



New Hampshire Trip, November 12-14, 2018

Summary of Responses to Reflection Questions

Prepared by Deborah Good, Director of Org. Learning & Research, Future Focused Education

The following is a summary of online reflections completed by five New Mexican leaders who traveled to New Hampshire on a learning trip in November 2018. New Hampshire's Performance Assessment for Competency Education (PACE) initiative has been in place and expanding since March 2015, when the state received permission to use PACE performance assessments for accountability purposes in place of required standardized testing. In its first year, four districts participated in PACE. That number has now expanded to more than twenty. The state's application under ESSA Section 1204 was recently approved, allowing PACE to continue and to scale over the next few years.

1. There were two primary motivations for participating in the trip:

- a. Improving New Mexico's accountability system at the state level
- b. Implementing new and alternative assessments at the district level (even if the state doesn't change)

2. The group returned excited about performance assessment, believing NH provides a realistic model with implications for NM. Learnings included:¹

- a. Performance assessments as implemented through PACE are a viable alternative to standardized tests as we know them, and piloting a PACE-like system in New Mexico is do-able.
- b. New Hampshire's processes for calibration and comparability in PACE show us that performance assessments can be meaningful at the classroom level *and* applied to school accountability and teacher evaluation with fairness, reliability, and validity.
- c. Performance assessments provide a more accurate and well-rounded profile of student competencies than standardized tests currently do.
- d. Assessment and evaluation systems can have a positive impact on instructional practice.

3. Group members identified several ideas to keep in mind as we move forward:

- a. It is important to recognize the performance assessment practices already happening in classrooms around New Mexico. Aligning new approaches with current practices will help with buy-in at the local level.
- b. Expanding the use of performance assessment will require significant investment in professional development for educators and school leaders.
- c. A needs assessment to identify districts' level of readiness will be important.

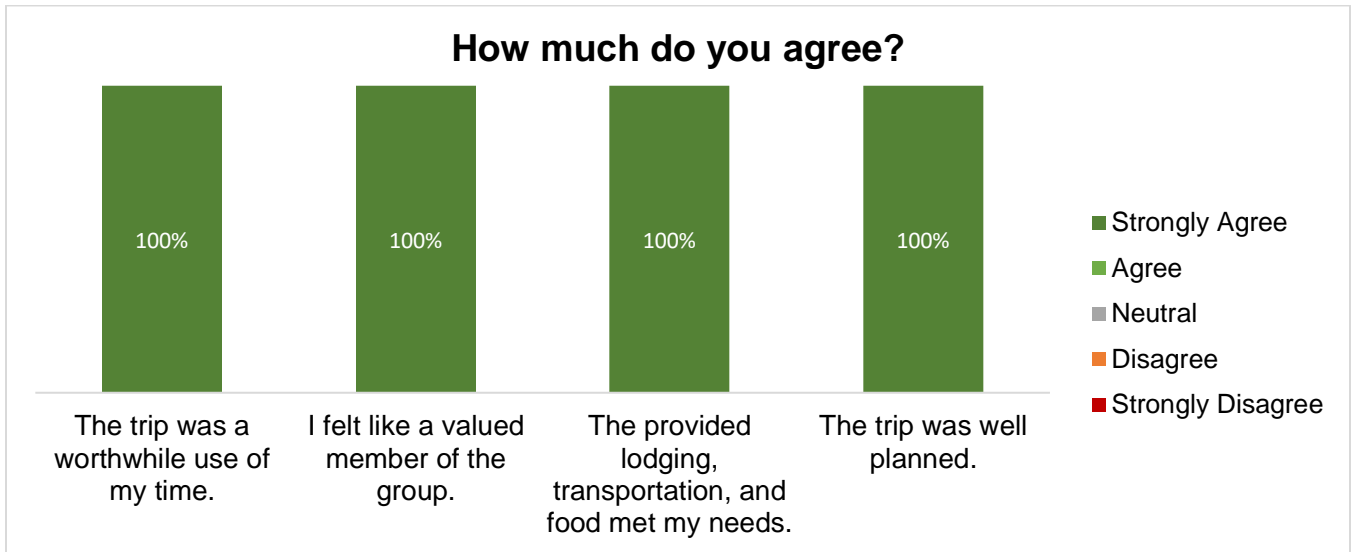
¹ The summaries provided in #2-4 are based on responses to the online reflection as well as notes from the final group debrief done in person before leaving New Hampshire.

- d. We should be thoughtful about how the model bridges to primary students (K-2) and integrates with CTE.
- e. New Hampshire is moving toward designing regional rather than statewide assessments in order to better address the needs and context of local communities, which would be a good fit for New Mexico.
- f. Performance assessments are good practice. Districts should consider implementing them regardless of whether the New Mexico makes changes in the required state assessments.

4. Group members have additional questions for discussion and exploration:

- a. When performance assessments are group projects, is there an equity concern if students are placed in groups that are not equal?
- b. How much time are teachers taken out from instruction to do this work? How does this work with union contracts and collective bargaining agreements?
- c. How much capacity do we need to build at the district level?
- d. How can we reduce assessment time and still provide meaningful, fair, valid, and reliable measures for teacher evaluation and school grading?
- e. What role do schools libraries play in developing common performance assessments? How has PACE changed the need/use of school libraries, if at all?

5. All five travelers rated the trip very highly.



6. The group had no suggestions for improvements, and said they appreciated:

- a. Planning done ahead of time
- b. Welcoming reception from New Hampshire partners
- c. Time spent with fellow travelers (including an adventurous drive through the snow!)