

*PhillyCORE Leaders strives to explore critical challenges facing Philly education from multiple perspectives. By providing balanced information, we support informed leadership in education. However we don't stop at the discussion; our goal is to put words and ideas into action. This "Take 5 Issue Brief" summarizes the key takeaways and next steps for involvement coming out of our December 2014 meeting on measuring outcomes.*

### 5 KEY TAKEAWAYS

**1. Varying goals of education.** It is challenging to measure outcomes because different stakeholders have different perspectives on the purpose and goals of our educational system. Though these goals are not necessarily mutually exclusive, it creates tension. Over time, different measures have been used to capture these various outcomes of education, and there are strengths and challenges associated with each of these measures.

| Measures                  | Strengths  | Challenges  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Academic achievement      | Ensure that students meet consistent goals and can be standardized across system | Does not capture complex skills, has limitations for fair accountability        |
| Academic growth           | More accurately captures impact for accountability and can be standardized       | Does not capture complex skills or measure outcomes in relation to goals        |
| Portfolio/Teacher created | Empowers teachers and can capture more complex skills                            | Difficult to evaluate and standardize across the system                         |
| Character                 | Captures more complex knowledge and skills                                       | Difficult to determine how to set standards or track progress on these outcomes |

**2. Two different local and state measurement tools.** Currently, Pennsylvania uses the SPP (School Performance Profile) to measure school outcomes. This measure includes academic achievement, academic growth, closing the achievement gap, other academic indicators (e.g., graduation, attendance) and advanced achievement. The District uses the SPR (School Performance Reports), which includes achievement, progress, and climate. While these measures attempts to capture the complexity of educational outcomes, it can be challenging to understand the formulas. It's also difficult to assign value to a number and the measures are constantly changing so there is no consistent longitudinal look or easy comparison across states.

**3. Tension between the uses of measurement: improvement vs. accountability.** Summative measures like the SPP may help us understand how schools are doing but they do not help schools improve. Other measures (like character) offer critical information about students' readiness to learn but it's unclear if - and how - teachers should be accountable for these outcomes. Indeed, just because something is important and tracked doesn't mean it should be part of an accountability system.

**4. Different stakeholders want - and need - different information.** Currently, we collect extensive data, but do not do a particularly effective job at sharing this information with stakeholders based on their needs. Policymakers' challenge is to determine how best to disseminate data by finding the right balance between being thorough and being clear. This includes the right timing, format, and focus on actionable next steps.

**5. Trust among stakeholders is critical.** Part of the tension in measuring outcomes is the level of trust policymakers are willing to place in teachers. If we want to empower teachers, then we have to trust them to participate in measuring student outcomes. And there need to be more opportunities for dialogue about measurement that involve teachers and students in the conversation.

## 5 NEXT STEPS

- 1.** The District is considering how to incorporate information on stakeholder feedback and educator effectiveness into the SPR measure for upcoming years. Access more information on the District's SPR measure – including a User Guide, FAQs, and copies of all the SY 12-13 reports. **If you have feedback or thoughts on the measures, e-mail [performanceframework@philasd.org](mailto:performanceframework@philasd.org).**
- 2.** We do not effectively provide parents – and other key stakeholders – with information on how to interpret students' progress through high school graduation. We need to help develop – and aggregate – better developmental recommendations for parents in K-12 education. The School District is using new online resources to keep families engaged and informed about student progress. **Families can learn more at <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/p/publicengagement/stayconnected>**
- 3.** Effectively measuring diverse outcomes at the classroom and school level is incredibly challenging. **Learn about different types of measures that some schools have been experimenting with such as the Character Growth Card ([characterlab.org/character-growth-card/](http://characterlab.org/character-growth-card/)).**
- 4.** The focus on measuring outcomes at the systems level should be on implementing solutions – we need less talk and more action! We need to build better partnerships between researchers and practitioners so that we can use data to replicate effective practices. **Learn more about the Philadelphia Education Research Consortium (PERC), an innovative partnership among the SDP, the city's charter sector, and the research community and led by Research for Action. ([researchforaction.org](http://researchforaction.org)).**
- 5.** If we want measuring outcomes to actually improve performance, we need to discuss what system supports are in place to develop students and teachers before they are evaluated. Teacher and student empowerment as part of the measurement process is critical. **Learn more and get involved in supporting teacher networks in Philadelphia ([philaedfund.org/educators](http://philaedfund.org/educators)).**

## 5 RESOURCES

- 1.** The School District's School Progress Reports: <http://webgui.phila.k12.pa.us/offices/s/strategic-analytics/annual-reports/school-progress-reports>
- 2.** The Pennsylvania School Performance Profile: [paschoolperformance.org](http://paschoolperformance.org)
- 3.** Character Lab: [characterlab.org](http://characterlab.org)
- 4.** What Works Clearinghouse: [ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/)
- 5.** Common Core Standards: [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org)