



Quality Performance Assessment Overview Transcript

Laurie Gagnon (QPA Director): At the Center for Collaborative Education, we believe that all children should have access to a rich education that prepares them for college, career, and life. Performance assessments are a key tool to realizing this goal, because performance assessments provide opportunities for students to show what they know and can do, while learning in the process.

When teachers engage together in using common performance assessments, it's also a powerful form of teacher-learning. We developed the Quality Performance Assessment model to help schools use performance assessment to create learning environments where students are engaging with deep content and mastering the transferable skills they need for success in their future.

Dan French (Executive Director): We started this initiative about five years ago with generous funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. The first thing we did was look at the research. What does the research say both nationally and internationally about scale-up performance assessment initiatives? What we found was there were three critical ingredients to success. One is technical quality—in other words, that the results that you get have some validity and reliability. Two is a robust professional development agenda that trains teachers well enough so that they can both create, design, and implement quality performance assessments. And three is political will and leadership and policy support for sustainability.

Laurie Gagnon: We developed and field-tested the Quality Performance Assessment Framework with a group of 20 schools over the course of three years. Now, we're continuing to implement the model in new places. At the center of our framework is student learning. Teachers support student learning by engaging in a cycle of align, design, and analyze.

Maggie Ward (Program Associate): Aligned instruction is about making sure that the instruction and the performance assessments that we're creating are aligned with the goals that we have for our students, so we're looking for the most important standards, whether they be common core or 21st century skills. Quality task design is about creating tasks that really allow students to engage deeply with the content, so we're looking for tasks that ask students not to reproduce information, but to take that information and apply it to new situations and create original products.

One of the biggest pieces of a quality task is the rubric and the clear criteria so that a student knows exactly what is expected of them. Data analysis is when teachers score student work together to come to a common understanding of what their expectations are for the students. This process allows teachers to open up their practice and learn from one another, and it allows them to figure out together as a collective unit what are the next steps for my learning and teaching, as well as what are the next steps for my student and what types of feedback am I going to give to my students?

Richard Dubuisson (Senior Associate for School Redesign): Administrators have a very important role because of their unique position. They can look at the big picture and help create a

coherent vision to help faculty, students, and families see how all of the pieces fit together and how performance assessments fit into what their school's already doing. So in a sense, they can create the structure and the system to help impact the culture, so that performance assessment can take place in the school.

Our professional development is very teacher-friendly and teacher-focused. We want to build on what teachers are already doing because we know that teachers are already doing a lot of really great work. We want to give teachers some new tools and some new processes in order for them to deepen their work. We want teachers to be at the center of this work, and we want to guide them to ground their work in the evidence that students are producing.

Amber Meiras (4th Grade Teacher, Prospect Hill Academy): When we introduced this project in particular, you heard gasps when we said, "You're going to create something and actually have it in the school." The students were just immediately excited. And it's something that we can come back to everyday. We have homework that connects back to getting them ready for that project. It makes more sense. It makes them excited, and it gets them truly invested in it.

Thabiti Brown (Principal, Codman Academy) I think QPA has a lot to offer in that folks have already thought through what are some steps that you can take. So my job as a school leader is to say here's what's possible, here's where we are, let's use QPA and any other resources that we can to help build along this model so that we can get to this final piece.

Jenna Goldenberg (History Teacher, Chelsea High School): I started out doing my first performance assessment feeling frustrated that my kids weren't where I wanted them to be, and through learning how to use the rubric and not just as a grading tool, but a teaching tool, and a learning tool, and a tool for motivating my students, they were able to make incredible growth, and they were able to have an intrinsic motivation that came from the instruction itself. It's been neat to share that with my colleagues as well here.

Lauren Harwood (English Teacher, Chelsea High School): This year they've had a huge shift to authentic performance tasks. The shift in our kids' skills and their achievement has actually been unbelievable. The kids can't believe it, other teachers can't believe it.

Student: I just realized I just need to dig deeper, instead of just digging on the surface just so I can understand it. And that's what got my score higher.

Student: It just helps me, for my next essays, be able to see where the standard is, basically, and what I should be reaching for and what I should be putting in my essay.

Student: (presenting a project) My motto for who I am is tell the truth, live the truth, and be the truth.

Erin Moulton (Principal, Prospect Hill Academy): I think that anytime the kids are doing work that has a greater meaning and purpose for them, that they will do better work, and they'll learn more



from it. Having an audience for this kind of activity tonight, having to go really public with the thinking, pushed the kids to think in ways that they may not have thought before.

Student: Now I'm getting a 96 average and high honors.

Dave Jasinski (Social Studies Teachers, Souhegan High School): All along the way, we've been assessing them, we've been noting down what they've been doing, and they've really been having to problem solve themselves, and so the performance is the culmination of all of those skills put together, and all of the learning.

Student: We get to apply our knowledge a lot more, and not just memorizing something for the test and then forgetting it. This is something we're all going to remember for a long time.

Student: This helps me learn and realize what I have actually learned. When I'm taking tests, I'll be like, "Oh cool, I got a letter grade." But if I'm doing a performance assessment, I'll be like, "Oh, wow! I know a lot, because I did this, and this, and this, and I have no problem with it."

Paul Schlotman (Chemistry and Engineering Teacher, Souhegan High School): One of the things that happens with performance assessment, is you go over the things that are important to them when they need to know, because then they'll really pay attention. When they have to do something, or calculate something, they'll really listen to what you have to tell them. But until then, it's kind of meaningless.

Student: You can visualize what's going on because you've actually worked with it before you've learned it. So without even knowing what you've done, you've set a foundation for the theoretical in reality.

Laurie Gagnon: We're excited about this next chapter in assessment. With commitment and hard work, we're confident that the Quality Performance Assessment model can bring about the changes we all want to see in the education system, and ensure that every student graduates with multiple good opportunities ahead.

