



NEW METRICS STUDENT VOICE REPORT



May 2016

Overview

From March 17th to May 2nd, students attending Albuquerque schools gave their feedback on the New Metrics tool. Twenty-two students from four schools - Health Leadership High School, Media Arts Collaborative Charter School, Amy Biehl High School and ACE Leadership High School – participated in small group discussions at their schools.

The small group facilitator (and author of this report) used a similar format with each engagement: introductions, orientation, New Metrics tool review, general discussion/question and answer about review, questionnaire, guided discussion, closing. The following two sections synthesize student input from the four sessions.

Shared Insights and Themes

Students responded well to the New Metrics tool. Ninety-five percent (21 out of 22) of students said, “New Metrics would work in my school.” Many said they currently enjoy similar evaluations in their schools. A number of students recommended other schools pilot New Metrics or assessments like those offered in their schools.

Themes emerged among the students’ responses, including:

New Metrics

1. **Provides greater student agency**

“I like how [New Metrics] gives students an opinion of their own and the option to do great things for themselves.”

- Student from Health Leadership High School

2. **Assesses students using a responsive, holistic, personalized approach**

“[New Metrics] aligns with our values. It gives us the support and opportunity to be understood as a whole; not just from an academic standpoint.”

- Student from Media Arts Collaborative Charter School

3. **Seems to have more breadth, depth and relevancy than standardized tests**

“New Metrics makes sense to me because it captures all of the qualities a student should be able to demonstrate when they graduate.”

- Student from Health Leadership High School

4. **Encourages students’ passions**

“New Metrics is evaluating the skills and integrity, whereas standardized tests evaluate the content taught using few of their skills.”

- Student from Media Arts Collaborative Charter School

5. **Links to real-life relevancy**

“Other schools just teach you enough to pass the test. We need schools that will teach you to get through life.”

- Student from Media Arts Collaborative Charter School

6. Values students as people

"It's about me as a person rather than me as a number."
-Student from Amy Biehl High School

7. Offers on-going assessment of growth (formative), which can relieve test anxiety (summative)

"More authentic demonstration of progress."
-Student from Health Leadership High School
responding to what would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics

Some students expressed their appreciation for the New Metrics designers asking for feedback.

"I appreciate that adults are trying to adapt evaluations to the ever evolving learning culture in high school and I think New Metrics is a good start."

- Student from Amy Biehl Leadership High

Shared Concerns

Students raised a number of concerns. Most focused on the implementation of the tool, for example:

- How will New Metrics translate to public schools? Students with disabilities?
- How often and by whom will students be evaluated?
- How will evaluators communicate student expectations for each area?
- Will students be allowed to choose specific projects to demonstrate each capacity?
- How will the tool evaluate the basics: reading, writing and arithmetic?
- How do you create objectivity, reliability and validity?
- To what extent does the tool inform grades and daily grading?
- Will the tool be available in multiple languages?
- How will more students, youth and community members provide input to improve the tool?
- Would New Metrics apply only to high school students? If so, how do elementary and middle school students transition from one evaluation system to another?

Additionally, students identified some missing components, e.g. *entrepreneurialism, financial literacy* and *technology and media literacy*.

Conclusion

In our discussions, students showed excitement about New Metrics. Some voiced skepticism about standardized testing and other traditional evaluations. Most students who participated had an understanding of the proposed New Metrics forms of evaluation through their charter school experience.

Personalizing evaluation and being recognized as a human resonated deeply with students. Students spoke of their desires for realistic, relevant and applicable assessment to gauge their life-preparation. Students welcomed piloting New Metrics at their school and encouraged the design team to consider how New Metrics could translate to traditional public school.

“You can be good in one subject, but tank another one, but that doesn’t mean you’re stupid. It just means that subject isn’t your strongest asset. The existing evaluation convicts you for your weaknesses.”

-Student from ACE Leadership High School, responding to how New Metrics is different from the existing evaluation system

Appendix A - Language to Introduce New Metrics Tool to Students

Overview

During the January 29th New Metrics Small Group meeting, partners discussed a Student Voice project to learn student feedback on the New Metrics tool. The group discussed the importance of sharing the background of New Metrics with students and orienting them before asking for input. A draft orientation framework follows.

WHY New Metrics

- We think graduation should be determined by whether you're ready to go on into the world
- Current means of gauging "success" and "growth" do not recognize the whole student
- Students have important skills and competencies beyond subject matter proficiency

HOW Do We Envision Change

- Influence schools to be more responsive to current students
- Introduce a more relevant, community-designed assessment – New Metrics
- Schools adopt New Metrics in order to tell a more complete and accurate story about student achievement

WHAT Are We Doing Today?

- Review New Metrics
- Provide feedback on the relevancy of New Metrics
- Discuss
 - "What do you like about New Metrics?"
 - "Would New Metrics work in your school?"
 - "What would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics to gauge your progress?"
 - "How could New Metrics improve?"
 - "What's different about New Metrics compared to standardized testing?"

Appendix B - Health Leadership High School Notes

General comments

Seems clear

Explains what we did and other schools do

Could be an alternative demonstration of competency

Would this be for all grade levels or just seniors? Probably a process over time, culminating in Capstone/exhibition/etc.

Would students be evaluated by teachers, staff members and community members? Who assesses?

So it's more like a portfolio? Should depend on student whether hard copy or electronic.

Facilitated Discussion

What do you like about New Metrics?

- It isn't really a test, just presenting a portfolio – enables you to see growth
- Many students don't thrive with test taking; New Metrics shows how students grow in community
- Less formal
- Picks up all aspects of students; not just ability to test
- Shows what students are capable of and evaluation of us as people/individuals
- If it inspires us, we can grow further
- Allows us to show what we are passionate about
- How it judges a student beyond what it says on paper; highlights different abilities

Would New Metrics work in your school?

- Yes – 5 (100%)
- No - 0

What would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics to gauge your progress?

- Looking at all your personal work; you can see how much you've grown and boost your self confidence
- See how capable you are – “I achieved something I thought I'd never do”
- Growth is a key word
- More authentic demonstration of progress
- Gives us a chance to show mastery

How could New Metrics improve?

- Don't forget the basics matter greatly – reading, math, etc.
- Stronger focus on communication skills
- Pilot New Metrics with a group of students to keep track of how it works
- How would this change public schools? They would have to adapt

What's different about New Metrics compared to standardized testing?

- I get anxiety with testing; panic attacks with SBA
- Shows growth in a more human way
- Allows us to show what we're capable of
- Reality of what you really learned; implementation
- We learn life skills instead of random facts from books
- Projects explain what we need in life; transferrable skills to real life; relevancy
- How you evaluate teachers who teach us what we need to know to live by ourselves

Anything else?

- Public school already started this – some seniors doing portfolios, but not project-based; seems to be alternate demonstration of competency
- Don't forget the basics; exhibitions won't solve how to show progress in basic concepts

Written Responses

Why does New Metrics make sense to you?

- With New Metrics, it allows us as a project-based learning school to show mastery and what we are really capable of. It gives us a chance to prove ourselves.
- The New Metrics makes sense to me because it captures all of the qualities a student should be able to demonstrate when they graduate.
- It makes sense due to how it is laid out explaining beyond what health does and more about what all schools in one table do
- To my understanding, New Metrics is a good idea because it replaces many of the tests high school students must take, and instead, they present a portfolio of all their work throughout high school to show growth in a more comfortable way.
- New Metrics makes sense to me because it's really important to see real skills in students than test taking skills.

How is New Metrics different from the existing evaluation system?

- You don't have to worry about the stress of testing and you won't have to worry about a grade you got on that test to determine what you do the rest of your life.
- This is different by not having a test score as what our growth is in high school.
- New Metrics goes above how we see good students as if they are good due to what we see on paper. This system sees if they're capable to go outside of their boundaries and see if they are great or not able.
- The current evaluation system is test after test so instead of learning, children are testing more and more. The New Metrics system provides a better outlet where children can learn more and show their work and growth versus a test that gets them nervous causing them to perform poorly.
- New Metrics is different from the current system because it actually tests cognitive skills, and skills needed for future abilities and builds those abilities.

What do you like best about New Metrics?

- I like how it gives students an opinion of their own and the option to do great things for themselves. It will give students a chance to maybe and hopefully make a difference or even a change in someone's life.
- That it catches all aspects of a student
- How a student needs to perform in front of a group and what they really did over those years of high school.
- I like the fact that it isn't a test; it's a portfolio. We are able to show our growth in those subjects throughout work that we've done in all four years of high school.
- I really like that it allows students to actually grow and build skills needed. Also, the community part is important.

What doesn't make sense to you about New Metrics?

- How are students going to be evaluated and how will this determine the difference between a diploma and certificate of completion?
- The New Metrics calls the same activities different names. Have consistent terminology, for example, senior level action project then there's senior capstone.
- When will they begin to inform other students how you will be graded?
- Everything was clearly explained and all our questions were answered to the best of their ability.
- When it would be introduced to students and what the students should look for

What's missing from New Metrics?

- How they will introduce this system to other schools of different evaluation systems
- I don't think anything is missing from what I can think of.
- Maybe I missed it, but communication skills

Anything else?

- HLHS and other schools could use this for capstone and then there will be an example of how the New Metrics work.

Appendix C - Media Arts Collaborative Charter School

General comments

- Would each student be expected to do one thing from each category?
- What would the qualifications be for each of these?
- Worried about restrictions
- How would we grade what we do day-to-day?
- Missing entrepreneurship
- What do we mean by 21st century soft skills?
- What about life skills – financial literacy, how to invest, etc.?
- Ongoing tool or just one time?
- How can we get youth involved in building the tool? Not isolated, but integrated (including middle schoolers who could opt-in)
- Provide a weekend focus group session maybe with students
- How does the tool translate to students with learning disabilities? How do you contextualize/customize the tool?

Facilitated Discussion

What do you like about New Metrics?

- Different because every individual different; highlights learning for individual student; ensures you learn life lessons
- Instead of just learning about subjects, you can do your project on a specialization
- Involves community
- Considers the person - their traits; life skills; includes testing but minimizes it
- Implementing tools and topics that are important to life and long-term assessment; participate in community workshops; opening minds
- Current system restricts learning; New Metrics encourages broader learning and gets students who are turned off by tests involved
- Values students and selves more; alleviates stress of passing tests; counters narrative of being stupid if you can't pass test

Would New Metrics work in your school?

- Yes – 6 (100%)
- No - 0

What would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics to gauge your progress?

- I could discover what I'm good at and what I want to learn
- More about giving to the community; personal potential
- How I would react to situations I don't see inside of school
- Whole potential and how you can contribute to society; relevancy
- Students know what they want to do
- Exposure to pathways and broader life; organization; time management

How could New Metrics improve?

- Simple is better; implement it sooner rather than later
- Pilot this tool with students
- Transition middle schools into New Metrics; more media or technology for possible school activity and lifelong skills
- Specify how it will be assessed and by whom; how it could be adapted to students with disabilities
- Ensure teacher buy-in as well as students
- More intergenerational discussions

What's different about New Metrics compared to standardized testing?

- Breaking down things/habits we're used to, like procrastinating
- Less stress
- Standardized testing can be gamed, less opportunity for that here
- People have bad weeks and moments, longer assessment would account for that

Anything else?

- How would this work with the traditional system?
- Do this throughout the year
- [Name of student] volunteers to be the first participant
- How do you create objectivity and reliability?

Written Responses

Why does New Metrics make sense to you?

- It aligns with our values, it gives us the support and opportunity to be understood as a whole; not just from an academic standpoint
- They are focusing on implementing new tools and new ways to further students
- It answers issues I have had with tests. It addresses personality, like kindness and generosity rather than how sharp my mind is. I like that a lot and also how it goes over life skills
- By showing that every student is different with learning and showing how they learn. This is a very simple assessment tool
- It's less that and more that standardized testing does not make sense. We need a form of assessment that takes more time (instead of all on one day) and allows students to demonstrate abilities that are more applicable in the real world, not just memorization.
- I think it would make sense, generally because of the current testing system. Students are graded by how well they can do on one test, so I think being able to do our own projects and have our own ideas would help get people more involved and make the test more individual

How is New Metrics different from the existing evaluation system?

- New Metrics is evaluating the skills and integrity, whereas standardized tests evaluate the content taught using few of their skills
- New Metrics is focusing solely on topics that are important for a student to be armed with. New Metrics looks at a long-term life system to help students grow

- It considers personality, i.e. kindness, participation, generosity, rather than how much I can think or remember the quadratic equation or where the comma goes. And also how it goes over life skills
- This assessment is a tool for life and seems like it wants to help you understand more. The SBA or the PARCC just says a score that doesn't mean anything in life
- Standardized testing takes place in a single day instead of creating something over a longer course of time, and it tests skills and knowledge that students are unlikely to use in their careers
- New Metrics seems to be more interactive than the current tests because it lets you do your own project specific to you rather than one test for every student

What do you like best about New Metrics?

- It really highlights the importance of the role of community in growth and learning
- The fact that New Metrics is willing to reach out to students for input and focusing on implementing tools into our schools to help students grow
- It makes us humans rather than numbers. The idea is to consider all of someone than just a few things. It lets people who might not be so keen in math and writing show themselves in other ways
- New Metrics is laid out and right there. But it wants you to know the core of things you will need later on.
- It allows students to learn and demonstrate knowledge that they are actually interested in and which will be useful to them in their careers
- The different options available for testing and individual aspect included in it

What doesn't make sense to you about New Metrics?

- How much leeway would Metrics give to focused schools like MACCS
- I'm confused on exactly how will certain activities be graded
- In what time period will this be graded in? How will it be graded? How will you (the grader) make sure you don't miss anything? Who will grade it? How will this be changed for kids with disabilities? How will it be introduced?
- Trying to rush the possible school activities on kids. I feel like you are trying to push that right away for some reason.
- How much choice would be given to the students in how to demonstrate these values?
- It would be harder to grade and evaluate students, since it is kind of individual and has a lot of possible variety involved in the system

What's missing from New Metrics?

- Intergenerational discussions and a larger selection of youth input
- Entrepreneurship classes or programs; teaching students about finance like investing/mutual funds, etc.; No information for students with disabilities or disorders
- Kids with disabilities; economics – i.e. budgeting; details
- Testing! You need this system in school so when you bring it to the state you can show that it works
- Customization for the needs of different students

- New Metrics doesn't really involve any age groups younger than high school, which I think would limit the effectiveness and wouldn't prepare students for the skills they need for high school

Anything else?

- VIVA la Revolución
- I like this. I would be happy to do this.
- Other schools just teach you enough to pass the test. We need schools that will teach you to get through life
- Maybe it could have more technological or media aspects, which I think would also serve as life-long skills

Appendix D - Amy Biehl High School Notes

General comments

Can this be used to have students graduate early?

What does this replace and how soon?

Is this an on-going assessment?

How and when will students check-in to gauge their progress? How do you keep track?

Will there be a specific rubric for each section so students know how they're being evaluated?

How did these different rows come to be?

Connecting all this to passions

Will students be allowed to choose specific projects to demonstrate each capacity?

Facilitated Discussion

What do you like about New Metrics?

- What ABHS is trying to do, but more fleshed out; trying to be its own thing; ABHS is hybrid of these ideas and public school evaluation
- Assessment beyond standardized testing; Assessment everyday
- Possible schools activities and how demonstrations follow ABHS and what it stands for; Opportunity to express more than just right or wrong
- Not standardized test; Builds connection to student beyond number and grade
- So many different opportunities to show abilities and success
- 1) Trying to evaluate whole student; takes pressure off students; can see true achievements through ongoing assessment; 2) Preparing students for future; life beyond school
- More options than standardized testing; Liked that it's categorized (need some more examples)

Would New Metrics work in your school?

- Yes – 6
- No – 1
 - Why? I do on-line schooling

What would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics to gauge your progress?

- Tests don't define who I am and what I'm capable of
- Healthy mentality about school – taking away a lot of what I don't like about school (such as being a cog; input and output model)
- Find more of what you like – different community involvement and internships; Connection to real world
- Help me understand my life-long learning
- I don't know if it would teach me about myself, but it would make me more prepared for life
- It wouldn't help me learn about myself b/c I went to ABHS and I learned about myself; At a public school, I would have learned a lot about myself and my strengths using this tool

- Internships/networking would help me learn if I'm interested in the work

How could New Metrics improve?

- Being more inclusive of personal passions
- Allowing for students to choose what to demonstrate when
- Have a rubric for students so we know what I need to do to demonstrate capacities specifically
- Extremely overwhelming – simplify; especially if you want to introduce it to the general public
- Pilot and improve on mistakes
- Blend stories and statistics

What's different about New Metrics compared to standardized testing?

- Accurately assesses students development
- Accurately conveys what I understand
- Explaining what you need to know and what you need to graduate; Standardized testing is unclear and frustrating – “I don't know what you're asking...”

Anything else?

- Can we just implement it now?
- Disconnect between charter school students and public school students – New Metrics could be tool to connect these environments
- Opportunity for student-to-student networking; students could communicate what this is to other students
- Give more awareness about New Metrics before implementation

Written Responses

Why does New Metrics make sense to you?

- New Metrics is a system that addresses more than the basic English, Math, Science, Social Studies, etc...that makes it easier for students that demonstrate other skills to be acknowledged
- New Metrics covers a ton of valuable and important bases. This tool deals not only with the student's own goals but with how that student understands situations/can navigate through life
- I believe you should be assessed in more ways than just one or two standardized tests
- It's about me as a person rather than me as a number. It's what ABHS is trying to do except with loads of ideas and more potential.
- It's an alternative to standardized testing and I feel a more realistic way of gauging success.
- It is not only a new take on evaluating students but it is a new take on viewing and educating students in general
- The way New Metrics is categorized makes sense

How is New Metrics different from the existing evaluation system?

- New Metrics is different from the existing evaluation system because it has skills demonstrated in a broader way instead of a “correct/incorrect” manner
- It isn't a test. New Metrics makes the connection between a students' passions and allows for them to be more than just a grade. Plus students have a chance.

- New Metrics delves deep into preparing students for our future and looks at many requirements for graduation unlike a standardized test
- It's more about our potential for the things around us than the potential we have for a factory or restaurant.
- It's a larger way for students to show what they can do and how well they can do in college or after high school in general
- New Metrics is attempting to evaluate the entire student and not just the solely academic parts of their high school careers
- It offers more choices that could be based off of one own interests

What do you like best about New Metrics?

- The possible school activities shown to demonstrate the skills given are along the line and similar to activities ABHS follows which makes it open for students to demonstrate these skills to the best of our abilities
- I really enjoy how the aspects of a student's personal goals are implemented into the tool. It gives the student a better/clearer understanding of what they can do after high school and that they aren't just a test score
- The idea of assessing a student all throughout high school instead of a few standardized tests at the end of the year
- It focuses on the student rather than the test
- There are many opportunities for students to show their success and abilities
- How it connects academia to other parts of a student's life and future
- I'm glad that an alternative form of testing is being created instead of PARCC

What doesn't make sense to you about New Metrics?

- How it's going to be assessed
- The reference to the community/client driven/Row 4 is a bit broad and confusing to me. Not all students are going to be able to demonstrate how their specific profession will benefit a specific client or audience while they are still in high school
- How everyone will be evaluated in a literal sense. Will your teachers evaluate you? Advisor? A New Metrics representative?
- I understand it pretty completely. Probably as a result of lots of exposure to ABHS
- The need for the 5 criteria or rows – they all feed into each other I think more than individual criteria should...
- How vague it is at this point in the development of the tool. It can make it a bit difficult to decipher
- Since New Metrics is still in development, I won't judge it so harshly. What I do want to say is that I don't understand some of the topics

What's missing from New Metrics?

- Specifically how it is going to be assessed
- I think more emphasis on after-school goals and thoughts should be implemented
- The importance of New Metrics
- Passions (personal passions)

- I'm not sure that I can necessarily say that anything is missing but there does need to be a more specific way for students to approach this/these assessments
- Specifics. It is a bit broad at this point.
- I don't know since it's still being worked on

Anything else?

- I believe this is an amazing idea
- It's a great idea and with more development I think it can be very helpful
- I appreciate that adults are trying to adapt evaluations to the ever evolving learning culture in high school and I think New Metrics is a good start.

Appendix E ACE Leadership High School Notes

General comments

This makes a lot of sense because we already do a lot of this

Add to Capacity 2; Demonstrated through: Ability to lead groups in tough situations

Add to Capacity 3; Demonstrated through: Acknowledgement of mistakes and correction of behavior

I like “life-long learning “because public schools miss this

I like “take responsibility of own work” – important to look out for yourself

I like life-long learning because you get a little taste of what you can do beyond school

Important to translate the tool to other languages

Other assessments are about just reading not making

Facilitated Discussion

What do you like about New Metrics?

- Simple, direct and precise
- We’re getting student input
- I see value in these principles because I’m exposed to these at ACE; the tool shows more understanding of students
- Just feels good; simple but not; treating you as a human finally not a statistic; implement beyond charters in public schools; treat students better

Would New Metrics work in your school?

- Yes – 4; already happening to an extent at ACE
- No – 0

What would you learn about yourself by using New Metrics to gauge your progress?

- Gets you more comfortable with communication
- Better prepared to be an adult; life preparation
- Grow up and realize responsibilities; things that are relevant
- More projects evaluation and reflection

How could New Metrics improve?

- Get more student voice (x2)
- A lot of explaining for public school; show them the middle column in practice
- Get community feedback: workforce and parents, CNM & UNM

What’s different about New Metrics compared to standardized testing?

- Treats you more like a human
- More simple – we can understand it
- Presents a lot of examples

- Existing evaluation convicts you for your weaknesses
- Preparing for exhibitions good review and reflection; more prepared

Anything else?

- How would it be administered?
- Overwhelming for APS
- I like speaking with community and getting more involved
- Tool understands pressures and life of typical teenager
- Helpful with time management; challenges you

Written Responses

Why does New Metrics make sense to you?

- Si, me gusta porque todo es simple pero preciso.
- I understand the New Metrics system because it is very clear to me. It is demonstrating the activities we do in school and how it is going to help us in the long run. The New Metrics system is a positive thing for ACE. It's giving us a chance to let the students speak their minds on the opinions of how ACE is running their school.
- New Metrics makes sense to me because I'm exposed to all the activities on a regular basis and I like all the principles behind exhibitions, capstone, making connections. They prepare us for presenting, thinking on our feet and getting us exposure to show what we have to offer.
- Feels good man what can I say

How is New Metrics different from the existing evaluation system?

- Es mas interesante llaba la atencion los estudiantes pastaria mas atencion
- The evaluation system is simply adults evaluating us students. It is biased because the teachers are adults evaluating us. They don't know how we feel. It is nice to have a student's input.
- You can be good in one subject, but tank another one, but that doesn't mean you're stupid it just means that subject isn't your strongest asset. The existing evaluation convicts you for your weaknesses.
- It definitely focuses more on the human than what the human knows

What do you like best about New Metrics?

- Digo que puedes entender muy facil pero es directo con lo que quieren user
- Getting student input
- The understanding and consideration of the students. The developers knew what a typical high school student encounters and created the perfect system to get a more accurate evaluation of competence.
- Feels good man

What doesn't make sense to you about New Metrics?

- Nada se me complico creo que es algo preciso si se lo entiende lo que trater de user
- The partner school's examples

What's missing from New Metrics?

- Que agan mas trabajo con la comunidad
- Not much. The notes say it all.