



To: Friends and Allies
From: Jim Cowen, Executive Director
Date: July 09, 2020
Subject: Parents, Educators, Advocates and Policymakers Agree, Assessment Data is Valuable

Measurement Matters—Support for Annual State Assessments Remains Strong Even in the Face of a Global Pandemic

State and district education leaders are preparing plans to safely resume learning in the fall. Finding a way forward that successfully balances safety concerns while attending to the social, emotional and academic needs of every student is no small task—particularly when considering that the novel coronavirus has only exacerbated existing inequities. Unfortunately, against that backdrop, **several states have prematurely moved to suspend using annual summative assessments—one of the primary tools they have to understand where students stand on their path to success and how to adjust the system to meet their needs.**

These requests run contrary to the sentiment of parents, educators, advocates and policymakers on the important role assessment data plays and ignore several key points:

- **The decision to cancel tests for the next school year is premature and will not yield significant cost savings.** The U.S. Department of Education did the right thing this past spring when they waived annual testing requirements for this year. The global pandemic forced abrupt and extended school closures and schools across the country were ill-equipped to deliver months of remote learning. As a result, assessment data would not have painted an accurate picture of this past year. Anti-testing proponents, however, are seizing on this extended, pandemic moment to postpone, delay or outright eliminate testing for next year, at a minimum. There is simply no need to rush a decision now about what might be possible next spring. Furthermore, claims that cancelling testing will yield significant cost-savings and a redirection of resources to classroom learning are disingenuous at best.
- **Assessment data is needed now more than ever.** We are trying to overcome the greatest disruption ever faced by our public-school system. To do so, we must have measures of where students stand academically. Beginning of year assessments – already a common practice in schools during the fall – will be important to directly inform classroom instruction. End of year summative assessments in the spring will be equally important to ascertain how well our education system is serving all students, particularly Black and Latino students, those with special needs or are from low-income communities, who have been disproportionately impacted in this uncertain time.
- **We cannot fix what we don't measure.** Parents and educators are joined in their belief that measurement matters by both the civil rights and business communities that made [support for annual assessments](#) a signature component of their federal advocacy platform. In the face of previous efforts to 'opt-out' of annual assessments, 12 civil rights organizations [joined together](#) to acknowledge the need to continue to work to improve annual assessments and stated "...But we cannot fix what we cannot measure. And abolishing the tests or sabotaging the validity of their results only makes it harder to identify and fix the deep-seated problems in our schools."

Don't Take our Word for It—Check the Data!

Parents, Educators, Advocates and Policymakers agree, even in the face of great turmoil people understand that measurement matters. We have collected the following polls and surveys that reinforce the huge role that data plays in making informed decisions and supporting student growth and success.

- On January 22, Educators for Excellence released their “[Voices from the Classroom](#)” nationwide survey of a representative sample of 1,500 public school teachers and found that *92% of teachers support summative measures of student learning.*
- On April 8th, [EdTrust-NY released](#) the results of a statewide survey of public school parents to amplify the voices of New York families during the coronavirus crisis. Their survey found that *89% of all parents, and 72% of low-income parents are very concerned that their children will fall behind academically.*
- On April 29th, the Collaborative for Student Success released the results of its national “[catch-up](#)” survey of 5,500+ education professionals from across the country, with every state represented. We found that *71% of school administrators, 59% of teachers and 70% of policymakers & advocates favor the use of a high-quality assessment to measure learning loss at the start of the next school year.*
- On May 20th, Learning Heroes released their [Parents 2020 study](#). After surveying a representative sample of over 3,600 parents or guardians – with oversamples of African American and Latino families – they found that *70% of parents say that want to know what material their child has missed as a result of the pandemic and what their school plans to do to address the missed classroom time.*
- On June 24th, the Data Quality Campaign released the results of a [national poll](#) that found an overwhelming *89% of teachers agree that they want data about which of their students are furthest behind so that they can do their part to support students getting back on track. 77% of parents agree that states should resume administration of end-of-year summative assessments in math and reading next year.*