The Importance of Statewide Assessment Data to Inform Policy

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A Test for Education: Assessment’s Role in Recovery
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The Value of State Summative Tests

• Large-scale tests can add value to policy decisions and support program evaluation functions.

• The 2021 state tests showed us a lot about the substantial impact on student learning.

• Even with participation rate challenges, state tests provided the best view of the pandemic impact compared with any other tests
  • Sample characteristics, administration mode
The Value of 2022 State Testing


1. The 2022 results can confirm the low scores in 2021 and the pandemic impact. With high participation rates, these data can help us better understand student learning patterns throughout the pandemic.

2. The 2022 results can shed light on any learning recovery efforts.
   • Both cases require the kinds of careful analyses conducted by my colleagues Damian Betebenner, Leslie Keng, Nathan Dadey, and others with the 2021 data.
How are things looking in 2022?

An example from Indiana: “State-level data indicates stabilization for some student populations. Specific students require higher levels of support to reach pre-pandemic performance. Local data analysis involves 1) which students need support; 2) the levels of support; and 3) content areas of need.”

Dr. Charity Flores, Chief Academic Officer for the Indiana Department of Education

We are seeing similar results from other states.
Communicating and Using the 2022 Results

• Nathan Dadey wrote recently if scores increase slightly in 2022, the headline could be:


or

Schools Back on Track: 2022 6th Graders Doing Better Than 2021 6th Graders

• How we communicate can greatly affect the necessary policy actions.
The “Most Important” NAEP

• We often hear things like, “this is the most important election in US history” so I say this with some humility, but:

This is the most important administration of NAEP ever!

• This will be the first NAEP since 2019 and will be the first truly national look at the influence of the pandemic on student achievement.
The Value of NAEP

• NAEP, (the “Nation’s Report Card”) provides high-quality reports on student achievement across the country.

• There are two NAEPs:
  • “Main” or State NAEP reports performance for each participating state and certain urban districts—since 1990—Results in late October
  • “Long-term trend” reports a national picture of achievement since the 1960s—Results soon!
Connecting with Relevant Data

NAEP has the advantage of being able to connect to other relevant data sources to add meaning to the scores and score changes.
Now What?

- State and national assessments can be the most effective instruments for monitoring educational trends.
- The 2022 state and NAEP assessment results will provide a true “national” picture of the effects of the pandemic on student learning and the beginning of any recovery.
- How long do you think it takes to make up 3-6 months of “learning loss?”
- ESSER money expires in September 2024! State legislatures need to make up this gap!

Marion. Center for Assessment. NCCL. August 1, 2022
A Word About Innovation

• Under current federal law, through-year is at best an empty promise, but at worst it can undermine strong classroom practices.

• Stop running scared of curriculum—Chicago’s Skyline Initiative

• What’s your goal for innovation? If it is truly to improve learning and teaching, we have a lot of evidence about what works and what doesn’t!

• Dick Elmore: “Task predicts performance.”

• In other words, if your focus is on low-level thinking characteristic of many multiple-choice items, guess what type of performance you’ll get?