



**MEASUREMENT,
ASSESSMENT, AND
ACCOUNTABILITY II**

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SEPT.- DEC. 2020

Lessons Learned from the Seek Common Ground Measurement Assessment and Accountability Action Accelerator Phase II

September- December 2020

While each of the six organizations—Advance Illinois, Council for a Better Louisiana, The Education Trust-New York, Expect More Arizona, Ohio Excels and Tennessee SCORE—developed a unique project to inform and engage families in their state around assessment and accountability issues, there were shared learnings across projects. This is noteworthy as the conditions (political, and otherwise) in each of the states was quite different and yet, there were common themes.

These themes (across a majority of projects) are worth considering as advocates and policymakers across the country contemplate communications about, and administration of, spring assessments, reporting of results, and how they will be interpreted and shared with families and others. It is unclear to what extent families' current views are influenced by K-12 schooling during the pandemic, and whether the close-up that virtual and hybrid schooling has allowed--as well as the increased understanding of structural inequities in school systems-- is causing families to want to become even more engaged in the details of their children's education.

These lessons are also a useful starting point when considering what assessment and accountability systems might look like, if students and families were centered in the discussion.

Lessons Learned:

- Families generally support assessment and accountability and are hungry for information on how their children are doing; but there is not a clear consensus on how that information should be gathered from students or received by families.
- Project leaders found that while statewide polling was helpful to assess the opinions of parents, supplementing that research with deep conversations via listening sessions, or focus groups, with parents gave context and nuance to research results that they might not otherwise have appreciated.
- For example, while families have opinions and are supportive of assessment and accountability, they are understandably concerned about a range of education issues right now, including the mental and physical health as well as the social and emotional

needs of their children. The on-going trauma of the pandemic (and its effects) came up repeatedly in listening sessions, as did other concerns, such as the provision of services for special needs students, as well as policies that seemed “out of touch” for the moment, such as the lack of devices, ongoing connectivity issues, and the way students were being graded.

- Parents’ views about education issues are complex. Asking about assessment and accountability, or any single education issue in isolation, doesn’t “land right” with many parents and does not fully reflect their current, complicated experiences with schooling.
- Families consistently noted that their views are NOT solicited on education policies that impact them, including on testing and accountability. They strongly expressed that they would like to be more fully engaged on these, as well as other policy issues.

Participating organizations:

