teach to the test" culture and prescriptive school improvement identification and intervention.

• Local control

+ Stakeholders discussed local control as both a lever for equity and a practice that perpetuates oppression and marginalization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of all stakeholder engagements, UnidosUS and NUL make four recommendations to assessment and accountability systems.

• Our education system(s) should consistently implement broadened definitions of success

• Our education indicators and assessments, no matter the setting, should be grounded in continuous improvement and accountability

• Our systems of support should be strengthened to enhance shared accountability that centers equity and promotes transparency and continuous, targeted improvement

• Historically marginalized communities, families and youth should have a greater voice and ownership in assessment and accountability

FUTURE WORK

The above work represents Phase 1 of this project. Phase 2 of the work will continue to center the voices of young people, their families and communities, educators, and youth development workers— particularly those from historically excluded groups. To do so, NUL and UUS will host state convenings to learn from state contexts, elevate tensions and solutions and collaborate toward a shared vision of assessment and accountability policy that enhances educational experiences and outcomes for our youth.

• UUS and NUL held a convening in April of 2024 titled Broadening Perspectives in California: Shaping the Future of Assessment and Accountability to gather young people, their families and communities, educators and more to tackle critical issues in education. Together, they explored strategies to enhance learning experiences and outcomes for underserved students.

• In June they held the second of their state convenings in Cleveland, Ohio.

• The third state convening will be in the fall of 2024, location and date TBD

NUL and UUS will also be convening a small group of civil rights organizations to meet monthly to craft their equity principles and guidelines and assist in developing their policy agenda. These will begin late Spring/Early Summer 2024.

FAST FACTS
Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://nul.org/

https://unidosus.org/

• Publications

+ The Future of Assessment and Accountability Project

» *2022 Phase 1: The Final Report*

» *Animated Video Series w/ actual quotes from listening sessions*

» *2022 Convening Recording*

» *w/ Spanish subtitles*

• Contact Information

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NEW MERIDIAN
THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENTS

New Meridian

Educators, administrators, and students have been calling for statewide assessments that better align with classroom curriculum; provide timely, actionable feedback; capture fuller, fairer portraits of student learning; and cause less stress for students.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

New Meridian (NM) has led the following efforts:

- Support the design, development, prototyping and piloting of through-year assessments for elementary and middle school ELA and math in Montana and Louisiana.

- Partner with people most proximate to the problem (PPP) to develop test items, forms, score reports, and other product features. Continue to solicit stakeholder feedback via focus groups and empathy interviews to refine designs throughout the project.

- Pilot math and ELA assessments in two grades in several districts over the 2022-23 school year. Pilot assessments in additional grades in an expanded group of states and districts across the 2023-24 school year. Prepare for statewide operation in the 2024-25 school year.

- Validate through-years' use cases for formative classroom assessment and comparable summative assessment purposes through user research and psychometric analysis.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- **Pilot Results:** During the 2022-2023 school year, NM worked with Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to pilot math and ELA through-year assessments in fifth and seventh grade, and with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) to pilot math through-years in fifth and seventh grade. In the 2023-24 school year, NM expanded to piloting math and ELA in grades three through eight in Montana and piloting math in grades three, five, six, and seven in Louisiana. Montana is implementing NM's through-year assessments statewide in the current 2024-25 school year. Louisiana is also continuing its pilot of math.

- **Research Findings:** User research shows the success of NM's assessments in the pilot phases. Educators' responses to post-administration surveys, along with their comments during open feedback forums, indicate that most educators have had positive experiences administering the testlets. The alignment of testlets to curriculum schedules has gone smoothly in all states, with only a handful of districts last school year needing to change their testlet schedules from the sequences that they had designed or that NM had recommended. Students have found testlets aligned to instruction more accessible and better measures of learning. In addition, students and educators report reduced testing anxiety from NM's through-years, compared to traditional end-of-year summatives. Through ongoing user research, stakeholders have provided valuable feedback and influenced NM's design decisions. For example, educators encouraged NM to include information in reports on common misconceptions that students demonstrated in each math testlet, which will help educators group students for targeted interventions.

CHALLENGES

- **District Use of Interims:** While NM's through-years are intended to replace both traditional summative and interim assessments, the team has found that some pilot districts are using interims in addition to the through-year assessments. This poses a problem because it increases total testing time for students.

  + **Mitigations:** Working with its state partners, NM is holding regular feedback sessions with districts to understand how it can support them in through-year implementation. NM's goal is to raise districts' confidence in using the assessments to support instructional decision-making, so they will no longer feel the need to rely on interims. In addition, as NM refines test designs, it is gathering timing data to ensure that it optimizes the time it takes to administer and complete the testlets. The organization also continues to engage stakeholders through focus groups and empathy interviews to get their feedback and ideas for report designs and other features. Through this work, NM can deliver assessments that successfully meet the needs of both summatives and interims.

- **Federal Peer Review Process:** To be used for federal accountability purposes under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), statewide assessments must pass federal peer review by the U.S. Department of Education. To date, no fully operational through-year assessment systems have undergone federal peer review. This may pose a risk as states, like Montana, move to implement NM's through-years statewide as replacements for traditional end-of-year summatives. Because of the novelty of through-year assessment for federal peer reviewers, NM may need to conduct and submit additional analyses that it did not originally anticipate.

  + **Mitigations:** As it develops and pilots its through-year assessments, NM has been collecting extensive technical documentation, which will be useful for analyses to include in Montana's federal peer review submission in December 2025. The technical advisory committees (TACs) for NM and its state partners are also providing guidance in preparing for federal peer review submission; Dr. Scott Marion, the head facilitator of NM's TAC, is a nationally recognized expert on this process.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Through-Year Popularity:** As a whole, educators deeply value the reporting from NM's through-years and the overall vision of an assessment that tests content as it is taught throughout the year. In recent user research, educators and administrators told NM they appreciate how its assessments can:

  » Help administrators identify schools and districts needing additional support.

  » Paint a more holistic picture of students than traditional summative assessments.

  » Enable early interventions for struggling students.

  » Help educators lead group instruction.

  » Decrease student stress during assessments.

  » Encourage students' academic growth.

- **Communicating Testing Time:** NM learned that the messaging on testing time must be clear and thoughtful. Without context, the same values can be interpreted differently. The total amount of time it takes a student to start the test and finish it is not inclusive of all the administration time that is involved (logging in, organizing students, etc.). It is important for assessment developers and state partners to present administration timing estimates that include this set-up time, to present a clear picture for stakeholders. NM conducted special item timing

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

NEW MERIDIAN
THROUGH-YEAR ASSESSMENTS

New Meridian

studies in summer 2023 to provide more specific timing recommendations to its state partners, and the organization is continuing to gather timing data throughout this year's pilots.

- **Curriculum Alignment Tool:** Stakeholder feedback prompted NM to accelerate the development of a scheduler tool to help stakeholders align testlets to local scopes and sequences. With this online tool, which launched in the current 2024-25 school year, school and district leaders can input the curriculum for a particular grade and subject. The testlet scheduler tool then recommends a customized schedule of testlets for the school year, in alignment with the user's local scope and sequence. Districts, schools, and educators make the final determination on the testlet schedule after receiving this recommendation. The scheduler tool goes a long way in helping through-year assessments deliver on the promise of testing students on material soon after they have learned it.

- **Outreach for User Feedback:** NM faced difficulty in recruiting students and parents for empathy interviews. Recruitment efforts by the states, social media marketing, direct compensation, and contact with parent/student groups yielded minimal leads for students and parents that are willing to talk about their experiences with assessments. NM has identified several solutions to bolster local recruitment efforts moving forward. However, in hindsight, one aspect New Meridan notes that it would have approached differently is the geographic focus of recruitment.

The organization notes that it would have helped to recruit individuals from both within and outside states participating in the pilots, to build a larger pool of eligible participants for user feedback.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- **Broader Implications:** NM is meeting an emerging need for personalized, competency-based learning that is disrupting the state summative assessment market. By signing on to implement NM's through-year assessments statewide next year, Montana is leading the national transition to more instructionally useful forms of testing. The U.S. Education Department's acceptance of Montana's Field-Test Flexibility Waiver for NM's through-year assessments signals the department's appetite for innovation, which could encourage other states to consider piloting through-years.

Unanswered Questions: A critical question for NM and the assessment field to address regards the effects of through-year assessment on student learning. Will through-years cause the positive effects on student outcomes that we hope for? NM aims to launch a formal research study that will evaluate how and to what extent its through-years can assist educators in adjusting instruction and in promoting students' academic outcomes, including how its assessments impact student academic performance. With funding from Carnegie Mellon University and the Walton Family Foundation, the organization recently hired a post-doctorate research fellow to lead this important work.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Aug 2022 - March 2024 (CZI gave us a no-cost extension from the originl end date of July 2023.)

Project Status: In progress

Geographies: Montana and Louisiana

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://newmeridiancorp.org/

- Publications:
  + *Understanding Through-Year Assessment: What Everyone Should Know*
- Contact Information:
  + *info@newmeridiancorp.org*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

STANFORD D.SCHOOL K12 LAB
SUPPORTING SCHOOL COMMUNITIES TOWARD EQUITABLE SYSTEMIC CHANGE

d.**K12 LAB**

It is well known that there are persistent challenges and opportunity gaps in K12 schools. The Stanford d.school's K12 Lab (SDS) aims to close opportunity gaps in elementary and secondary education by designing new, more equitable models and sharing design approaches with students and educators.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Stanford d.school K12 Lab explored a more community-based approach to design in schools. The project supported the creation of resources and tools, collected in the Positive Deviance for Educators Toolkit, to give a range of pathways to introduce educators and school communities to "positive deviance" — an asset-focused approach to using data, including assessment data, to help solve intractable problems.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Bright spots exist in our schools, and are able to be uncovered via the "positive deviance" process.
- This process can lead to a mindset shift in how educators and students approach problem-solving.
- It is freeing to shift from a deficit mindset to an asset-based mindset.
- Positive deviance can advance equity in schools.
- This process works in myriad contexts - language, geography, and design experience is not a barrier.

CHALLENGES

SDS's previous grant's outcome was a detailed *72-page Positive Deviance Toolkit for Educators*. While this is an excellent resource, their design research showed that there was a need for real-time training and support to ensure teams were confident in the process before launching the work school-wide. Also, there was a need for more flexible starting points in the busy life of schools. Thus, they created *seekingbrightspots.com* and an introductory video to provide easy ways to practice the concepts, activities, and process of positive deviance prior to launching into the work of the complete Toolkit.

LESSONS LEARNED

- It's infectious!
  + Whether through a brief engagement or multi-day experience, the lens shift to finding and elevating authentic bright spots of successful practice is appealing, intuitive, and leaves participants wanting to apply it.
- Content/Messaging
  + SDS finds that it still needs to hone its message and stories to highlight impact and efficacy of the Positive Deviance Toolkit.
- Positioning for impact
  + As seen in the experience of end users, this work is well-positioned at the district or organizational level. The access to (and expertise in) data and ability to focus on system improvement makes it a natural fit.

- Bright spots and community building
  + The process has also led to an important mindset shift that elevating what's working and building from there can actually change (for the better) the way the central office interacts with school sites.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

Through the exploration and use of the positive deviance approach for educators, SDS would like practitioners to learn that:

- School communities, including families and students, hold valuable expertise that can help to solve our biggest challenges if we are willing to look and listen.
- Clear processes and tools can support school communities in using their data to see their school in an asset-focused way and elevate practices that are already working locally, and are therefore more likely to scale.
- Shifting mindsets is a key element of positive deviance, and educators can take steps to make this shift through small, school-based activities.
- Both a lever and an outcome of this process is the building of meaningful connections among the school community by asking "what's right here?" rather than "what's wrong here."
- Research-practice collaborations offer a powerful opportunity for shared learning and improvement
- Power of working with districts or other cross-school networks.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2022 - 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: International

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Seekingbrightspots.com
- Publications:
  + *Positive Deviance Toolkit*
- Contact Information:
  + *devon@dschool.stanford.edu*
  + *peter@dschool.stanford.edu*

ORGANIZATIONAL
PROFILES
T-W

TALKINGPOINTS
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PLATFORM

TalkingPoints

Family engagement is proven to drive student outcomes, but traditional models have left out under-resourced communities and failed to consider barriers such as time, access to technology, and language. With technology-driven family engagement we can change this.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

TalkingPoints is an education technology nonprofit with a mission to drive student success by unlocking the potential of families to fuel their children's learning, especially in under-resourced communities. TalkingPoints conducted research on their family engagement platform that helps strengthen relationships between parents and educators to improve student outcomes.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

The research for this project analyzed 40M+ home-school conversations to surface insights on best practices in effective family engagement and what interactions could directly improve student outcomes. The project built upon third-party research that proves TalkingPoints leads to higher test scores, better grades, and lower absenteeism rates, with gains even more pronounced for historically marginalized groups.

CHALLENGES

- The biggest challenge school districts face is delivering equitable student outcomes.
  + With record high absenteeism, pandemic-era federal funds ending, and a crowded ed-tech market with very few evidenced-based solutions, districts have tough decisions about where to spend their money in order to deliver those outcomes.
- Our mitigation strategy is providing districts with an evidenced-based way to deliver equitable student outcomes – tech-based family engagement.

LESSONS LEARNED

Key lessons that came out of this work that schools and districts should consider include:

- Schools must prioritize communication with families to create strong partnerships.
- All educators need access to a technology platform that allows for equitable and effective communication.
- Family engagement should be integrated as a core tool and part of districts' strategic plan to drive equitable outcomes.
- Educators need ongoing support and PD around how to leverage families to support student outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

- More evidence-based ed-tech in the market: Feedback from the field shows educators and administrators want and need this.
- More personalized interventions: Advances in technology and AI are accelerating the ability for adaptive, culturally-relevant relationship building and personalized coaching at an unprecedented scale.
- A focus on equity and whole-child: Delivering equitable outcomes requires ensuring that the perspectives of historically under-resourced communities are included in the solution, and expanding the notion of "student success" to factors beyond academic outcomes.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Nov 2022 - Nov 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National
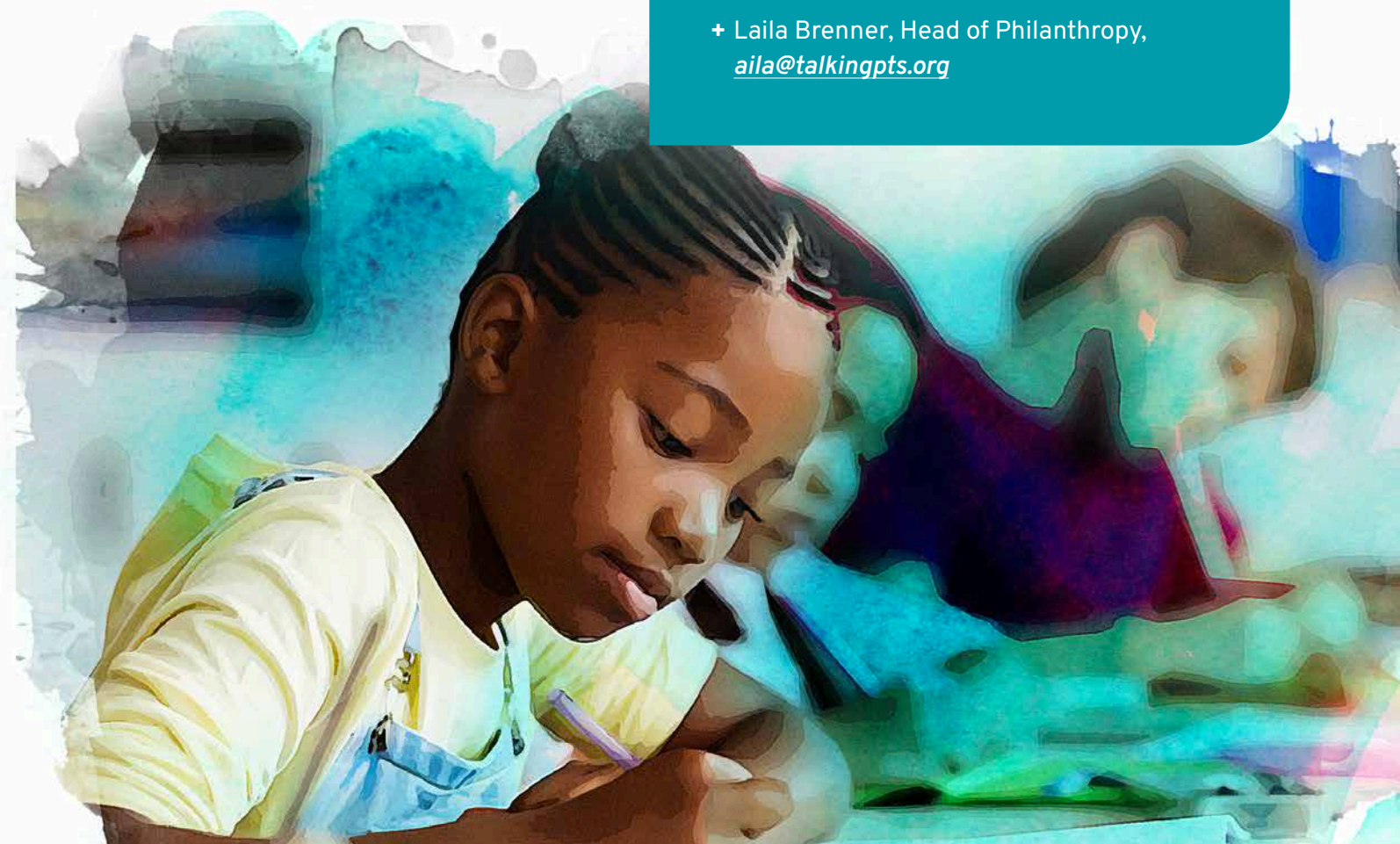
FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://www.talkingpts.org

- Publications:
  + *Conversation Dynamics*
  + *TalkingPoints leads to student academic gains*
- Contact Information:
  + Laila Brenner, Head of Philanthropy, *aila@talkingpts.org*

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

TEACH PLUS
ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

TEACH +PLUS

Teach Plus (TP) addresses the growing need for authentic teacher leadership to transform the nation's schools and the education system. Teach Plus focuses on both policy and practice in order to find solutions to the most important issues facing students, teachers and equity in education.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Teach Plus (TP) supports federal and state policy advocacy on assessments and accountability through the lens of teacher voices and perspectives. TP is working to transform schools to better understand the connection between equity and their students' readiness to meet rigorous college and career-ready standards. Across its 12 regions, TP builds teachers' ability to build public understanding and will to drive action on high-quality instructional materials that mirror and validate students' own experiences and provide windows into new worlds and communities they have not yet imagined, and standards-aligned instruction that challenges them with grade-level material. Through this work, TP focuses on ensuring that local, state, and federal policies hold us accountable for the readiness of all students for college, career, and community.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- TP teacher leaders have led on issues of accountability and assessment since our organization's inception. TP prioritizes participation in the Assessment and Accountability Learning Network and partners with organizations in the Network to advocate for accountability and assessment systems that ensure all kids have access to an excellent education. TP also works to support state teams to improve and protect assessment and accountability systems in their states.

- TP teacher leaders are engaging in assessment and accountability policy conversations in Massachusetts, Colorado, and Texas. TP elevates teacher voice through op-eds such as this one: *Frank: We Don't Teach to the Test, We Teach History Above It; Measure That.*

- A TP publication, *The Phoenix Report, Building an Equitable Educational System Beyond the Pandemic*, outlines the teachers' blueprint for change and zeroes in on what it would take to enact their vision for the profession. For this work, TP engaged 175 educators across 30 states and used the design thinking process to shape the vision for and solutions to transform the education ecosystem.

- TP teacher leaders have provided insights about how to design and implement assessments measuring college and career-ready standards at the local, state, and federal level. In addition, TP partnered with the Education Trust to gather insights from educators and help shape EdTrust's report "The Future of Assessments: Centering Equity and the Lived Experiences of Students, Families, and Educators."

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- *From TP' work on the Phoenix Project:*
  + Teachers believe that assessments are an essential tool for ensuring that our school systems are serving students equitably. Yet too often, they take time away from instruction, encourage a narrowing of the curriculum, and fail to provide relevant information for students, teachers, parents, and systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *From their work on the Phoenix Project:*
  + Assessments must be reimagined so they measure what matters, including critical thinking and grade-level standards. They must take as little time away from instruction as possible or even integrate seamlessly into instruction. They must provide data in a format that teachers and families can easily understand, and provide it quickly enough that they can take action on the results.

FAST FACTS
Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://teachplus.org/
- Publications:
  + *The Phoenix Project: Building an Equitable Educational System Beyond the Pandemic*
- Contact Information:
  + Lindsay Sobel, Chief of Policy, Planning & External Affairs; LSobel@teachplus.org, (512) 230-823

THE LEARNING AGENCY
CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT DISCOVERY WORK

THE LEARNING AGENCY

There are three central challenges in the current state assessment system: the current state assessment model 1) is burdensome and expensive, 2) is overly standardized and 3) is disconnected from learning. These three issues lead to excessive test preparation and the neglect of core skills.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Learning Agency (TLA) developed recommendations for curriculum and assessment grantmaking. TLA's eight recommendations aim to address three central challenges in the current state assessment system: the current state assessment model 1) is burdensome and expensive, 2) is overly standardized and 3) is disconnected from learning, leading to excessive test preparation and neglect of core skills.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- TLA conducted a landscape scan of research and development in K-12 curriculum and assessment. As a result of that landscape scan, they provided a series of investment recommendations.

The eight recommendations are:

+ Cultivate and embed technical talent in key leadership roles

  » Build infrastructure to facilitate the development of accessible, high-quality assessments

  » Build infrastructure to capture and leverage student data to drive interventions

» Build and expand open-source curriculum and assessment sources

» Leverage technology to democratize assessments to facilitate in-school and at-home learning

» Cultivate tools that facilitate and increase formative feedback

» Create stealth assessment tools and systems

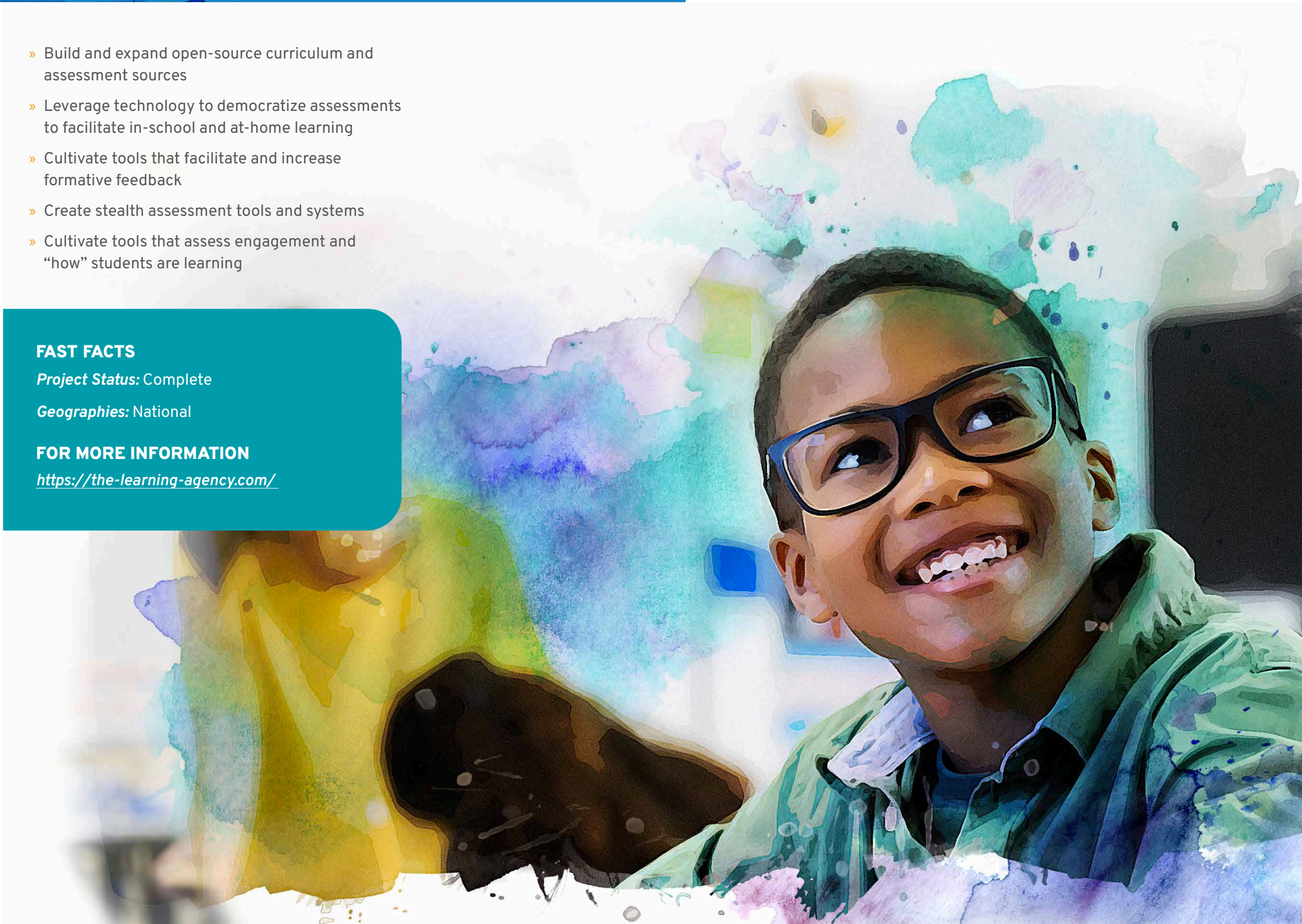» Cultivate tools that assess engagement and "how" students are learning

FAST FACTS

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://the-learning-agency.com/

THE LEARNING AGENCY
LEARNING ENGINEERING TOOLS COMPETITION TO DRIVE INNOVATION IN ASSESSMENT

THE LEARNING AGENCY · Tools Competition

Policymakers, educators and parents are increasingly concerned about the extensive time and expense associated with assessments. There is a pressing need to leverage technology to significantly reduce assessment duration and cost without compromising quality.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Learning Agency (TLA) led the second round of the Tools Competition. This competition fostered the development of technological solutions to streamline assessment processes. The grant enabled TLA to organize and oversee the competition, award prizes to 10-15 winners, offer comprehensive coaching and support to competitors, host product review days for winners and industry leaders and cultivate partnerships between tools and research to ensure scalability and drive insights for the field. The competition aimed to generate various tools addressing critical assessment challenges, ranging from AI-powered scoring and item generation to platforms offering real-time student performance insights for educators and parents.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

TLA had three main goals for this project. Those goals and TLA's progress toward achieving those goals are as follows:

- **Grow a global community committed to improving learning through assessment**
  + TLA exceeded its goal of growing a global community focused on improving learning through assessments.

- **Identify and support the development of 3+ assessment technologies**
  + The Tools Competition received 150 proposals in the assessment track, surpassing the target.
  + Named 10 winners in the assessment track, exceeding the goal of identifying and supporting the development of 3+ assessment technologies.

- **Spur the creation of tools benefiting at least 750,000 students**
  + The winning assessment proposals are expected to halve the time or financial cost compared to similar assessments within a year of announcement.

CHALLENGES

- TLA notes that it faced challenges supporting the competition's teams in the development and execution of their research strategies.

- Follow-through from winning teams was inconsistent. Some teams maintained regular communication with TLA, while others were harder to keep in touch with, making it difficult to track their progress and offer support.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Competition teams wanted more technical assistance and resources to help them incorporate end-user demand into proposals and their strategic vision.

- The timing of the competition matters. The competition had fewer participants and less engagement in the summer months. The best time to launch the competition is in the fall.

- Teams valued the ability to collaborate with other teams throughout the competition. Feedback and community elements of the competition received the most positive feedback.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: June 2021 - May 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://tools-competition.org/

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

THE LEARNING AGENCY
VALIDITY PROJECT

THE LEARNING AGENCY

Current assessment practices are widely dissatisfactory, necessitating the validation of new assessment tools and measures; however, traditional practices for validating assessments have not kept pace with new innovations in the assessment space. The Learning Agency (TLA) set out to explore ways to modernize validity to support uptake, adoption and spread of new innovations in the field.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Learning Agency (TLA) led a project to address the challenges with current validity efforts and generate new ideas for standardizing validity approaches, creating community alignment around best practices and creating validation methods tailored to student-centered measures. As part of the grant, TLA conducted a set of stakeholder interviews and produced a 20-page landscape analysis on the state of validity. The grant also supported efforts to scope an infrastructure organization or project that could become a research and development hub for addressing validity issues in education. TLA's work set out to answer two central questions:

- What are the key areas in validity that need to be modernized? What needs to change due to new formative teaching approaches and new approaches to summative accountability?

- What type of project or organization–such as the "National Validity Project"—could be created to improve the validity of new assessments, and what would the scope of that organization be?

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- To answer their two central questions, TLA interviewed subject matter experts, conducted a landscape scan and hosted a convening with academics, practitioners and other stakeholders. Key findings from their research revealed the following challenges and concerns with current validity processes:

  + The field is challenging the core conceptions of validity and the social values and constructs that lay behind it

    » Assessments are measuring certain constructs (e.g., "Mastery" of a subject as defined by state standards), but the constructs may be interpreted and defined differently by different people. Reconceptualizing construct validity may include acknowledging and valuing substantively different construct definitions.

  + Many validity processes ignore the increasing complexity of teaching and learning. Common validity approaches work well with traditionally defined learning objectives and processes. However, research is starting to inform new ways of teaching and learning that aren't factored into common validity processes.

    » Lack of customization hindering innovation with validity approaches

    » "Checklist" culture in the field that prioritizes compliance over innovation

    » Many validity experts and infrastructure emphasize traditional ways of doing things

    » Widespread use of dated statistical models that aren't suited to evaluate newer assessment items

    » Lack of attention to fairness and equity in the assessment development process

    » "Purpose drift" causing disconnects between the initial design and evidence of the validity of an assessment and its actual use

- Based on these findings, TLA made the following recommendations for what a national validity project or organization (The Validity Project) should focus on to support best practices in validity:

  + **Thought leadership:** Developing common guidelines for validity studies and identifying areas for focused attention

  + **Technical Assistance Services:** Providing validity services to assessment providers and Ed Tech organizations

  + **Tools and technology toolsets:** Creating technology toolsets and frameworks that can be used to implement these recommendations

LESSONS LEARNED

- TLA finds that the value of funders supporting the creation of a single entity like the Validity Project lies in the ability to create a more integrated, common approach than would be possible through a portfolio of separate grants or other structures. The Learning Agency also notes that the Validity Project should integrate diverse experts and scale its services across a broad set of providers and organizations.

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE
REBUILDING THE CASE FOR RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM AND RECOVERY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute and its affiliated Foundation promote educational excellence for every child in America via quality research, analysis, and commentary, as well as advocacy and exemplary charter school authorizing in Ohio. In order to improve student outcomes, boost upward mobility, and dramatically increase the number of young Americans prepared for college, career, and citizenship, Fordham advances: 1) ambitious standards in all academic subjects, strong assessments of student learning, aligned and well-implemented curricula, and common-sense accountability for schools and children across the achievement spectrum; and 2) high-quality charter schools and other proven models of educational choice, particularly for the children and families that need them most.

AREAS OF FOCUS/PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (Fordham) woks on strengthening and defending results-based accountability systems and on forming bipartisan coalitions aimed at improving achievement in the wake of the pandemic. The goals for the various projects/grants were as follows:

- **Defend and improve results-based accountability.**
  + Fordham explored and advocated for responses to testing backlash using three main strategies:
    » Suggesting policy changes that make testing and accountability systems more acceptable, without giving up on their essential purposes.
    » Improving data and accountability systems by identifying new, valid, and reliable measures of school effectiveness and student success.
    » Leading efforts to encourage schools to change the way they respond to testing and accountability systems by focusing on good instruction and practice rather than teaching to the test.
- **Call for and lead bipartisan reform and recovery in the wake of COVID-19,** including giving families information, power, and agency to understand, support, choose, and advocate for their children's education in a real and actionable way. The *bipartisan coalition* advocated for a broader definition of student success and the enabling of a broader set of providers—inside and outside of schools—to play a role in meeting students' needs.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Reform and Recovery in the Wake of COVID-19
  + Fordham engaged educational practitioners and advocacy organizations from left, right, and center in collaborating on education recovery post Covid-19.
- Fordham is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability, and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- Shifting power to parents is essential, as is maximizing the array of choices and options available to families, heavily informed by clear, actionable information and assurances of equal opportunity.
- Business leaders can and should hold school systems accountable by demanding and presenting transparent data on student progress, such as the Arizona Economic Dashboard and the State of Education report, presented by the Greater Phoenix Chamber Foundation and the Detroit Regional Chamber, respectively.

- Fordham supported *reforms* in Ohio that decreased the number of rated measures, shifted Ohio from the controversial A-F grading system to five-star ratings, maintained clear, user-friendly "overall" rating that summarizes performance across the report card's several components, and ensured students' year-to-year academic progress counted more heavily in the overall rating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fordham recommends protecting assessments in accountability systems. Suggestions include:
  + Policy changes that make testing and accountability systems more acceptable without giving up on their essential purposes;
  + Defending the essential role of tests to hold all students to equally high levels of expectations;
  + Promoting accountability systems that incentivize improvement for advanced students, especially advanced low-income students and students of color;
  + Encouraging policies to enable the creation of high-quality career pathways rather than having a standardized course of study for every student; and
  + Setting goals aligned to recovery and our evolving understanding of educational outcomes—and reporting on them clearly and accurately.

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

THOMAS B. FORDHAM INSTITUTE
REBUILDING THE CASE FOR RESULTS-BASED ACCOUNTABILITY REFORM AND RECOVERY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

FUTURE WORK
New Measures of School Success

- In addition to continuing to publish *commentary* on the topic, Fordham will continue work on exploring new measures of school success. Fordham has already *examined* the viability of "attendance value added," or schools' contributions to attendance after accounting for individual students' prior absenteeism and other observable characteristics.

- Upcoming work will explore additional novel and potentially powerful indicators of school quality, namely a "high school readiness indicator" and "middle school readiness indicator." In short, Fordham is testing whether we could use a students' ninth-grade GPA as a measure of the effectiveness of their middle school, and their sixth-grade GPA as a measure of the effectiveness of their elementary school. Perhaps most importantly, it sends a clear message to schools that one of their core missions is to support students' academic achievement and help their graduates succeed at their next institution.

FAST FACTS
Geographies: National, Ohio

FOR MORE INFORMATION
https://fordhaminstitute.org/

- Publications:
  + *Imperfect Attendance: Toward a fairer measure of student absenteeism*
  + *A Generation at Risk: A Call to Action*
  + *America's Best and Worst Metro Areas for School Quality*
- Contact Information:
  + (202) 223-5452

A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

UMASS AMHERST
IMPROVING EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT THROUGH DIVERSITY

University of Massachusetts Amherst

Topics on social justice and diversity in educational measurement are emerging, but far too slowly, and with too little impact. UMass Amherst (UMA) believes the biggest reason for the lack of meaningful and effective conversation on social justice in the measurement community is that there are very few psychometricians who are Hispanic-LatinO, and even fewer who are African-American. That is, the psychometric community of educational testing experts is almost exclusively White and Asian. Thus, it is hard to have enlightening and influential conversations on the deleterious effects of current testing systems on black and brown kids, if we remain "white people talking to white people." Clearly, we need to diversify the field of educational measurement.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

UMass Amherst a) support education measurement graduate students from historically marginalized groups to attend and fully participate in the 2020 annual meeting of the National Council of Measurement in Education (NCME) in San Francisco; and (b) track these students over time to support their professional development and evaluate the success of their conference funding.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Thirty graduate students from historically marginalized groups were recruited and funded to attend the 2020 NCME conference, but due to COVID-19, the conference was canceled and switched to virtual. Arrangements were made to fund these students for

NCME 2021, but that conference was also switched to virtual. UMA pivoted and paid for online registration for these conferences, established a coordinated series of BIPOC-mentored writing workshops, delivered online webinars featuring BIPOC mentors, and eventually gathered the Fellows at the 2022 NCME conference. The project has been an enormous success in that the cohort continues informally. UMA has established a network of BIPOC mentors, and new cohorts were recruited and reconvened for NCME 2023. The project has been moved to the Center for Measurement Justice, which has added summer mentoring and research experiences. There are about 70 BIPOC graduate student Fellows, many of whom now have their Ph.D.s, who have received travel and other support through this funding.

CHALLENGES

COVID-91 was a huge challenge, but UMA's pivoting resulted in success in establishing and continuing to build networks of BIPOC students and mentors in educational measurement. Continued funding for the program is a challenge, but The Center for Measurement Justice has been successful thus far in acquiring continued funding.

LESSONS LEARNED

There is huge interest among BIPOC graduate students to contribute to the field and they thrive when mentored.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Jan 2020 - Jan 2022

Project Status: Completed

Geographies: USA (including international graduate students)

FOR MORE INFORMATION
- Publications:
  + *https://measurementjustice. org/2024/03/13/curriculum-review- of-graduate-programs-in-educational- measurement-2/*
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A B C D E F G I K L M N S T U V W

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION
ASSESSMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE FUTURE OF DATA

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) is the nonprofit affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business association. The USCCF harnesses the power of business to create solutions for the good of America and the world. Both organizations are national advocates for high standards, aligned assessments, and accountability measures, and the Chamber has been at the center of the business-civil rights coalition in K-12 education for over 20 years.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (USCCF) works on coalition building, nonpartisan thought leadership and capacity building in the following areas: 1) defending current statewide assessments, 2) developing better data assessment systems and 3) federal policy issues around career pathway programs and broadband. More specifically, USCCF's work on its Future of Data initiative has included…

- Looking Back to Look Forward: Quantitative and Qualitative Reviews of the Past 20 Years of K-12 Education Assessment and Accountability Policy
  + This report examined the last twenty years of education reform to understand what has and has not worked.

- Future of Data Design Challenge
  + USCCF launched its Future of Data Design Challenge aimed at improving public education in America. USCCF used this initiative to field ideas from the brightest minds in K-12 education to see how they are viewing the current policy landscape and to understand the problems they are facing, identify changes they would like to see and how they would propose implementing those changes.

- Future of Data Working Group
  + To guide its work, USCCF recruited a working group of top leaders in education policy, education administrators, local and federal policymakers, business leaders, and nationally recognized advocates. This working group provided feedback to the Looking Back to Look Forward report, hosted learning meetings with experts to better understand innovations in assessment and accountability, and reviewed design challenge submissions and draft recommendations.

- Communications and advocacy work
  + USCCF has a Federation of thousands of chambers of commerce in every state in the country, and USCCF maintains a network of 330 highly trained, highly engaged business leaders that it can activate on education and workforce issues. USCCF has worked to build awareness among these networks for preserving statewide assessments and building momentum around the future of data and assessments.

STAKEHOLDER AND PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

Through their work, the USCCF engages state and local chambers of commerce and the business community.

- From Looking Back to Look Forward:
  + To inform this work, USCCF conducted interviews and focus groups with approximately 50 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds. They sought to balance the voices we heard from to include people on the political right and on the left, education practitioners and policymakers, grassroots and grasstops stakeholders, and advocates for diverse sub-populations of students including Black, Brown, and Indigenous children, children with disabilities, English learners and low-income children.
  + USCCF's Working Group also contributed guiding questions, feedback, and framing to this report.

- USCCF is participating in Education First's Assessment and Accountability Learning Network, where they are collaborating with a host of other advocacy organizations to share insights, engage in dialogue on key issues related to the future of assessment and accountability and elevate opportunities for partnership and collaboration to move the field in the coming years.

KEY INSIGHTS AND FINDINGS

- From Looking Back to Look Forward:
  + Disaggregated data shifted the focus from the average kid to every kid—including Black, Hispanic, low-income students, English learners, and students with special needs. No longer were school districts able to hide the performance of some students behind an average.
  + Student achievement increased due to NCLB-era assessment and accountability policies, especially in math and especially for Black, Hispanic, and low-income students, who the system had not been serving well.
  + There is now access to far more reliable, comparable education data than there would be available otherwise, though there has not been sufficient time dedicated to rigorous analysis.
  + Reforms in teacher evaluation and school turnaround initiatives did not consistently improve student outcomes at scale, in part due to significant variation in quality of implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- From Looking Back to Look Forward:
  + Stakeholder buy-in: For students, families, and community members, the proposition of buying into the promise of greater educational opportunities seems valuable on its face. They are often an untapped resource, rarely asked to meaningfully participate in education conversations. Here, building the requisite trust that their input will be taken seriously is the main challenge. This takes strong relationships on the ground level, as well as consistently designed engagement strategies over time.
  + Communications strategy: A strong communications strategy is one with a few top-line messages that are repeated early and often by all messengers, across a variety of platforms. This can then be followed by tailored messages delivered by credible messengers to key audiences needed to move specific targets
  + Leadership: The need for persistent leadership from respected people who are willing to work through challenges together. Leadership must come in many forms. It must include behind the scenes leadership in the form of a coalition of advocates working collaboratively to design and implement various elements of strategy. It can also come from prominent, trusted messengers who will carry the right messages forward to reach intended targets. It must come from political leaders who will negotiate compromises and keep diverse stakeholders at the table.

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

FUTURE WORK

- USCCF will continue to educate and engage its *Business Leads Fellowship Program* network to build knowledge and support around policy issues aligned with business' perspectives.

- USCCF will provide short-term state-level education, engagement and communications support for state and local chambers and their coalitions in defense of statewide K12 assessments.

FAST FACTS

Geographies: National

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.uschamber.com/

- Publications:

  + *Looking Back to Look Forward: Quantitative and Qualitative Reviews of the Past 20 Years of K-12 Education Assessment and Accountability Policy*

  + *Education Design Challenge*

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VILLAGE OF WISDOM
CULTURALLY AFFIRMING CLIMATE SURVEY AND KEEP DREAMING TOOLKITS

VOW
Village of Wisdom

Learning environments are often psychologically harmful to Black students, and schools do not use co-constructed data collection and assessments to either identify these issues or to facilitate their growth. Village of Wisdom's (VoW) work focuses on building tools for schools both to measure the cultural affirmation of Black students in the classroom and to adapt to the needs of Black students through the use of their toolkits.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Village of Wisdom has led the following efforts:

- Develop and implement the Culturally Affirming Climate Survey (CACS) for Grades 3-12. This survey has been implemented to over 1,000 students and measures seven indicators of a culturally affirming learning climate: growth mindset, interest awareness, multicultural navigation, racial identity, affirmation, selective trust, social justice, and discrimination.

- Create two Keep Dreaming Toolkits, one for parents and one for educators. The Keep Dreaming Toolkits are digital assets to support teachers and parents in culturally affirming instruction using a user-centered design process involving Black parents and teachers.

RESULTS & FINDINGS

Thus far, VoW has used the CACS to determine the impact of the toolkits.

- This work seeks to understand how the use of the Keep Dreaming Toolkits impacts the learning climate for Black students, as measured by the CACs.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: Nov 2021 - Nov 2023

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: North Carolina

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.villageofwisdom.org/

WEST ED
MASSACHUSETTS INNOVATIVE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT

WestEd

Innovative science assessments are showing promise and more work is needed to analyze the impact of simulation-based assessment design on student outcomes, students' assessment experience overall, and instructional practice. Specifically, this approach appears to result in smaller performance gaps between traditionally underserved populations, such as Black, Hispanic and multilingual learners and their counterparts, but little is understood about other differences that may be contributing to this effect.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

WestEd provides state education agencies, including Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), with support in the design, development, and scoring of innovative science assessments. Massachusetts is one of the states currently working under the Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) and is focused on simulation-based problem-solving in science. Massachusetts made multiple changes in its approach to assessment, developing interactive science tasks based on a storyline, including diverse characters, and centering the items around authentic content. The first two years of Massachusetts's pilot showed smaller performance gaps on innovative science assessments compared to the traditional MCAS STE for several groups that are traditionally underserved. The purpose of this project was to supplement achievement data with process data and student survey data to further explore factors that might account for the decreased performance gap that earlier research has shown.

The pilot sought to answer the following research questions:

Performance on the ISA and the Performance Gap

- Is the decreased performance gap between traditionally underserved and White, non-economically disadvantaged students uniform across the scale, or is it predominantly with lower or higher-performing students?
- What other demographic factors mediate this change?
- Does time on task differ between student groups and is this related to performance?

Patterns in Student's Use of Process Data

- How do various types of process variables differ between lower- and higher-performing students?
- How do various process variables differ among student groups and correlate with performance?

Using Survey Data to Enhance our understanding of Student Performance on the ISA

- How did students who answered yes to "Did you take an innovative assessment to practice before this test?" perform on the ISA?
- How did students who answered yes to "Did the practice test help you understand how to use the online tools and how to navigate through the test?" perform on the ISA? Are there patterns in the process variables based on response to the question?
- How is the task performance reflected in students' perceptions of the innovative assessment?

RESULTS & FINDINGS

- Decreased performance gap: As students moved from traditional science assessments to simulation-based science assessments the performance gap between groups decreased. This increase was more prevalent among students at the lower end of the score scale. Note that the effect size was generally small.
- Higher-performing students spent more time on the task and used tools provided for simulation-based questions more often: The number of simulations completed within a task was correlated with the highest scores.
- Students who completed a practice test did slightly better on the innovative assessment than students who did not, and the difference was more pronounced for students who scored lower on the traditional science test.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although the current data set includes very limited information about curricular changes and professional development, initial analysis exploring the impact of curricular changes on students' performance on the ISA seemed promising. Analyzing these data at a more granular level can provide information that can help districts identify curricular programs and professional development activities that foster students' development in science. For future administrations, collecting data on specific information about how different curricular programs are used, such as the amount of time per week that students use each curricular program and the types of activities that the programs provide would provide useful contextual variables.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FIELD

The changes made in Massachusetts are showing promise for traditionally underserved students. Although it is impossible to tease out whether the differences are due to the use of interactive simulations, the inclusion of diverse characters in the stories, or the focus on authentic phenomenon, the combination appears to result in smaller performance gaps.

FAST FACTS

Project Dates: 2022 - 2024

Project Status: Complete

Geographies: Massachusetts

FOR MORE INFORMATION

https://www.wested.org/

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