Transforming Assessment Systems at the State and Local Level

EdUprising Conference

January 10, 2020

Paul Leather, Director

Interstate Learning Community
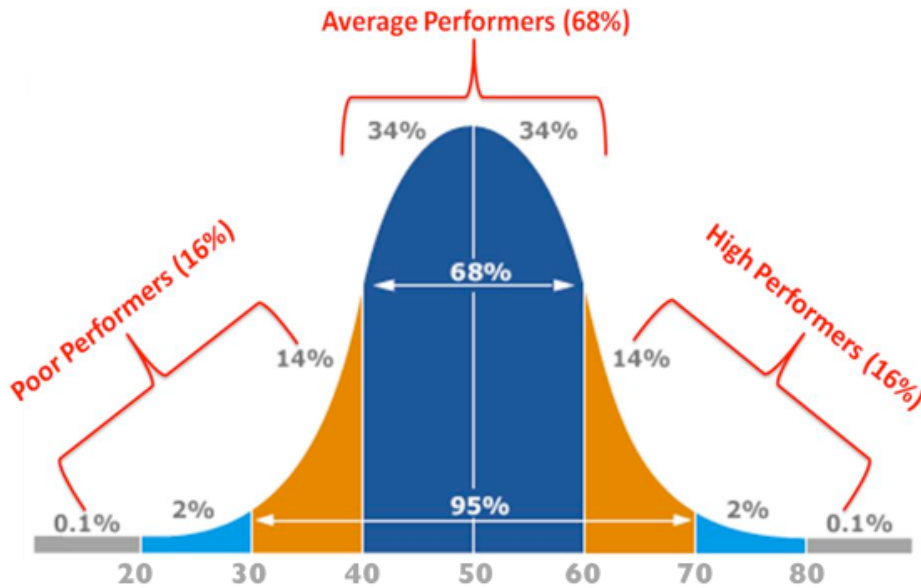
Center for Innovation in Education, University of Kentucky

How "Assessment" Became a Dirty Word, Part 1

In other words:

The pernicious and unexpected consequences of the Standards Movement

Issues with Standards Based Accountability and Reform:
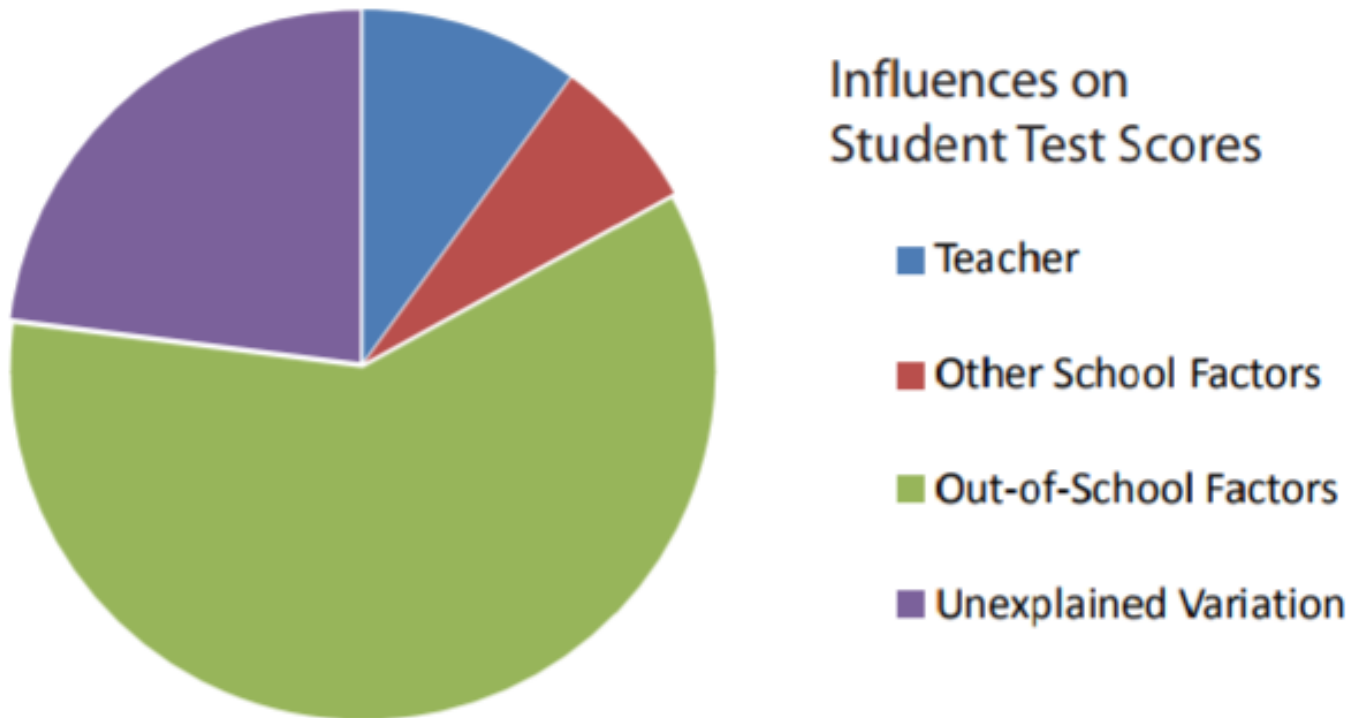

The Educational Bell Curve

- National top down solutions to issues in the classroom:
    - Control moves away from Community
    - Narrowing of Curriculum
- Massive inequities (race, ethnicity, socio-economic) built into the public education system:
    - Resources
    - Dominant School Delivery System design, (based on efficiency)
    - Assessment Theory and Design

What Happened To The Children Left Behind?

The Era of No Child Left Behind, NCLB:

Large Scale State Assessments – Performance Follows Out of School Indicators Primarily

Influences on Student Test Scores

- Teacher
- Other School Factors
- Out-of-School Factors
- Unexplained Variation

New Mexico:
State Level ~

From p. 7 of the Report:

Minimizing Footprint.

New Mexico's statewide summative assessment for math and ELA in grades 3–8 and high school should be limited to only what is required by State and Federal law, and testing time should only be as long as necessary to ensure adequate coverage of the content standards.

New Mexico's
State Assessment System

Recommendations from the New Mexico
Task Force for Student Success

New Mexico//New Measures of Student Success
OCTOBER 11, 2019

Center for
Assessment

Taskforce Recommendations:

1. Minimizing Change—stay with vendor/platform
2. Minimizing Footprint—Keep State Assessment to state/federal minimal requirements
3. Assessing Writing—for ELA
4. Cultural Responsiveness—design and support materials
5. Decoupling Performance—Teacher Eval and Graduation Requirements
6. New Mexico Review—Writing and Reviewing Assessments
7. Authentic and Innovative Assessments

NM State Level Balanced Assessment System

- Large Scale State Assessments – Summative:
  - Grades 3-8 -- Online/Computer Adapted -- ELA (Writing), Spanish (SLA), Math, Science
  - High School – College Entrance Exam in ELA and Math
  - Continued Alternative Performance Assessment, (SWD)
  - WIDA (ELL)
  - TBD – Early Childhood Assessment

- Optional Interim Assessments – based on same standards as summative and using the same platform

- Support for Formative Assessment as part of Classroom Instructional Practice

Taken from New Mexico Student Success Task Force Executive Summary / October 2019

Turn to someone next to you and discuss the following questions:

What are the positive aspects of the New Mexico Recommendations and the resulting system of assessments?

Are there any concerns that you have about the Recommendations or the assessments?

4 minutes

What if Assessment Was No Longer a Dirty Word?
Part II

...in Today's Schools, We have:
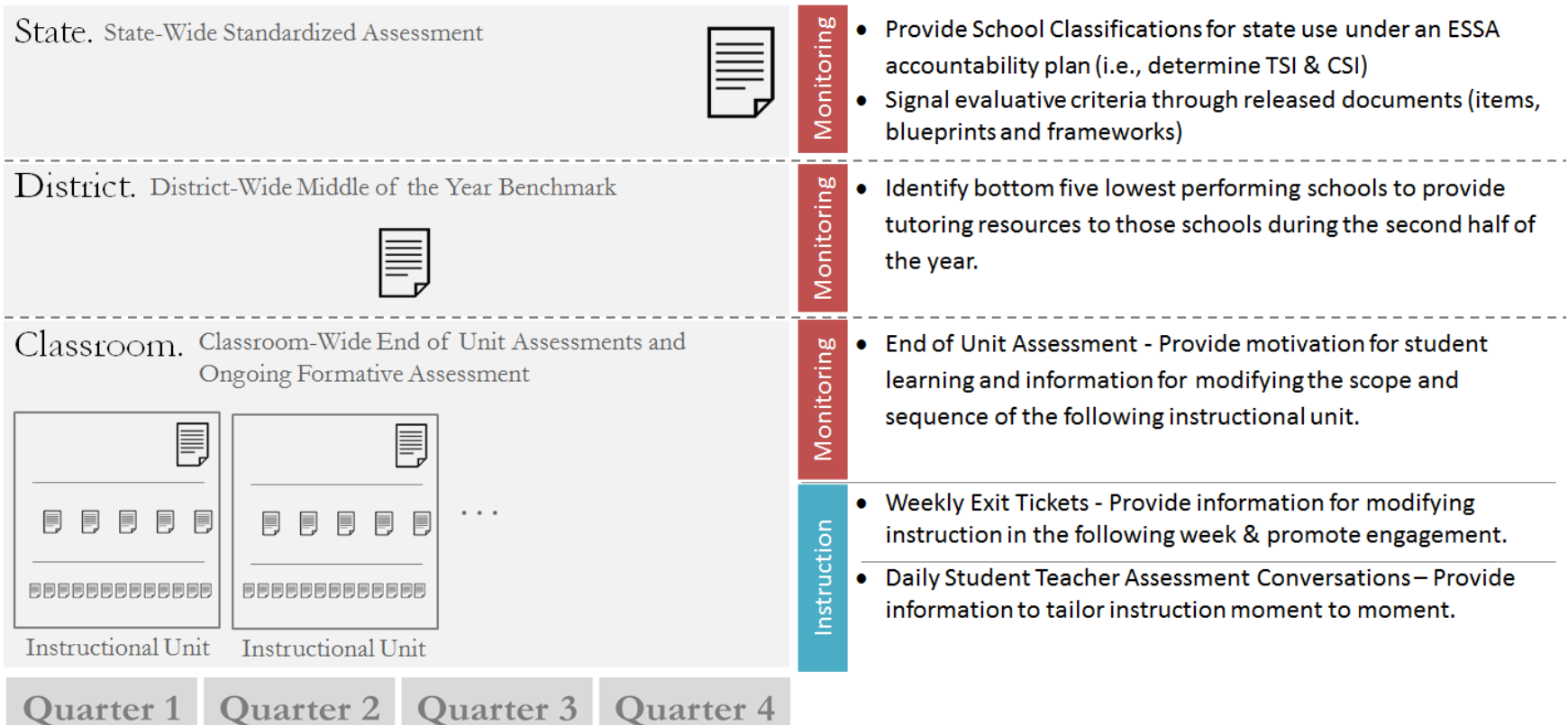
Too many assessments

given by too many people

for too many purposes

all providing too little information.

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment*
NCSA, June, 2018

Operationalizing Assessments in Terms of Layers of the System--

Level or Layer:

Purpose:

State. State-Wide Standardized Assessment

Monitoring
- Provide School Classifications for state use under an ESSA accountability plan (i.e., determine TSI & CSI)
- Signal evaluative criteria through released documents (items, blueprints and frameworks)

District. District-Wide Middle of the Year Benchmark

Monitoring
- Identify bottom five lowest performing schools to provide tutoring resources to those schools during the second half of the year.

Classroom. Classroom-Wide End of Unit Assessments and Ongoing Formative Assessment

Monitoring
- End of Unit Assessment - Provide motivation for student learning and information for modifying the scope and sequence of the following instructional unit.

Instruction
- Weekly Exit Tickets - Provide information for modifying instruction in the following week & promote engagement.
- Daily Student Teacher Assessment Conversations – Provide information to tailor instruction moment to moment.

Instructional Unit   Instructional Unit

Quarter 1   Quarter 2   Quarter 3   Quarter 4

Timing

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment NCSA, June, 2018*

Operationalizing Assessments in Terms of Layers of the System--

Level or Layer:

Purpose:

State. State-Wide Standardized Assessment

- Provide School Classifications for state use under an ESSA accountability plan (i.e., determine TSI & CSI)
- Signal evaluative criteria through released documents (items, blueprints, and frameworks)

District. District-Wide Middle of the Year Benchmark

- Identify bottom five lowest performing schools to provide tutoring resources to those schools during the second half of the year.

Classroom. Classroom Community Assessments and Ongoing Formative Assessment

- End of Unit Assessment — Provide motivation for student learning and information for modifying the scope and sequence of the next instructional unit.
- Weekly Exit Tickets — Provide information for modifying instruction in the following week & promote engagement.
- Daily Student Teacher Assessment Conversations — Provide information to tailor instruction moment to moment.

Instructional Unit — Instructional Unit

Quarter 1 — Quarter 2 — Quarter 3 — Quarter 4

There is no "one system."

Instead, within each layer, decision makers build, or at least implement, their own set of systems.

Timing

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment*
NCSA, June, 2018

Operationalizing Assessments in Terms of Layers of the System--

Level or Layer:

Purpose:

State. State-Wide Standardized Assessment

Monitoring
- Provide School Classifications for state use under an ESSA accountability plan (i.e., determine TSI & CSI)
- Signal evaluative criteria through released documents (items, ...

District. District-Wide Middle of the Year Benchmark

Monitoring
- Identify bottom five lowest performing schools to provide tutoring resources to those schools during the second half of the year.

Classroom. Classroom-Wide End of Unit Assessments and ...

Monitoring
- End of Unit Assessment - Provide motivation for student learning and information for modifying the scope and sequence of the following instructional unit.

Instruction
- Weekly Exit Tickets - Provide information for modifying instruction in the following week & promote engagement.
- Daily Student Teacher Assessment Conversations – Provide information to tailor instruction moment to moment.

Instructional Unit   Instructional Unit

| Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |

Timing

Thus each classroom, school, or district system may look different.

Meaning that within each state there are multiple "systems," when taken as a whole.

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment NCSA, June, 2018*

Operationalizing Assessments in Terms of Layers of the System--

Level or Layer:

Purpose:

State. State-Wide Standardized Assessment

- Provide School Classifications for state use under an ESSA accountability plan (i.e., determine TSI & CSI)
- Signal evaluation criteria through released documents (items,

By juxtaposing the layers, hopefully we can start thinking about ways the layers can start complementing each other.
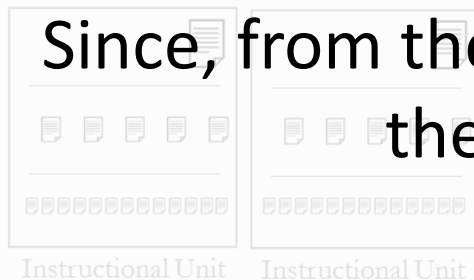
District. District-Wide Middle of the Year Benchmark

- Identify bottom five lowest performing schools to provide tutoring resources to those schools during the second half the year.

Classroom. Classroom-Wide End of Unit Assessments and Ongoing Formative Assessment

- End of Unit Assessment - Provide motivation for student learning and information for modifying the scope and sequence of the following instructional unit.

Since, from the student and the teacher's perspective, they are often viewed together.

- Weekly Exit Tickets - Provide information for modifying instruction the following week & promote engagement.
- Daily Student Teacher Assessment Conversations – Provide information to tailor instruction moment to moment.

Instructional Unit Instructional Unit

| Quarter 1 | Quarter 2 | Quarter 3 | Quarter 4 |

Timing

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment NCSA, June, 2018*

This approach doesn't fully meet the vison for a system of assessments, but it is a practical start.

By showing what is actually going on, we can then start to think about ways in which each layer can be made more **complementary,**

along the lines of comprehensiveness, coherence and continuity.

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment*
NCSA, June, 2018

A Starting Point

- Define the state layer as concretely as possible, then examine where and how the district layer can be made more complementary (and vice-versa).

- Consider key chunks of each layer:

    – Use

    – Assessment Design

    – Assessment Framework (i.e., Domain)

    – Measurement

Nathan Dadey, *Center for Assessment NCSA, June, 2018*

So,
if New Mexico is going to have a relatively traditional state/federal assessment –

consider taking advantage of decoupling and create a robust local system (district, school, and classroom) where you can demonstrate success to your communities

7th Recommendation:

Authentic and Innovative Assessments. The state should pursue options for more authentic and innovative assessment models including performance-based and project-based assessments as part of the full system.

- "Ensure assessment practices are culturally responsive
- Involve New Mexico educators in the process
- Pursue other innovative practices that measure student learning (e.g. performance-based assessments)

These recommendations are the foundation of our work to build out a more meaningful graduation menu of options. More graduation options will become a new vision that reflects the needs of local communities."

New Mexico Solution –

Creation of a Networked Approach:

Community of Practice

Gwen Warniment ~

Members of the Community of Practice COP will:

- Identify current school and district assets

- Identify opportunities for growth

- Explore on-site facilitated learning events

- Participate in school intervisitations, observations, and virtual collaborative convenings

Based on this work, the COP will be charged with creating the Quality Criteria for Performance-Based Graduation Options.

How NM's Education Department Is Transforming Assessment: Start with Teachers By Gwen Warniment, December 19, 2019

Recommendations for a Local Process:

- If decoupling occurs for Grad Requirements, you might consider asking the following questions:
  - What knowledge and skills should students be able to demonstrate in order to graduate?
  - What metrics will you use to identify student performance?
  - How will you measure student performance?
  - How will you build educator capacity?
  - One example – performance assessment/portfolio defense/capstone process

Turn again to a partner and discuss:

What are your impressions of this idea of a local option for graduation? Do you have any concerns?

Do you think your community High School will pursue this option, should it pursue this option?
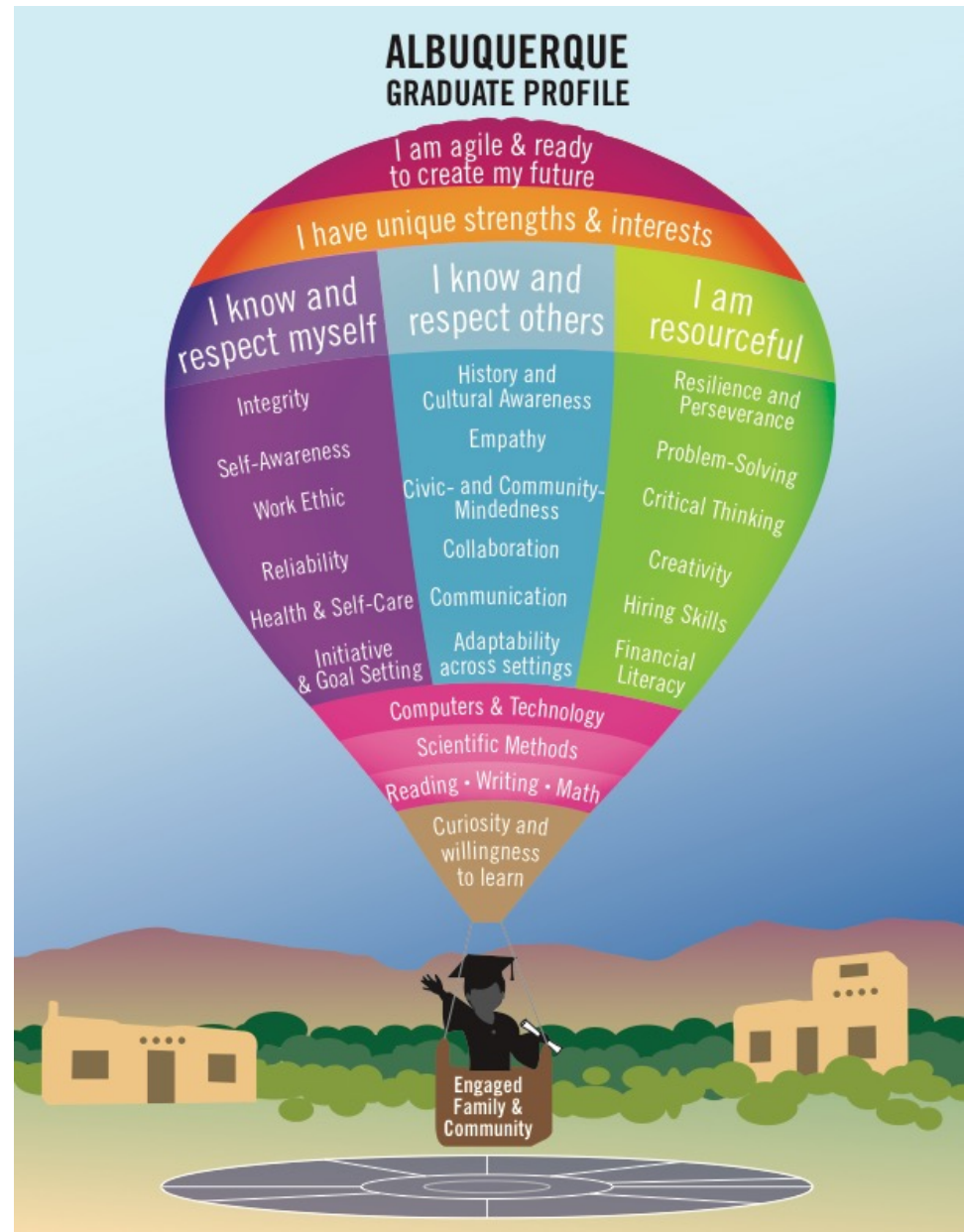
As community and education leaders, it is important to ask:

- What are the hopes, aspirations, and dreams that our community has for our young people?

- What are the skills and mindsets that our children need for success in this rapidly changing and complex world?

- What are the implications for the design of the learning experiences—and equitable access to those experiences— we provide in our school systems?

NM Districts ~ Portrait of a Graduate

Already, New Mexico School Districts have begun to adopt a national movement to identify a community vision of graduate knowledge, skills.

- This needs to be a community-wide conversation

- It is important not to stop with a series of graduation expectations, but to also identify how these will be prioritized in the classroom

ALBUQUERQUE
GRADUATE PROFILE

I am agile & ready to create my future

I have unique strengths & interests

I know and respect myself

Integrity
Self-Awareness
Work Ethic
Reliability
Health & Self-Care
Initiative & Goal Setting

I know and respect others

History and Cultural Awareness
Empathy
Civic- and Community-Mindedness
Collaboration
Communication
Adaptability across settings

I am resourceful

Resilience and Perseverance
Problem-Solving
Critical Thinking
Creativity
Hiring Skills
Financial Literacy

Computers & Technology
Scientific Methods
Reading • Writing • Math
Curiosity and willingness to learn
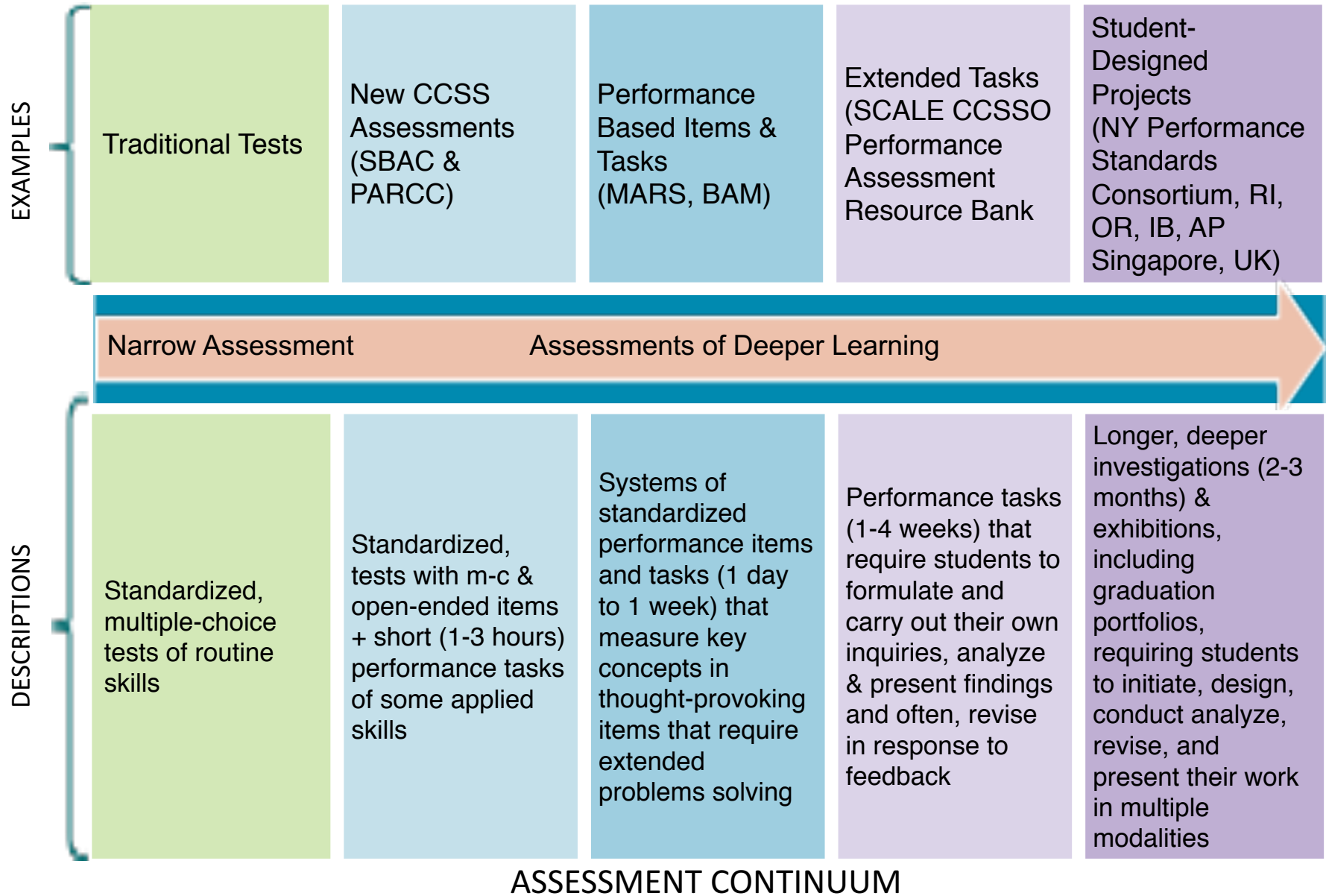
Engaged Family & Community

What Metrics Will You Prioritize?

- As we expand the breadth of knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected at graduation, the question of metrics and reporting has become a national conversation.

- The Range is tremendous – examples (just one state -- California):
  - High Tech High, CA – One Primary Metric – College retention at the second year
  - Public Schools – CA School Accountability Dashboard:
    ex: San Diego USD ~ Absenteeism, Suspensions, EL Progress, Graduation Rate, College/Career, ELA, Math, Basics, Implementation of Academic Standards, Parent/Family Engagement, Local Climate Survey, Access to Broad Curriculum….

- Core Question – What problem(s) are you trying to solve?

Turn and Discuss:

What metrics would you recommend for your community?

How Will You Measure Student Performance?

EXAMPLES

Traditional Tests	New CCSS Assessments (SBAC & PARCC)	Performance Based Items & Tasks (MARS, BAM)	Extended Tasks (SCALE CCSSO Performance Assessment Resource Bank	Student-Designed Projects (NY Performance Standards Consortium, RI, OR, IB, AP Singapore, UK)

Narrow Assessment → **Assessments of Deeper Learning**

DESCRIPTIONS

Standardized, multiple-choice tests of routine skills	Standardized, tests with m-c & open-ended items + short (1-3 hours) performance tasks of some applied skills	Systems of standardized performance items and tasks (1 day to 1 week) that measure key concepts in thought-provoking items that require extended problems solving	Performance tasks (1-4 weeks) that require students to formulate and carry out their own inquiries, analyze & present findings and often, revise in response to feedback	Longer, deeper investigations (2-3 months) & exhibitions, including graduation portfolios, requiring students to initiate, design, conduct analyze, revise, and present their work in multiple modalities

ASSESSMENT CONTINUUM

Linda Darling-Hammond, "Developing and Measuring Higher Order Skills: Models for State Performance Assessment Systems"

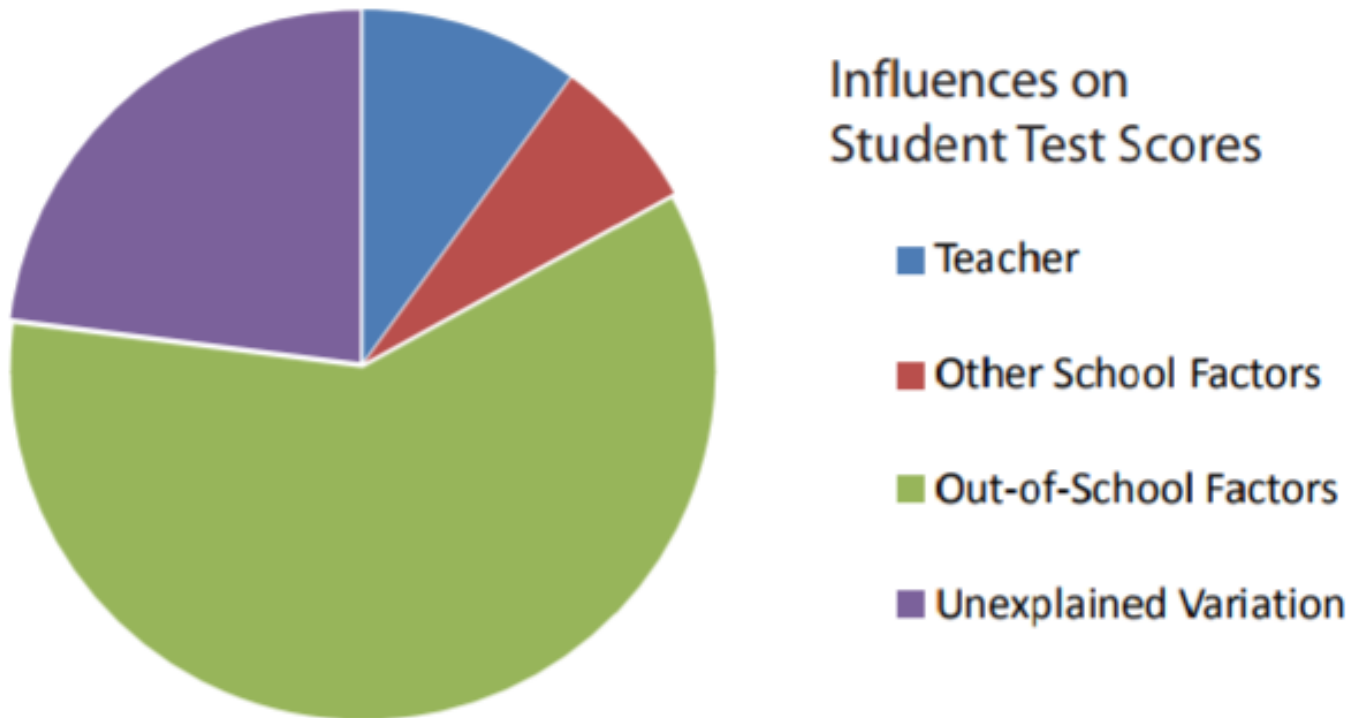# How Will You Build Capacity?

Gwen Warniment ~

"...we will **partner with Future Focused Education** to launch a **Community of Practice (COP).** This will **bring teachers and school leaders together to learn from one another to expand the demonstrations of competency for graduation**. The COP will be charged with helping **create a graduation option that allows a measure of student learning based on innovative teaching practices that are project-based, more reflective of local practices, and currently rooted in New Mexico schools**."

How NM's Education Department Is Transforming Assessment: Start with Teachers By Gwen Warniment, December 19, 2019

What Happened To The Children Left Behind?

The Era of No Child Left Behind, NCLB:

Large Scale State Assessments – Performance Follows Out of School Indicators Primarily

Influences on Student Test Scores

- ■ Teacher
- ■ Other School Factors
- ■ Out-of-School Factors
- ■ Unexplained Variation

This Finding is consistent with research on culturally responsive classrooms – "funds of knowledge and identity"

- Students bring with them funds of knowledge from their homes and communities (cultural worlds)

- Classroom practices can underestimate and constrain what students are able to display intellectually

(Adapted by M. Heritage from Moll et al., 1992)

Horizontal Relationships

Teacher ⟷ **Students**

"Willing to adopt an unknowing position"

M. Heritage, 2018

Practice Follows This Thread:

Culturally responsive pedagogy

Culturally responsive assessment?
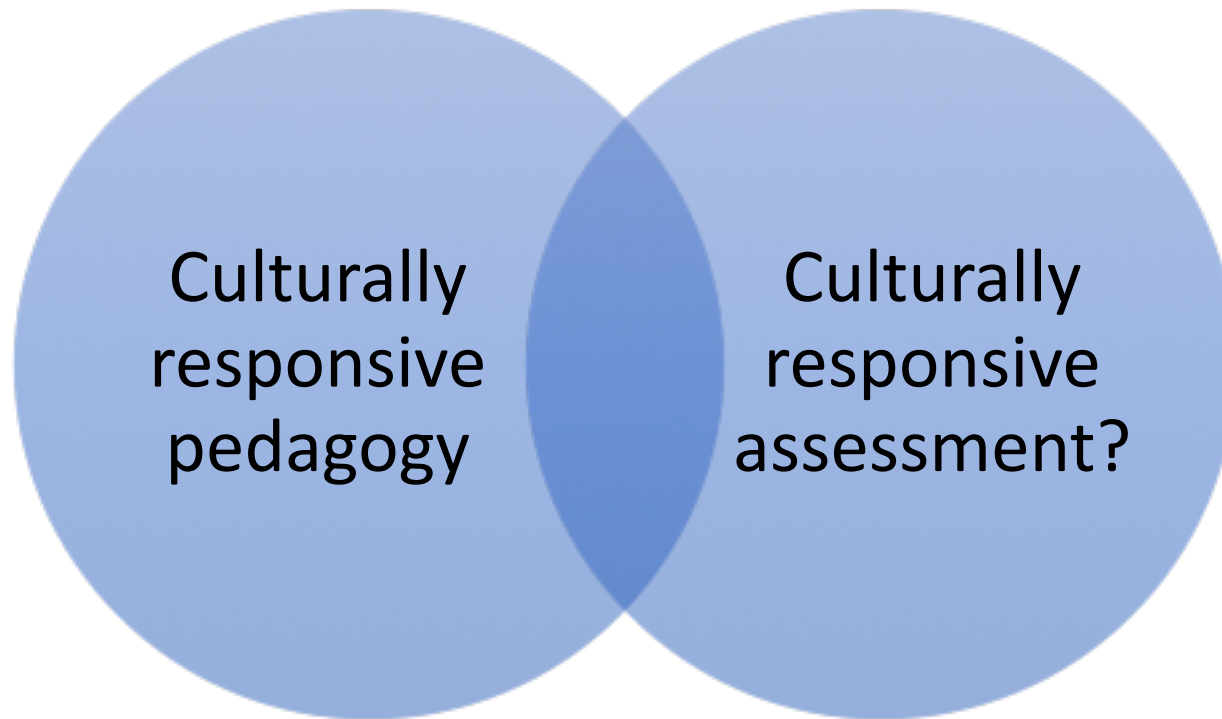
Heritage, 2018

Why do we need systems transformation? --
Our learning expectations have begun to shift
Systems work best when they are aligned…
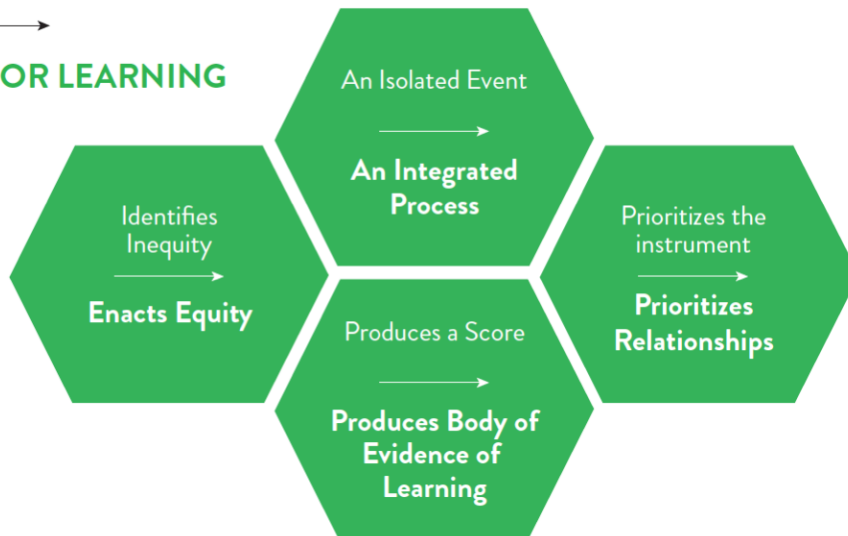
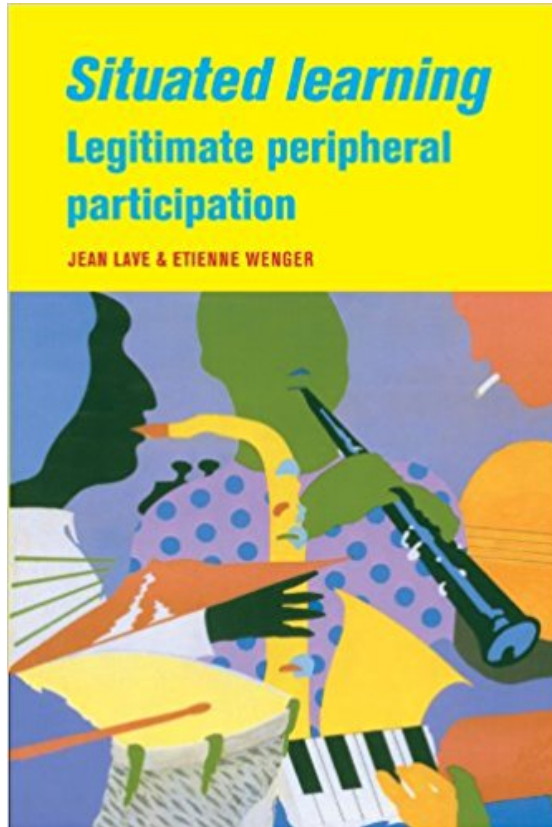# Examples of high impact learning communities...

Model	Theory Base	Membership	Leadership	Organizational Culture	Knowledge Sharing
Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) Dufour Eaker	Learning Organization	Membership is a forgone conclusion by virtue of status as a faculty member; teachers are assigned to a collaborative team to work on substantive school issues	Principal; shares decision-making; provides staff with information and training; model behaviors congruent with vision and values; results - oriented	Shared mission, vision and values drive the work; collaboration is key; innovation, experimentation and a focus on results are vital aspects	Discussion is limited; team members collaborate, but how teams create new knowledge and share it with the whole organization is not discussed at length
Communities of Practice (CoPs) Wenger, McDermott & Snyder	Social Learning	Participation is voluntary; membership can either be self-selected or assigned by the organization; based on expertise or passion for a topic	Distributed; leadership comes from both formal and informal leaders, within and outside the community	Organization values innovation and knowledge sharing;	Occurs mainly within the community; however, exchange across and at community boundaries occurs when appropriate

Professional Learning Communities and Communities of Practice: A Comparison of Models, Literature Review
Blankenship and Ruona

cie center for innovation in education
leading with learning

A Sociocultural Approach

Situated learning
Legitimate peripheral participation

JEAN LAVE & ETIENNE WENGER

- Many continue to talk about "train-the-trainers" even though there is little evidence of effectiveness.

- A deeper, **research-based approach** is based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) study of how "apprentices" become "masters"

- **System design** – Community of Practice where COP is engaged in designing quality assessments:
  - Ex. Young Whan Choi, Oakland USD – Portfolio Defense Modeling
  - Ex. NHPACE Content Leads – Common Performance Tasks

Moving from Scaling to systems of "Symmetry" and "Emergence"

- "The notion of scale as replication implies a top-down perspective (or "seeing like a state") which is increasingly challenged in the field of education. Top-down reform approaches of test-based accountability, "evidence-based programming," and teacher evaluation are not generating the returns reformers hoped for."

CIE national center for innovation in education

We believe that this new approach can only be accomplished by a different way of working with districts. In our approach, **scale and in particular scaling, recede to the background**, to be **replaced by a focus on symmetry and emergence**.

- By **symmetry**, we mean a parallelism between the work of adults in the system and the work we hope that teachers will do with students

- By **emergence**, we mean an approach to leadership and to organization, where leaders move from engineers to gardeners, helping to nurture and grow the energy and capacity in their system, and support more lateral and organic organizational forms to emerge.

While **these shifts in systems** can and should be led and owned by practitioners, they **need leaders to forge shared purpose, create the space and the resources, and offer guidance and facilitation** for this new work. New approaches to leadership are needed to provide the context within which these processes and systems can develop.

The Deeper Learning Dozen, A White Paper. John Watkins, Amelia Peterson, and Jal Mehta, November, 2018

Leadership can accelerate "emergence"

- "Superintendents must develop the kind of leadership necessary to name and nurture emergent properties. This means the capacity to coordinate and make meaning with others out of the complex processes of interdependent change that will be required to realize deeper learning across a district."

The Deeper Learning Dozen, A White Paper. John Watkins, Amelia Peterson, and Jal Mehta, November, 2018

national center for innovation in education

Turn and Discuss:
If your community engaged in the Community of Practice, who should participate and what should they be focused on?

Build Your System to Last – Based on Trust!

Right now, you have tremendous:

- Supportive Leadership

- Buy-in, with many and expansive community inputs

Look to create systems that will support your work, particularly if your political circumstances were to change in the future –

Build a lasting infrastructure that will own this work for the future!

www.puebloprints.com