

September 20, 2013

Memorandum

To: LEESC Members
From: Tori Stephens-Shauger, Principal ACE Leadership High School
Vanessa Svihla, Assistant Professor, UNM School of Education
Tony Monfiletto, NM Center for School Leadership
Re: Performance Assessment

Performance Assessment as an Equal Option for Graduation:

We propose that after a year of study (May 2014), Performance Assessment be adopted as an alternative to the Standards Based Assessment or PARCC assessment required for graduation. Currently, the Alternative Demonstration of Competency (ADC) pathway for graduation may only be used as an option of last resort, that is, students must fail the state exam before they can take the ADC. In this proposal, high schools and/or districts would be allowed to opt out of SBA administration and select the performance assessment pathway to demonstrate competency and meet high school exit graduation requirements.

Given the high stakes nature of the high school assessment (that is an exit requirement for high school graduation), it will be critical for the performance assessment option to address the criteria of validity, reliability, and freedom of bias. We offer a consistent approach to the design of a performance assessment option to meet high school graduation requirements, administered by the New Mexico Performance Assessment Network (NMPAN).

New Mexico Performance Assessment Network (NMPAN):

NMPAN members collaborate to build the capacity to use "Performance Assessment" through professional development that is aimed at creating tools/rubrics that meet a high standard for reliability and validity. Research to verify this work is currently being funded and performed by UNM. The Performance Assessment option will be completed by the end of the 2013-14 school year. However, funding is needed to continue the research aimed at demonstrating the validity and reliability research on the project to demonstrate its legitimacy.

Background:

Performance Assessment is a comprehensive evaluation in which a student can demonstrate his/her accomplishments, strengths, and weaknesses. Using the official New Mexico Standards and Benchmarks and/or CCSS as a guide, the goal is to create tasks that allows students to demonstrate expected knowledge, reasoning, skills, and/or attitudes. The tasks should be authentic (real-world) observable (public), and rooted in the actual instructional approach of the school.

Like all good assessments, our approach will be feasible (in time, space, and cost), fair (not biased based on gender, race, etc.), and flexible (allow multiple outcomes). The evaluation tools we create will assess the if the student has mastered the learning outcomes expected in the approved standards.

Talking Points for NMPAN & the PARR Collaboratory

Standardized tests are proxies for learning. Their secrecy doesn't allow for meaningful public accountability.

Employers want information about skills such as professionalism, innovation, and collaboration. Current assessment practices cannot provide this.

Currently students in New Mexico must fail the initial standardized test before they have a chance to prove their learning through a performance assessment.

The Common Core is designed to prepare students for the real world. A better way to assess the common core is through real-world applications.

There's a national movement toward more authentic assessment. Policy makers are dissatisfied with the results of single measure accountability (see the State School Officers funding of this research).

The New Mexico Performance Assessment Network – or NMPAN-- provides support to schools and teachers interested in using performance assessments.

With support from an Interdisciplinary Research grant from the UNM College of Education and the Office of the Provost, we formed a collaboratory. A collaboratory is a lab without walls, where members contribute resources to solve a challenging problem. The Performance Assessments are Rich & Reliable-- or PARR-- Collaboratory will establish the validity and reliability of Performance Assessments.

Why have we given the power to judge to those who are disconnected from our community. Performance assessments give local employers and community members a chance to inform the work of schools.

Claims that this work is not "valid" are false. Examples of meaningful assessments are musical performances, debates, and science fairs. Judging real world performances like these are far more valid than any standardized test because they are rooted in real-world expectations.

Performance assessments are a proven method in other states (see the NYC Performance Standards Consortium) and high performing nations.

Talking points for ACE

We have never had an employer ask for a student's reading or math score. However, we have had employers hire our students after participating in their exhibition (performance assessment).

We have never had an employer ask for a student's reading score before hiring them (typically they offer them a job after participating in their exhibition).

Traditional
State
Assessments

New CCSS
Assessments

Common
Performance
Tasks

Learning
Tasks

Student-
Designed
Projects

CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENT FOR DEEPER LEARNING

Standardized,
multiple-choice
tests of routine
skills

Standardized
tests with
multiple-choice
and open-ended
items, plus 1-2
day performance
tasks of some
applied
knowledge and
skills

Standard
performance
tasks lasting 1-3 -
weeks that
include
structured inquiry
and demand
more integrated
skills

Performance
tasks that require
students to carry
out inquiries,
analyze findings,
and revise in
response to
feedback

Longer, deeper
investigations
lasting 2-3
months requiring
students to
initiate, design,
conduct,
analyze, revise,
and present their
work in multiple
modalities

Examples: WKSE-
CRT, OAKS

Examples: SBAC
and PARCC

Examples: C-PAS
and SCALE NY

Examples: C-PAS
and SCALE OH

Examples:
Envision Schools,
NY Performance
Standards
Consortium, IB