



BEYOND THE NUMBERS CONVENING 2014

Plenary Session Summary

Measures for Measure

The Promise of Student Perception Surveys to Improve Diverse School Outcomes

The increased collection of quantitative data on student achievement outcomes has greatly influenced initiatives to ensure that students graduate high school college- and career-ready. However, quantitative data offer limited insight on factors that influence student learning outside the classroom. This plenary draws on the latest research on student perceptions and socio-emotional attitudes that influence academic achievement outcomes and postsecondary success, and includes an example of how Oakland Unified School District is implementing a more holistic accountability system that recognizes the value of socio-emotional indicators of student learning.

Hunter Gehlbach, associate professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, began the session by sharing results from studies that highlight the positive impact that non-cognitive measures (such as a student's sense of belonging or grit) can have on more traditional measures (like grade point average and attendance). He also discussed the use of surveys to gather key information about students' perceptions of self and teacher effectiveness. While sharing the basic principles of good survey design, Gehlbach highlighted the importance of word choice when constructing survey questions.

Patrick Kyllonen, senior research director at the Educational Testing Service, discussed the relationship between socio-emotional indicators of student achievement and predictors of workforce success. For Kyllonen, the sector "should care about these measures because parts of schooling not measured by test scores are actually driving labor market and other life outcomes." Rather than focusing on quantifiable outcomes like IQ, education leaders should gather and analyze data on more holistic measures of student learning. According to Kyllonen, future work will look to online technologies and software that help students both identify and strengthen academic learning behaviors.

Kyllonen and Gehlbach agreed that determining exactly what attributes to measure, and subsequently the best way to measure them, presents a formidable challenge. Characteristics like tenacity, self-discipline, adaptability, and integrity are some of the key student behaviors educators should seek to better understand. "In concert with academic achievement," said Gehlbach, "socio-emotional and behavioral indicators of student learning can significantly enhance a teacher's ability to target student needs."

Offering a practitioner perspective, **Kristina Tank-Crestetto, director of social emotional learning and leadership; Matin Abdel-qawi, site leader; and Jean Wing, executive director of the quality, accountability & analytics department, all from the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD)** emphasized that "social-emotional learning (SEL) in schools is imperative for our community growth and development." OUSD has designed supports around five domains: self-management, self-awareness,

responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and social awareness. These domains are essential to supporting community and individual success. Though OUSD has faced challenges in establishing a common language for what is meant by socio-emotional indicators of student learning, the district has made great strides in supporting teachers' professional development in this area to fully understand how to enhance instructional delivery in this area. As a California Office to Reform Education (CORE) district, OUSD is hoping to incorporate these indicators as part of a holistic accountability system. Future challenges will include ensuring that educators view data on socio-emotional indicators as key contributors to understanding student learning and not just as a metric used to determine rewards and consequences for CORE districts.