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Dissenting Report
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As a parent representative, I respectfully submit this on behalf of the parents and students of Colorado.

The representatives of the 1202 Task Force embody a continuum of ideas and opinions regarding the Colorado State Assessment system. When left with the flexibility to express those varying opinions, work progressed. When forced to arrive at a false consensus, dissension began.

It is my opinion that the experience of the Task Force in struggling to reach consensus demonstrated precisely the problems that currently exist in the State Assessment system. While the specific manifestations are unique to each situation, the underlying principle is identical to both.

During the Task Force meetings, there were many topics discussed and not all of them are reflected in the majority report. This decision was made in the interest of having a report by the deadline. However, in doing this, the very nature and complexity of this issue was lost.

The state assessment system has a direct impact on the educational system. The statutes governing that assessment system must provide flexibility at the local level. With flexible guidelines, the assessment of students can produce the desired result efficiently and effectively. The tools used must have complete transparency of purpose and use. The students' data must be protected. With a solid and stable foundation of broad guidelines (and clearly defined benchmarks*) schools can then provide varying models of education to meet the needs of individual students.

This is a complex issue, not because of tests and systems for delivering tests, but because it deals with human beings which by nature are unique. The best way for accommodating the endless variety of individual learners is to provide them, not an endlessly complex and cumbersome educational apparatus, but one that is flexible and adaptable to a wide range of needs and preferences.

*Benchmarks – While the Task Force did not address the issue of standards, it is broadly recognized that a means of establishing a performance level is necessary if education is to be delivered within a system.

Attached:

State Assessment Proposal – As proposed by Syna Morgan on January 9

The following document, State Assessment Proposal, is included as an example of a system that would allow for a flexible assessment system. This proposal was prepared in a format and with language that is recognized in the education profession. It provides a simple framework with definitions. Page 3 of the report highlights the key elements that allow for maximum flexibility.

Guiding Principles for Colorado’s Educational System – Parents’ Perspective

For a year or more, thousands of parents have been meeting to discuss Colorado's education system. Out of those interactions recurring themes emerged. Regardless of background, school choice, environment, and personal beliefs, parents have a vested interest in their children, their children's education, and their children's future.

This list is respectfully submitted and shared as an idea of Principles to refer to when considering the educational landscape for Colorado.

DEFINITIONS: (These definitions are provided as guidelines for the development of the above ideas.)

Used in the report:

Consensus: an idea or opinion that is shared by all the people in the group

Flexible: characterized by a ready capability to adapt to new, different or changing requirements

For the writers use:

Integrity: firm adherence to a code of moral value

Moral: of or related to principles of right and wrong behavior

Dissenting: nonconformists

State Assessment Proposal

Purpose and Use

The first and foremost use of quality assessments is to give students, teachers and families meaningful information about the progress of student learning. This information helps guide the next steps in learning based on each student's strengths and needs.

Teachers and schools use quality assessment practices as part of teaching and learning. The majority of these assessments occur at the classroom level, with common assessments at the school and district level, and state mandated assessments at the state level. Teachers use a balance of assessments that serve specific purposes as described below:

- Formative – occur frequently, embedded within teaching & learning,
- Interim – periodic checks, track progress toward learning targets,
- Summative – at the end of learning, assess degree of mastery.

Teachers employ a wide variety of strategies to assess student learning in meaningful ways and help build a student body of evidence. Students and their families are informed of the results of assessments through effective mechanisms that provide results, descriptive feedback and helpful interpretations and analyses. Accordingly, students and families work collaboratively with teachers to build a complete picture of a student's strengths and struggles.

It is critical that the system of classroom, local and state assessments provides an appropriate balance of assessment practices based on the purpose for and use of each assessment. Three categories of purpose for and use of assessment are listed below:

Instruction

- planning instruction
- timely student feedback
- next steps in learning
- adjustments to instruction

Comparability

- student learning of standards
- effectiveness of instruction
- program evaluation for actionable adjustments

Accountability

- ensure growth and achievement for all students
- ensure reduction of achievement gaps
- evaluate effectiveness of schools

State assessments have a different purpose and use than local assessments. In the next section, the purpose for and use of state assessments and local assessments is listed. In addition, a possible scenario is presented for the redesign of the state assessment system.

Purpose and Use: State Standards & State Assessments

Instruction

- planning instructional programming at the school and district level
- curriculum review and mapping

Comparability

- school effectiveness in teaching of state standards
- a part of body of evidence for program evaluation

Accountability

- district accountability to implementation of state standards (demonstrated through student achievement of and growth toward mastery of state standards)
- school accountability to implementation of state standards (demonstrated through student achievement of and growth toward mastery of state standards)
- district and school accountability to reduction of achievement gaps

Purpose and Use: Local Assessments

Instruction

- planning instruction
- professional learning community data discussions
- timely student feedback
- next steps in learning
- adjustments to instruction
- communication of student progress for families

Comparability

- student learning of district curriculum (including state standards)
- analysis of instructional effectiveness in professional learning communities
- district and school program evaluation for actionable adjustments

Accountability

- schools ensure timely growth toward and achievement of district curriculum (including state standards) for every student
- schools ensure reduction of achievement gaps

Purpose and Use: Classroom Assessment Practices

Instruction

- planning instruction to meet the needs of all students
- professional learning community data discussions
- immediate student feedback
- immediate adjustments to next steps in learning
- immediate adjustments to instruction
- frequent communication of student progress to families

Comparability

- each student's learning of district curriculum (including state standards)
- professional learning communities analysis of instructional effectiveness
- classroom and school program evaluation for immediate adjustments

Accountability

- student accountability to their own learning to ensure timely growth toward and achievement of district curriculum (including state standards) for every student
- teachers ensure reduction of achievement gaps

Flexibility

It is recommended that Colorado state laws that directly (SB212, READ Act, SB191) or indirectly (SB163) mandate testing are revised to allow for local school districts that meet or exceed the state expectations of school performance be able to have the option of reducing the frequency of state testing in favor of demonstrations of meeting state expectations through a robust local assessment system.

The scenarios that follow illustrate the recommended frequency of state testing. Flexibility would include:

- School districts that want to administer English Language Arts every year to all students would apply for a waiver to participate at that level.
- School districts that want to administer the scenario with a sampling model (like NAEP) would apply for a waiver to participate at that level.
- Parents who do not want their students to participate in standardized testing would have the option of "opting out" without negatively impacting educator and school accountability.

Scenario: Reducing the hours per year that each grade spends on standardized statewide summative assessments.

- Literacy (ELA) and numeracy (math) are assessed at least once in each school level.
- Social studies and science are assessed once in the elementary and middle school levels.
- The blue shading shows the pathway of a student across grades 3rd through 11th.

Grade	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
3 rd	ELA (Reading & Writing)	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
4 th	Social Studies	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS	SS
5 th	Math Science	M Sc	M Sc	M	M	M	M	M	M
6 th	ELA (Reading & Writing)	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
7 th	Social Studies	M SS	M SS	M SS	M SS	M SS	M SS	M SS	M SS
8 th	Math Science Or Algebra I	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI	M Sc AlgI
High School	End-of-Year Algebra I Integrative I	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl	EoY AlgI or Intgl
	ELA (once in HS) Or Augmented PWR	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA	ELA
	PWR (11 th grade)	PWR	PWR	PWR	PWR	PWR	PWR	PWR	PWR

Scenario: READ Act

- All students undergo an initial screening and participate in the Beginning of Year (BoY) benchmark of the interim assessment.
- All students with a Significant Reading Deficiency are given a diagnostic assessment to identify their specific reading needs.
- All students with a Significant Reading Deficiency have frequent progress monitoring through the assessment practices relevant to their learning needs in reading.

Kindergarten	1st	2nd	3rd
<p>All Students: Screening</p> <p>Students with SRD: Diagnostic Progress Monitor (using probes, classroom and interim assessments)</p>	<p>New Students: Screening</p> <p>All Students: BoY interim benchmark</p> <p>Students with SRD: Diagnostic Progress Monitor (using probes, classroom and interim assessments)</p>	<p>New Students: Screening</p> <p>All Students: BoY interim benchmark</p> <p>Students with SRD: Diagnostic Progress Monitor (using probes, classroom and interim assessments)</p>	<p>New Students: Screening</p> <p>All Students: BoY interim benchmark</p> <p>Students with SRD: Diagnostic Progress Monitor (using probes, classroom and interim assessments)State</p> <p>All Students: Summative ELA State Test</p>

Guiding Principles for Colorado's Educational System – Parents' Perspective

Background

For a year or more, thousands of parents have been meeting to discuss Colorado's education system. Out of those interactions recurring themes emerged. Regardless of background, school choice, environment, and personal beliefs, parents have a vested interest in their children, their children's education, and their children's future.

This list is respectfully submitted and shared as an idea of Principles to refer to when considering the educational landscape for Colorado.

In order to maintain an efficient and effective educational system in Colorado, please continue to have respectful, productive conversations with parents, educators, and your public servants.

Guiding Principles for Colorado's Educational System

The following Principles were collaboratively developed by Colorado parents to provide a foundation for educational decisions for Colorado.

These basic guiding Principles reflect a framework to create a practical system that is flexible and diverse enough to accommodate the innate and unique aspects of human beings.

We believe that these Principles provide a framework to empower students for their entire lives and provide the highest opportunity for individual students to succeed.

We recognize that human beings are unique individualized expressions.

We recognize that learning occurs between a student, a teacher and a parent.

We recognize that a legal framework exists to provide for educational opportunities and that framework provides general guidelines for this system.

Principles:

Local control and local accountability

Balanced and flexible model

Transparency of intent, use and purpose

Standards are provided as guardrails

Parental rights are innate

Efficiency and effectiveness of allocation of resources

The public funds the system and the public is the customer/consumer of the services

No regulation for profit

Products and tools are resources

Tools and resources are drawn as needed at the local/individual level

A student's learning process will not be driven by special interest

Models of success – demonstrate best practices

Achievement is not assessment – assessment is not the exclusive measure of achievement

Individual learning is not scalable – the farther away from the student, teacher, parent triad the less integrity in the model

Equity – every student is given the opportunity to fulfill their highest potential