

Emerging Areas of Agreement for the Future of Assessment and Accountability

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DAX-DEV is a **DISRUPTIVE EQUITY VENTURE**, led by Dax-Devlon Ross.

We focus on **SOCIAL IMPACT CONSULTING** to help individuals, organizations and institutions achieve their social justice missions and bridge the gap between their stated values and actual practices.

We tell deeply-reported, truth-seeking stories that **ADVANCE SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CIVIL RIGHTS**.



Background and Context: The Call to Action

- Annual statewide standardized assessments have revealed longstanding disparities in academic opportunities and outcomes for historically marginalized students.
- Our current accountability systems and interventions have not led to large-scale improvements in student outcomes for these populations.
- The education and youth development fields are currently grappling with the long-term future of assessments and accountability.
- NUL and UnidosUS are committed to:
 - Meaningfully representing the civil rights community in the dialogue
 - Promoting disaggregated data as an important equity guardrail
 - Bringing additional coherence and alignment amongst stakeholders
 - Lifting up innovations that advance the interests of our communities
 - Continuing to acknowledge deep disagreements and differing perspectives on what the future should hold

Background and Context: Actions Taken Thus Far

2021

- Convened several roundtable discussions to inform and engage the civil rights community.
- Facilitated partner meetings with the White House Domestic Policy Council and U.S. Department of Education.



Spring and Summer 2022

- NUL, UnidosUS, and partners conducted **more than 60 focus groups and interviews** with diverse stakeholders, and Insight Policy Research led the data analysis.
- Dax-Dev facilitated a series of closed-door **sense-making roundtables** with experts and leaders within the civil rights and education equity community.

Session 1 | July 6th

- Built community amongst a group of experts
- Examined the history of assessments and accountability
- Compared the current and aspirational state

Session 2 | July 21st

- Insight Policy Research presented initial findings from focus groups
- Aligned on problem definition
- Envisioned the aspirational state
- Acknowledged the unintended consequences of policy implementation

Session 3 | August 3rd

- Identified levers and supports necessary to create the aspirational state
- Began modeling the steps toward aspirational impact

Session 4 | August 17th

- Re-aligned on definitions of assessment and accountability
- Created the draft principles and guidelines that will guide the development of a framework for assessments and accountability from a civil rights perspective for four key areas.

The image features two young Black women in the foreground, smiling warmly at the camera. They are holding hands, with their fingers interlaced. The woman on the left has long, thin braids with yellow and orange highlights. The woman on the right has her hair styled in a bun. They are wearing casual clothing; the woman on the left is in a dark hoodie, and the woman on the right is in a light-colored jacket. A semi-transparent red banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Four Areas of Agreement: Aspirational State' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with trees and a building.

**Four Areas of Agreement:
Aspirational State**

Pillar I *Our education system(s) consistently implements broadened definitions of success.*

Pillar II *Our education indicators and assessments, no matter the setting, are grounded in continuous improvement and accountability.*

Pillar III *Our systems of support are strengthened to enhance shared accountability that centers equity and promotes transparency and continuous, targeted improvement.*

Pillar IV *Historically marginalized communities/families/youth have greater voice and ownership in assessment and accountability.*



Pillar I: Our education system(s) consistently implements broadened definitions of success.

- ★ Definitions of success are broadened to include measures beyond academics, such as competencies, attitudes, agency and identity.
- ★ Focus on success is shifted to creating supportive environments at the classroom, school, community, and system levels.
- ★ Success is contextualized and informed by culture, communities, and families.
- ★ Student engagement is a precondition and active element of learning.
- ★ Student-centered learning plans are co-created between educators, families, and students with individualized learning goals.

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Pillar II: Our education indicators and assessments, no matter the setting, are grounded in continuous improvement and accountability.

- ★ Student formative and summative assessments are culturally relevant and aligned to state academic standards; formative assessments guide day-to-day instruction.
- ★ School quality measures encompass social and emotional learning, school climate, teacher capacity, working conditions, and resource audits.
- ★ Continuous improvement is driven by timely, disaggregated student data; individualized supports are provided through evidence-based interventions.
- ★ Assessments, curriculum, standards, preparation, ongoing training, and accountability are all aligned.

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Pillar III: Our systems of support are strengthened to enhance shared accountability that centers equity and promotes transparency and continuous, targeted improvement.

- ★ Accountability is a shared responsibility across all levels of the education system centered on the well-being and thriving of children and youth.
- ★ Accountability is shifted from something punitive to multi-level support, with investment in identified student groups' and education system success.
- ★ In balancing federal, state, and local accountability, there are clear purposes, an infrastructure of support, and broad outcomes with diverse stakeholder involvement.
- ★ School and community data is used to better understand root causes, track longitudinally, and is employed for multi-level accountability.

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Pillar IV: Historically marginalized communities/families/youth have greater voice and ownership in assessment and accountability.

- ★ Historically marginalized groups and stakeholders are engaged and consulted when assessment and accountability processes are being created, refined, and implemented.
- ★ The design, implementation, and execution of assessment and accountability measures incorporate the voices of, and are culturally relevant to, students and families.
- ★ Schools and districts make meaningful space and time, and allot resources for education equity advocates to engage families on accountability and advocacy.
- ★ Data is timely and is used to engage stakeholders, including community leaders, school leaders, families, and teachers, in actions to improve results for all subgroups.

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An Approach Grounded in Civil Rights and Equity

- ❖ **Legal:** Use legal levers to hold districts, states, and the federal government accountable to the shared values articulated by the civil rights community.
- ❖ **Equitable Oversight:** Advance equitable oversight through mechanisms such as provision of training to school boards in educational equity principles.
- ❖ **Data:** Advance access to educational equity data around assessment and accountability, guiding disaggregation practices, and supporting community use of data.
- ❖ **Community:** Elevate experiences of marginalized students, families, and communities to advance equitable opportunities and propose culturally relevant ideas and strategies. Actively partner with families to advocate for policy implementation.
- ❖ **Communication:** Uplift positive changes and advance counternarratives in the face of opposition to advocate with partners at the local, state, and national levels.

Next Steps



- ★ Gather YOUR reactions to the Areas of Agreement.
- ★ Regroup to reflect with select experts and community leaders.
- ★ Synthesize and integrate insights and feedback as well as research findings from the Insight-led listening sessions.
- ★ Generate a report setting forth areas of agreement, points of tension, open questions, and ideas for further inquiry.
- ★ Reconvene and tap into an expanded network of educational equity and civil rights leaders, and community members, to further articulate a clear vision for the FOAA.
- ★ Develop an advocacy platform that builds on the work to date.

Outstanding Questions

- 1) How can we ensure a commitment over time to allow for broadened definitions of teaching, learning, education and success to be fully utilized, implemented, and evaluated?
- 2) What are the implications of increased focus on continuous improvement in assessment for school accountability, specifically through state standardized assessments?
- 3) How can we reframe accountability to shift mindsets and motivate behavior, systems, and culture change?
- 4) How do we ensure equity in lifting up voices across communities and families?

Q&A

A photograph of a man and a young child embracing. The man, on the left, is bald, has a beard, and is wearing glasses and a green shirt. He is smiling warmly. The child, on the right, has curly hair and is wearing a plaid shirt. The child's arms are wrapped around the man's neck. The background is a dark, solid color. The text "Thank you!" is overlaid in the center in a white, sans-serif font.

Thank you!