Performance Assessment School System Recommendations

At the end of the 2019 School year, a year spent giving definition to and designing tools for the Collaboratively-developed, Standards-based Performance Assessment (Graduation Guidelines Menu Option), Colorado educators came together in June 2019 to participate in an intensive summer institute to produce recommendations for other aspects of a school system that set students up for success in performance assessment. The educators made four recommendations: aligned pedagogies, aligned culture, aligned structures and systems, and aligned leadership & approaches to professional learning and development.

Why school structures and systems?

Traditionally, students feel the need to protect themselves and their image in the classroom by not taking the kinds of risks performance assessment require. Given the perils of being a young adult surrounded by other young adults, they may seek to avoid the kind of public honesty that reflection and feedback require. Additionally, the narrative that "there isn't enough time" for essential performance assessment (e.g. reflection, revision, team building and culture building) should not be overlooked because this perception also exists. The traditional reality of "school", either perceived or otherwise for educators must be transformed to one that supports effective practices to implement high quality performance assessment and the people engaging in it.

Why leadership and professional learning?

Leadership can be one of the biggest factors for whether or not performance assessment feels (and is) possible and desirable to both teachers and students. Leadership within an effective performance assessment system includes, lifting teachers up as leaders while everyone develops at different paces, designing professional development that supports teachers as they master the necessary skills to implement the school's Performance Assessment system, and allowing for significant trial and error among everyone involved. Leadership that includes these types of actions will be leadership that can unleash success, both personal and academic, and encourage students and educators while "doing" performance assessment.

Why pedagogies?

High quality performance assessment is a significant shift from traditional event testing. The implications for instruction are equally significant. Student success on tasks, projects and a potential "exit requirement" relies on sufficient opportunities to see in action, practice, and demonstrate the Essential Skills at the heart of the culminating task or project.

Why school culture?

Performance assessment requires that students try to do things before they are proficient at them in order to grow and improve. To make this possible, community and substantial relationships that exist within it, are needed to ensure that failures on the way to success will not leave students categorized as "failure". There should also be implicit and explicit core values within the school culture that emphasize the importance of effort, multiple attempts to learn, and the routines and systems that will allow for a supportive community to be fortified and to thrive.

For each promising practice recommended, participants were asked to "defend alignment" to one or more of the following:
- Performance Assessment Definition
- Design Elements
- Essential Skills Outcomes

School Structures/Systems Recommendation

PA-Aligned School Structures	Aligned How?	Things to consider
Grading System that honors Multiple Iterations	- Accessible, Authentic, Iterative - Adaptability & Reflective Practice "Improve their skills" & "demonstrate growth" **See Culture: "Failure is Essential"** **See Pedagogies: Formative Practice**	This is different from what many adults are used to; the "why" must be well communicated to all stakeholders
Advisory / Crew	- Self-Efficacy & Self-Care, Social Responsibility, Inquiry & Problem Solving, Adaptability & Reflective Practice, Time & Work Management, Team Building (ESO) - Accessible, Authentic, Relevant, Transferable (DE) - Essential Skills class / community - Growth Mindset class - safe to try & fail "The product and process… [prepare us] for success in the postsecondary/workforce world" - Secure relationships support social & emotional skill development	- Needs to have a clear *stated and lived* purpose - Advisors need targeted professional learning re: how to be an advisor -- not the same job description as teacher, but all teachers are capable of being good advisors **See Culture: "Failure is Essential"**
Block Scheduling and/or Flexible Scheduling	- Authentic: Time to do and demonstrate - Ability for schedule to accommodate the kind of learning that's needed when it's needed **See Pedagogies** **Modeling Essential Skills** **Constructivist Learning** - Team Building, Adaptability & Reflective Practice	This is a much bigger shift for adults than for students -- best to try for a year, then reflect against your goals for student learning, than to try & abandon at first difficulty

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Leadership & Professional Learning Recommendation

PA-Aligned Leadership	Aligned How?	Things to consider
Principal = Lead Learner • Be what you want to see teachers doing in classrooms (model) • Elevate teachers & bring in experts to model everything you expect • Don't be afraid to choose public reflection on your own growth vs. personal protection	• Authentic: These are really high expectations, and no one has mastered all of them / has all the answers at any given time • Transferable: The importance & application of the Essential Skills must be grasped by adults	• Because of the authenticity of the Essential Skills outcomes, collaborative leadership becomes very important. Not an expert at all of them? Join the club! But be resourceful and find experts in your building and in your community
System Cohesion + Individual Autonomy • "Holonomy" • Tend to the support/cohesion, and the individuality/freedom of all the "layers" • System lens (*culture emphasis*) with students at the center • Collaborative & responsive leadership • We must live the Essential Skills as an organization	• See the relationship between all the recommendations -- pedagogies supported by & used to create culture which is supported by & used to develop systems which are codified & upheld by leadership	• *The Adaptive School* lays out helpful principles and structures for responsive and collaborative leadership • Professional learning opportunities and goal setting that includes choice, based on the Design Elements and Essential Skills outcomes
Teacher PD = Time to Learn and Collaborate (3-6 hrs/wk) • PA Design: try & fail & try again • Use/apply Design Elements • Collaborative scoring of student work & time to reflect • Share & model & practice pedagogies & PAs & Advisory	• Aligned: Time to do some standards mapping & aligned PA design • Transferable & Authentic: Time for interdisciplinary collaboration on interdisciplinary units and/or tasks • Iterative: Time to get feedback on PAs, time to look at student work together and reflect/revise PAs • Authentic: PD to meet needs, support people, learn from each other & grow	• There is some "start up" work to be done in creating aligned performance assessments (Essential Skills outcomes & subject-specific CAS) • A first attempt at using the Design Elements to create PAs should be seen as a learning opportunity **(see Culture: "Failure is Essential")** • Use teacher cohorts, adult advisories, or other small groups, and *protocols*
Aligned Teacher Evaluation System • Teachers should be held accountable to the Design Elements and aligned practices; accountability systems can be a help or a hindrance to this shift	• Summer Institute participants cross-walked, then unanimously endorsed the CDE model evaluation system (educator effectiveness) as aligned to the Design Elements	• Implementation: this model is not really built for a 5-minute classroom observation. Consider staying longer; ask students what they are learning to find evidence of good teaching

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Pedagogies Recommendation

PA-Aligned Pedagogies	Aligned How?	Things to consider
Understanding By Design ("Backwards Planning" from Essential Skills)	● Aligned, Accessible, Authentic, Relevant, Transferable ● All the Essential Skills can be taught and learned throughout the curriculum in this way	● Many students are not used to skills like Team Building and Self-Efficacy being measured, only hoped for; that shift requires intentional unit and task design and explicit instruction re: Essential Skills
Formative Assessment & Responsive Instruction ● Informal assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment, one-on-one conferring, feedback, reflection, revision -- indispensable	● "Improve their skills" & "demonstrate growth" ● An explicit way to teach & learn the kind of 21st century skills that are captured in the Essential Skills outcomes	● Significant shift: "Teacher as expert" who asks & has the answer to all the questions to "teacher as coach" of Essential Skills & relevant knowledge ● **See Leadership & Professional Learning Recommendation**
Concrete Recommendations for Activities & Strategies that Illustrate This Kind of Teaching		
Modeling Essential Skills ● Think-Aloud ● Workshop Model	● "Students evaluate targeted skills as modeled & applied by experts" ● "The product and process… [prepares us] for success in the postsecondary & workforce world" ● See *So What Do They Really Know?*	
Constructivist Learning ● Project-Based, Inquiry-Based, and Problem-Based Learning	● Transferable: "Task is complex," Accessible: "...contain a variety of pathways to success for the main 'need-to-know & do' components" ● Inquiry & Problem Solving, Adaptability & Reflective Practice	
Visible Thinking Strategies ● "What makes you say that," "Red light yellow light," "Tug of war"	● Communication, Adaptability & Reflective Practice, Social Responsibility ● See *Making Thinking Visible*	
Portfolio & Defense	● Portfolio: A curated collection of performance assessments aligned to Essential Skills, "Demonstrate growth," Adaptability & Reflective Practice ● Defense: "Authentic application of Essential Skills," "Complex presentation," Communication, Iterative	

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School Culture Recommendation

PA-Aligned Culture	Aligned How?	Things to consider
Strong relationships ● Sense of belonging without judgement ● "There are adults in this building who believe I am capable of greatness" ● All students are capable and competent ● Conflict is okay - we are in this together	● Accessible, Relevant, Iterative ● Social responsibility, Team building ● "Improve their skills" & "demonstrate growth"	● Relationship-building is not just a matter of will; teachers & students need structural and systemic time, space, and support to do so (see Growth Mindset above) ● **See Systems: Advisory**
Agency ● "Can do" belief ● "There is more than one pathway and timeline for success" ● Sense of purpose ● Transparency of expectations	● Aligned, Accessible, Authentic, Transferable, Iterative ● Inquiry & Problem-solving, Adaptability & Reflective Practice ● "Creation of a complex product or presentation"	● The "why" of the learning should always be clear and compelling; students who own their learning require this ● **See Pedagogies: Understanding by Design**
"Failure is Essential to Learning" ● "Learning takes time & many attempts" ● "We can learn anything!" ● Risk taking is valued, failure embraced ● Culture of trust and error and growth ● Growth Mindset	● Authentic, Iterative ● "Improve their skills" & "demonstrate growth" ● Inquiry & Problem-Solving, Adaptability & Reflective Practice	● Traditional schooling has trained most of us into a fixed mindset -- many HS students and teachers will need a shift -- it's okay! Fixed mindset is not fixed. ● Targeted focus on adult culture, including modeling and feedback
Community of Learners (Equity) ● "Growing in and demonstrating the Essential Skills outcomes is what <u>all of us</u> are about" ● "High expectations for all" - Strong belief that the Essential Skills outcomes are rigorous, achievable, and needed by <u>everyone</u> to be successful (not just every student, but <u>everyone</u>)	● Aligned, Accessible, Authentic, Relevant, Transferable ● "The product and process… [prepares us] for success in the postsecondary & workforce world"	● Other related pedagogical & systems recommendations included: Culturally responsive teaching, Restorative justice practices, Trauma informed practice ● **See Leadership: System Cohesion + Individual Autonomy**

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