WHAT’S POSSIBLE?
ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT OPTIONS

Jack Schneider, Executive Director
Education Commonwealth Project
Let’s start with what’s wrong

For students:
• Impacts on what (and how) they’re taught
• Inequitable barrier to graduation
**Figure 4-D.** Teacher-estimated time per year that students spend taking mandated tests

![Pie charts showing time spent on district and state mandated tests.](image)

- **District-mandated tests**:
  - 20%: 1 week or less
  - 9%: More than 1 week, less than 2 weeks
  - 8%: More than 2 weeks, less than a month
  - 40%: About a month
  - 22%: More than a month

- **State-mandated tests**:
  - 18%: 1 week or less
  - 7%: More than 1 week, less than 2 weeks
  - 6%: More than 2 weeks, less than a month
  - 24%: About a month
  - 45%: More than a month

**Figure reads:** An estimated 40% of public school teachers reported that the average student in their class spent one week or less per year taking district-mandated tests.
Students with disabilities, English language learners, African American, Latinx, and low-income students are far more likely to be denied a diploma for not passing a test (Hyslop 2014; Papay, Murnane & Willet, 2010).
Let’s start with what’s wrong

For students:
• Impacts on what (and how) they’re taught
• Inequitable barrier to graduation

For schools:
• Blame and shame
• Pressure instead of support
Here are the school districts that scored the best — and worst — on the MCAS

By Matt Rocheleau Globe Staff, October 2, 2018, 12:49 p.m.
Principals’ Working Conditions, Job Stress, and Turnover Behaviors Under NCLB Accountability Pressure

Hajime Mitani  View all authors and affiliations

Volume 54, Issue 5  https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18785874

is a mediator of the relationship between NCLB sanctions and principal turnover. Implications: Sanction-based accountability pressure appears to make the principalship more stressful and lead to turnover. Policy makers currently redesigning state and local accountability systems under the Every...
Let’s start with what’s wrong

For students:
• Impacts on what (and how) they’re taught
• Inequitable barrier to graduation

For schools:
• Blame and shame
• Pressure instead of support

For communities:
• Loss of control
• Increased segregation
Share of students by race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student poverty rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th>Closed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Note: All differences are statistically significant at the p < 0.10 level or higher with the exception that the shares of Asian and black students in rural schools that close and stay open are not different.
Let’s start with what’s wrong

For students:
• An emphasis on tests and narrowing of curriculum
• An inequitable diploma barrier

For schools:
• Blame and shame
• Pressure instead of support

For communities:
• Loss of control
• Increased segregation

And also ...
How usable is this ...

Our District

- Exceeding Expectations
- Meeting Expectations
- Partially Meeting Expectations

4% 24% 29% 3% 24% 29%
### 2017 Official Accountability Data - Newton North High

#### Organization Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Newton (0217000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Newton North High (0217000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Greater Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School type</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades served</td>
<td>9, 10, 11, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I status</td>
<td>Non-Title I School (NT)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Accountability and Assistance Level

**Level 1** Meeting gap narrowing goals

**This school's overall performance relative to other schools in same school type (School percentiles: 1-89)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All students</th>
<th>Lowest performing</th>
<th></th>
<th>Highest performing</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### This school's progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps (Cumulative Progress and Performance index: 1-100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Group</th>
<th>On Target = 75 or higher</th>
<th>More progress</th>
<th>View Detailed 2017 Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High needs</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Econ. Disadvantaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL and Former ELL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disabilities</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afr. Amer. /Black</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-race, 2 or more races</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nat. Hwr. or Other Isl.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>Met Target</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If we want to do better, we must:

1. Support the full mission of public education
2. Allow all students to show what they know and can do
3. Distinguish between in-school and out-of-school effects
4. Build capacity rather than punch down
5. Empower communities
6. Advance racial and economic equity
7. Offer actionable information
The Education Commonwealth Project works to challenge and expand the way student learning and school quality are assessed, advancing an approach to measurement and accountability that is valid, democratic, and equitable. ECP supports schools and communities with free and open-source tools, and broadly seeks to foster state- and national-level change.
School Quality Measures

Stakeholders identify what is most important to know about school quality. Multiple measures provide a robust picture of school strengths and areas for improvement.

Performance Assessments

Teachers lead the design of curriculum-embedded performance assessments and the scoring of student work. Students demonstrate what they know and can do through real-world application.
How should we assess our schools?

Areas Of Interest

School Quality Framework Indicators

**Teachers & Leadership**  Measures the relevant abilities of a school's teachers and the degree to which they are receiving the support they need to grow as professionals.

- Teachers & The Teaching Environment
- Leadership

**School Culture**  Measures the degree to which the school environment is safe, caring, and academically-oriented.

- Safety
- Relationships
- Academic Orientation

**Resources**  Measures the adequacy of a school's facility, personnel, and curriculum, as well as the degree to which it is supported by the community.

- Facilities & Personnel
- Learning Resources
- Community Support

**Academic Learning**  Measures how much students are learning core academic content, developing their own academic identities, and progressing along positive trajectories.

- Performance
- Student Commitment To Learning
- Critical Thinking
- College & Career Readiness

**Community & Wellbeing**  Measures the development of traits relevant for students leading full and rewarding lives—in society, the workplace, and their private lives.

- Civic Engagement
- Work Ethic
- Creative & Performing Arts
- Health
Reframing Quality as a Process

**School Culture**

Measures the degree to which the school environment is safe, caring, and academically-oriented. It considers factors like bullying, student-teacher relationships, and student valuing of learning.

**Safety**

Seeks to determine the degree to which school climate is a safe place for students to learn. It includes measures of student physical safety and student emotional safety.

- 0 / 2 school admin data sources
- 53% of students responded
- 100% of teachers responded
Drawing on a Range of Data Sources

Table 5. Correlation, Student Subgroup Composition and Survey, Accountability Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>% Economically disadvantaged</th>
<th>% Black/Latino</th>
<th>% English learners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey Percentile</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement Percentile</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.57</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism Percentile</td>
<td>-0.65</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability Percentile</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fostering Reciprocal Accountability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Greenslands Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Everglade Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Watertell Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Blue Lake Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Pleasant Hill Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Red Hills Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Grapevine Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Wild Mountains Elementary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Waterhill School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Orientation</td>
<td>Pine Elementary School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Internal / District Support**
  - Students in Need: Non-PD Services, Home visit teams (evening)
  - Students in Need: Non-PD Services, Mentoring program for students
  - Students in Need: Non-PD Services, Equitable assignment of students
  - Teacher Retention: Staffing, Additional instructional coaches (who can also analyze data)
  - Teacher Retention: Professional Development, Coaching for teachers
  - Teacher Retention: Non-PD Services, Differentiated treatment in hiring
How should we assess student learning?

Elements of a Quality Performance Assessment

- Aligns to learning targets & 21st century skills
- Is open-ended & relevant to the real world
- Requires application & transfer of learning
- Is fair & culturally responsive
- Outlines clear criteria for success
- Results in original products or solutions
Allowing students to show what they know...

**Pitching an Ad to Gatsby**

**GRADES:**
9, 10

**MA STANDARDS:**
RL.9–10.3, SL.11–12.5, W.9–10.1, SL.9–10.4

**IB STANDARDS:**
None

**CONTENT AREAS:**
English Language Arts

**DESCRIPTION:**
This is a performance task based on F. Scott Fitzgerald’s novel, The Great Gatsby. Taking on the role...

**Storytelling in Music**

**GRADES:**
6

**MA STANDARDS:**
W.6.2, W.6.4, 5–6.M.Co.11

**IB STANDARDS:**
Year 1 Arts Criterion A, Year 1 Arts Criterion B, Year 1 Arts Criterion C, Year 1 Arts Criterion D

**CONTENT AREAS:**
Music, English Language Arts

**DESCRIPTION:**
Students take on the role of a journalist writing about one of the most influential pieces of music...
...and what they can do

Analyzing Molecular Properties to Improve Products

GRADES:
10

MA STANDARDS:
HS.CHEM.2.6 SE.P.4

IB STANDARDS:
None

CONTENT AREAS:
Science Chemistry

DESCRIPTION:
Students adopt the role of a consultant in a “think tank” firm, which are consultants to local busin...

Mapping New England

GRADES:
3

MA STANDARDS:
HSS.3.T1.01 HSS.3.T2.01 W.3.1 RI.3.7

IB STANDARDS:
None

CONTENT AREAS:
Social Studies

DESCRIPTION:
Students create a map with symbols of their home state (physical features, landmarks, major cities) ...
We can do assessment better

1. Support the full mission of public education
2. Allow all students to show what they know and can do
3. Distinguish between in-school and out-of-school effects
4. Build capacity rather than punch down
5. Empower communities
6. Advance racial and economic equity
7. Offer actionable information
Free, open-source, and supported

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who can use the resources?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why become an ECP partner?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We will work with you to build relationships between teachers, administration, districts, and community. We will provide support to use and customize resources to measure school quality and student learning in ways that reflect the values of your community. We can consult on how to use data to make informed policy decisions and how to leverage data to advocate for student needs. Your partnership with ECP will help you build capacity to join MCIEA as a member district if that is a direction you choose to pursue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to become an ECP partner:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Staying in Touch

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Or: julie@edcommonwealth.org