BEST PRACTICES IN WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

Prepared for Arlington Public Schools

October 2015

In the following report, Hanover Research examines best practices in whole child education. Specifically, the report discusses the key components of whole child education, the importance of this type of learning, strategies for the successful implementation of high-quality whole child education, and best practices for assessment within the whole child model.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

21st century students must learn how to live, work, and compete in an increasingly global marketplace. In a December 2014 speech, for example, the National Education Association (NEA) President, Ms. Lily Eskelsen Garcia, emphasized the importance of skilled workers who are "creative problem solvers, who are collaborative, critical thinkers, and who are empowered to be professionals who [show initiative in] constantly meeting whatever challenges the day brings."[1] Overall, the demand for workers with more creative and globally-focused skillsets has led to an increased focus on providing more comprehensive education in United States schools.

Whole child education has rapidly increased in intensity since the beginning of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)'s 2007 "Whole Child Initiative." This plan first emerged as an effort to "change the conversation about education from a focus on narrowly-defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of children."[2] The ASCD has partnered with a wide variety of organizations and governmental agencies to promote the key tenets of whole child education, and the effort continues to increase in importance and popularity across the country.[3]

In order to assist Arlington Public Schools in delivering education that serves to foster the whole child, the current report comprises the following sections:

- **Section I: Overview of Whole Child Education** presents an overview of the key components of whole child education, detailing the importance of this type of learning and reasons it has emerged in the national conversation. The section also discusses the status of the whole child movement in Virginia.
- **Section II: High-Quality Whole Child Education** discusses best practices in the successful implementation of high-quality whole child education, specifically highlighting the importance of: community, school, and teacher collaboration; backward-designing curriculum; and social-emotional learning.
- **Section III: Assessment** examines best practices in assessment – of school quality as well as student growth and achievement – within the whole child model. The section concludes with detailed profiles of the whole child assessment practices of three exemplary districts.

[1] Walker, T. "NEA President: Take Public Education Off the Assembly Line and Focus on the Whole Child." National Education Association, December 16, 2014. http://neatoday.org/2014/12/16/nea-president-take-public-education-off-assembly-line-focus-whole-child/

[2] "ASCD's Whole Child Approach." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. http://www.ascd.org/whole-child.aspx

[3] Sterling, S. "Quick Guide: The Whole Child Initiative." Edmentum, April 2015. http://blog.edmentum.com/quick-guide-whole-child-initiative

KEY FINDINGS

- **Rooted in child development theory, the Whole Child Initiative follows the principles of holistic education in order to promote the development of children who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged.** The educational model draws on the notion that students have multiple intelligences, and thus aims to engage all the different sides of children. As such, the five crucial types of learning in whole child education include: cognitive-intellectual activity, creative-intuitive activity, structured physical movement and unstructured/self-directed play, handiwork, and engagement with nature and community.
- **Proponents of whole child education point to the shift in 21st century workforce needs, arguing that in today's globalized world, students must develop strong skills in collaboration, teamwork, problem solving, and creativity.** A number of evidence-based research studies further highlight the importance of whole child education, indicating that healthy and safe students have higher levels of academic achievement. Moreover, studies demonstrate that students are most likely to excel when they are academically engaged, supported by their schools and teachers, and challenged by their academic programs.
- **Despite indications that Virginia fares well compared to other states in a number of whole-child indicators, the ASCD provides several additional best practices that may serve to further support Virginia's children.** For example, the state can work towards: connecting free and low-cost physical and mental health services with students who need them; regularly assessing and reporting on school climate and using the data to establish positive learning environments; offering students an array of extracurricular activities and extended-day learning opportunities; and supporting parent education and literacy programs.
- **High-quality whole child education involves collaboration among the community, school, and teachers; backward-designing curriculum; and social-emotional learning.** Collaboration among various groups and coordinated school services are crucial, as all facets of a child's well-being impact his or her potential for academic success. When designing an effective whole child curriculum, it is useful to plan with the end goals in mind. Finally, whole child education should support students' social-emotional learning (i.e., their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making), as research underlines the positive effect of social-emotional learning on students' college/career readiness.
- **The most effective assessments of whole child education include multiple measures of learning.** Examples of comprehensive and coherent measures that are particularly useful when used in combination include: growth models; portfolios; criterion-referenced tests; norm-referenced tests; computer adaptive assessments; diagnostic evaluations; and formative, interim, and summative assessments. It is also important that students are able to demonstrate their understanding in multiple ways; thus, schools should allow student retakes and revisions to provide more fairness to students who learn at different paces.

SECTION I: OVERVIEW OF WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

In this section, Hanover presents an overview of the key components of whole child education, detailing the importance of this type of learning and reasons it has emerged in the national conversation. In order to provide the most relevance to Arlington Public Schools, the section also examines the status of the whole child movement in Virginia.

THE WHOLE CHILD APPROACH

Rooted firmly in child development theory, the Whole Child Initiative "proposes a broader definition of achievement and accountability that promotes the development of children who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged."[4] In a book published by a professor of special education and a nationally-certified school psychologist, the authors explain further that the whole child movement follows the principles of holistic education, where "educational experiences and environments [must] be adapted to the developmental path of the individual, rather than the individual adapted to the environment."[5]

To this end, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has identified a set of "Whole Child Tenets" which schools and communities should aim to address. The ASCD maintains that the following tenets serve to aid students in their long-term success by addressing a variety of developmental needs:

- Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.[6]

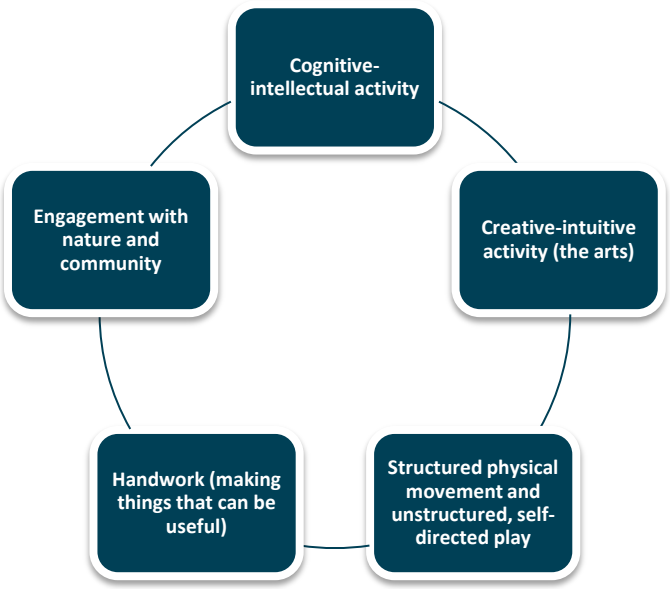
[4] DeWitt, P. "Why ASCD's Whole-Child Initiative Matters More Now Than Ever." *Education Week*, July 19, 2013. http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/finding_common_ground/2013/07/why_ascds_whole_child_initiative_matters_more_now_than_ever.html

[5] Kochlar-Bryant, C. and Heishman, A. "Effective Collaboration for Educating the Whole Child." SAGE Publications, April 2010. http://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/34869_Kochhar_Bryant__Effective_Collaboration_for_Educating_the_Whole_Child_Ch1.pdf

[6] Bullet points quoted verbatim from: "Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2012. p. 3. http://www.wholechildeducation.org/assets/content/mx-resources/WholeChild-MakingTheCase.pdf

Furthermore, an organization dedicated to the movement, Educate the Whole Child, highlights the five types of learning to which children should be exposed every day (Figure 1.1). The whole child model of education – which incorporates these various types of learning – draws on the fact that students have multiple intelligences, and thus aims to engage all the different sides of children.

Figure 1.1: Five Crucial Types of Learning in Whole Child Education



Source: Educate the Whole Child[7]

THE IMPORTANCE OF WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

Proponents of whole child education point to the shift in 21st century workforce needs, arguing that today, there is a need for "a highly skilled, educated workforce and citizenry unlike any we have seen before."[8] In order to succeed in the increasingly-globalized 21st century, citizens must develop strong skills in collaboration, teamwork, problem solving, and creativity:

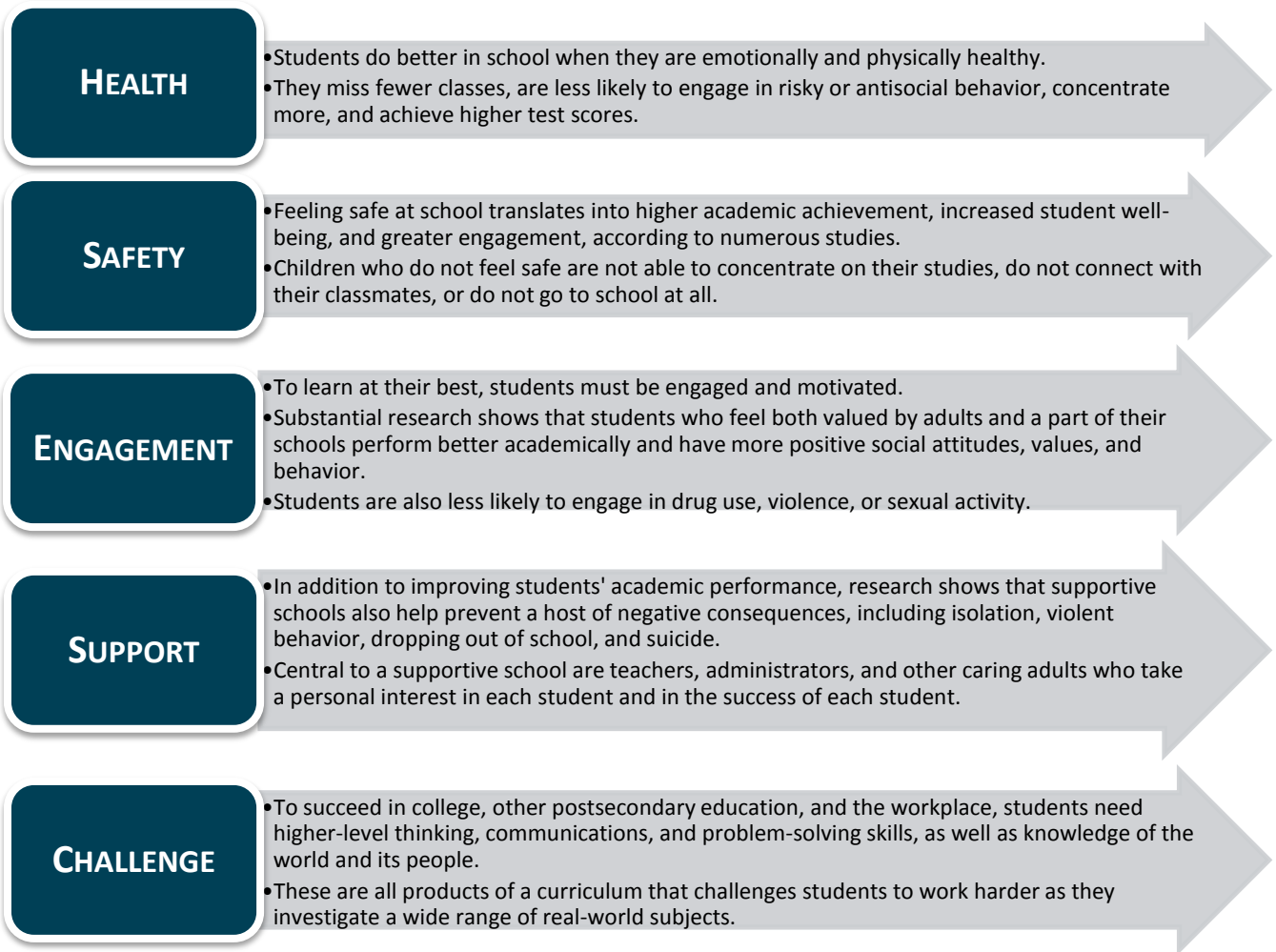
> We live in a time that requires our students to be prepared to think both critically and creatively, to evaluate massive amounts of information, solve complex problems, and communicate well [...] A strong foundation in reading, writing, maths, and other core subjects is as important as ever, yet insufficient for lifelong success. These 21st-century demands require a new and better way of approaching education policy and practice – a whole child approach to learning, teaching, and community engagement.[9]

[7] "What is Whole Child Education?" Educate the Whole Child. http://www.educatethewholechild.org/what-is-it/
[8] Slade, S. and Griffith, D. "A Whole Child Approach to Student Success." *Korean Journal of Educational Policy,* 2013. p. 23. Obtained from EBSCOHost.
[9] Ibid.

Whole child education also involves an **economic imperative.** Skills advocated in the whole child theory, such as problem solving and creativity, are "needed not only by a functioning society, but [are] also the skills required for economic growth as countries move out of the information age and into the conceptual age."[10] Today, rote memorization is insufficient. Instead, skills that whole child education nurtures – such as the development of knowledge and the application of information – are crucial for success.

The ASCD also provides detailed information and evidence-based studies that serve to highlight the importance of whole child education. As summarized in Figure 1.2, healthy and safe students have higher levels of academic achievement. Furthermore, students are most likely to excel when they are academically engaged, supported by their schools and teachers, and challenged by their academic programs.

Figure 1.2: Making the Case for Whole Child Education



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[11]

[10] Ibid., p. 25.
[11] Text in figure quoted almost verbatim from: "Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child," Op. cit., pp. 4, 6, 8, 10, 12.

WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION IN VIRGINIA

The ASCD also provides annual "snapshots" of the whole child movement in each of the 50 states across the country. These snapshots provide comprehensive data that allow for an understanding of students' current performance and well-being. Additionally, they provide ideas "for how families, educators, and communities can make targeted and innovative improvements to support the whole child."[12]

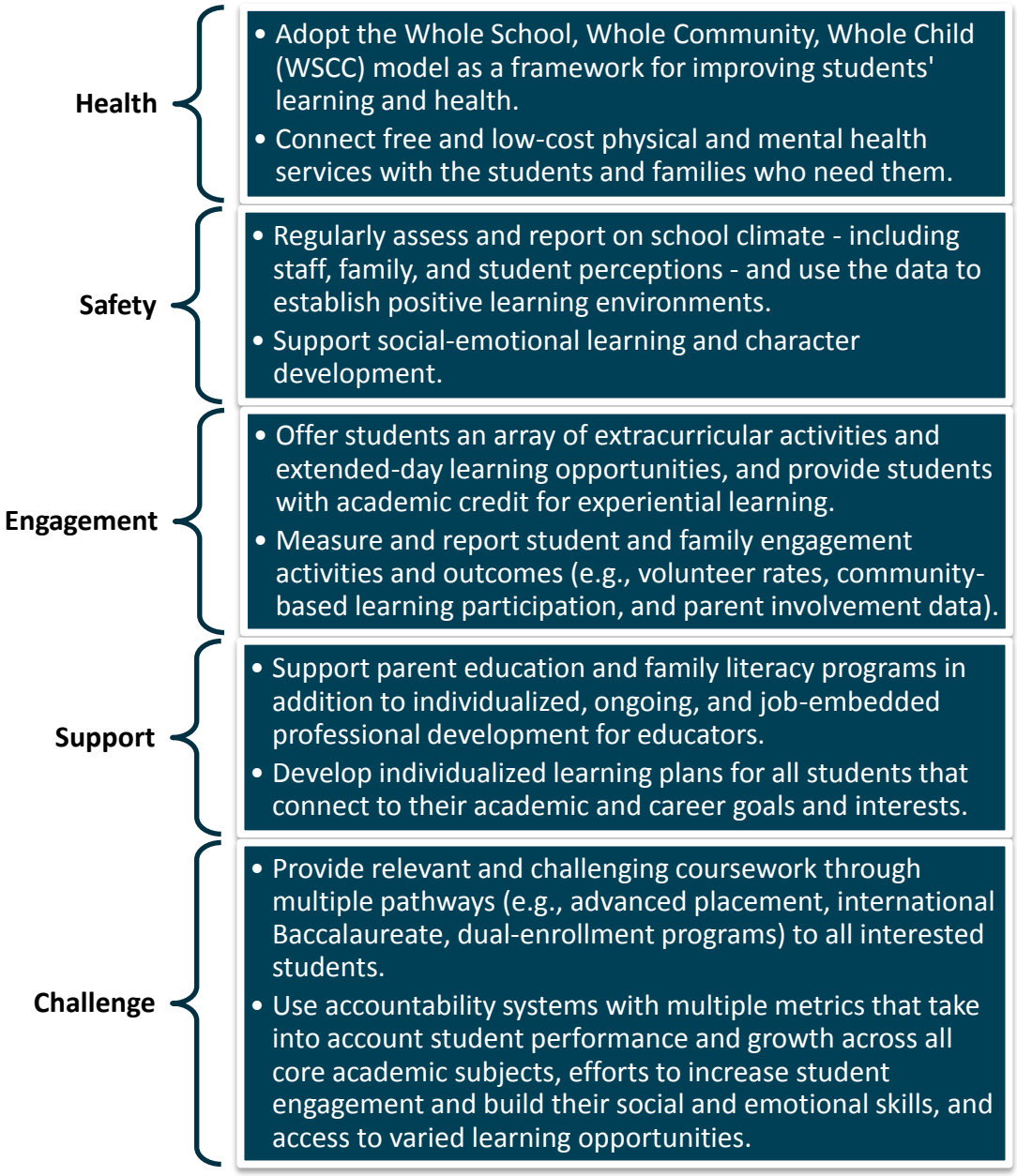
The organization's 2015 whole child snapshot for the state of Virginia suggests that students in the state enjoy relatively high levels of health, support, and safety. For example, 15 percent and 12 percent of Virginia high school students are overweight or obese (respectively), percentages that are slightly lower than the United States averages of 17 percent and 14 percent. Additionally, 71 percent of children in Virginia had both medical and dental preventative care visits in the past year, slightly higher than the national average of 68 percent. Fewer children are living in poverty in Virginia (16 percent) than in the United States as a whole (22 percent). Furthermore, Virginia ranks 14th among the 50 states in turns of positive student to counselor ratios (383:1 in Virginia).[13]

Despite indications that Virginia fares well compared to other states in terms of several whole-child indicators, the state snapshot details several ideas of additional practices that may serve to further support the whole child (Figure 1.3, on the next page). These approaches are organized in terms of promoting health, safety, engagement, support, and challenge.

[12] "Whole Child Snapshots: Measuring Whole Child Success Across the States." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2015. http://www.ascd.org/programs/whole-child-snapshots.aspx

[13] "2015 Whole Child Snapshot: Virginia." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2015. http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/siteASCD/wholechild/snapshot/2015/2015-va-ascd-whole-child-snapshot.pdf

Figure 1.3: Practices for Supporting the Needs of the Whole Child in Virginia



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[14]

[14] Text in figure quoted almost verbatim from: Ibid.

SECTION II: HIGH-QUALITY WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

This section discusses best practices in the successful implementation of high-quality whole child education, specifically highlighting the importance of: community, school, and teacher collaboration; backward-designing curriculum; and social-emotional learning.

COMMUNITY, SCHOOL, AND TEACHER COLLABORATION

Educators and administrators highlight the fact that collaboration among various stakeholder groups is crucial for educating the whole child. Specifically, professionals must collaborate and "bridge the different and separate worlds of family and school, academic disciplines, professional roles, school and community, and community agencies" in order to **"create a well-coordinated service system to meet the holistic needs of students."**[15] Collaboration among these stakeholder groups and coordinated school services are crucial for many reasons:

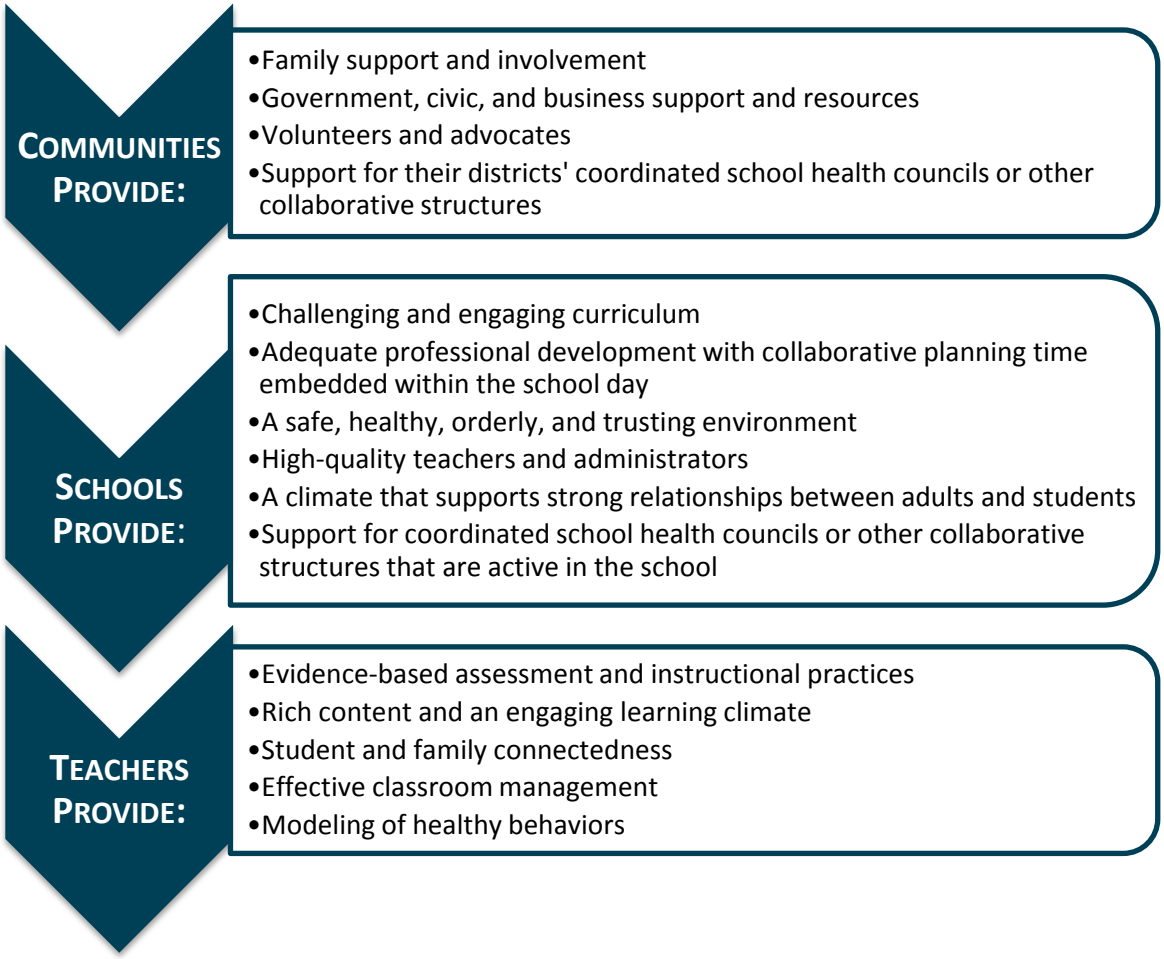
- All facets of a child's well-being impact his or her potential for academic success, career development, and long-term independence.
- A growing number of American school-age children can be considered at risk for school failure and other social problems, such as substance abuse and incarceration.
- Prevention is more cost-effective for society than correction or remediation.
- Children who are at risk of school failure come to school with multiple problems that cut across conventional health, social, and education systems boundaries, and schools are ill-equipped to handle such problems alone.
- The current system of child-related service delivery is fragmented and in need of coordination, since many children fall through the cracks and fail to get the services they need.
- Because schools have sustained long-term contact with children, they are the logical gateway for providing a spectrum of services to address the needs of children that affect academic progress.[16]

Along the same lines, the ASCD indicates that high-quality whole child education hinges on the collaboration of various stakeholders – particularly the community, schools, and teachers. Specifically, communities must provide a variety of supports and resources, schools must offer a safe environment and a challenging curriculum, and teachers must properly manage the classroom and effectively connect with students and their families. On the next page, Figure 2.1 provides an overarching list of the key elements that communities,

[15] Kochlar-Bryant and Heishman, Op. cit., p. 14.
[16] Bullet points taken near verbatim from: Ibid, pp. 16-17.

schools, and teachers need to provide in order to develop a whole child, or a child who is healthy, knowledgeable, motivated, and engaged.

Figure 2.1: Key Elements in Whole Child Education



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[17]

BACKWARD-DESIGNING CURRICULUM

In order to design an effective curriculum for engaging and educating the whole child, **it is useful to plan backwards – beginning with the desired goals and outcomes.** A guest contributor to the ASCD and a member of the ASCD Emerging Leaders Class of 2014, Ms. Tamera Musiowsky-Borneman, notes the importance of using the "Understanding by Design" framework to plan units. Teachers should specifically consider questions such as, "What do I want my students to know and be able to do by the end of the unit?" and "How will I design my curriculum to support them in understanding what I want them to know?"[18]

[17] "The Learning Compact Redefined: A Call to Action." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007. p. 3. http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/Whole%20Child/WCC%20Learning%20Compact.pdf

[18] Musiowsky-Borneman, T. "Backward Designing for the Whole Child." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, September 2, 2015. http://inservice.ascd.org/backward-designing-for-the-whole-child/

Ms. Musiowsky-Borneman suggests the importance of learning how the whole child tenets, learner profiles, and attitudes fit together. By considering how these elements can work in conjunction, while keeping the end goals in mind, classroom practices are more likely to be engaging and contribute to the desired outcomes (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Backward-Designing a Curriculum Using the Whole Child Tenets

GOAL (WHOLE CHILD TENET)	SAMPLE CLASSROOM PRACTICES	RATIONALE
Health	▪ Design activities for students to compare and contrast healthy and unhealthy lifestyle habits. ▪ Let them uncover how lifestyle habits influence whether or not they lead a balanced life. ▪ Let them research what happens when there is a lifestyle imbalance, and come up with ways to correct those choices.	Teaching healthy habits and allowing for brain/activity breaks enables students to become balanced physically, emotionally, and mentally.
Safety	▪ Focus on building trust in the classroom community during the first few days of school. ▪ Design activities that foster trust by communicating validation of feelings, and discuss how to problem solve in respectful ways so that all students feel comfortable sharing their ideas.	When students feel safe in their learning environment, they are more willing to be risk takers, and to become tolerant, curious, and open-minded. Students become caring toward one another, appreciate differences, and empathize with others.
Engagement	▪ Plan activities that require students to become creative thinkers and communicators. ▪ Being engaged is not to be confused with being busy.	When students are engaged, they participate in student-led inquiries, discussions, and self-selected projects that allow them to deeply dive into content and into their own interest areas.
Support	▪ Design curriculum so that students become reflective in their learning processes. ▪ Support students in developing practices that allow them to use feedback, rubrics, and checklists to reflect on their work.	When students feel safe and supported, they are more willing to take risks in their learning.
Challenge	▪ Model and plan opportunities that allow students to ask and answer deep questions. ▪ Allow students to discuss, research, ask questions, and debate with teach other.	Challenging students will allow them to develop a commitment to their learning and to being cooperative learners.

Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[19]

[19] Text in figure quoted almost verbatim from: Ibid.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

High-quality whole child education also involves instructional practices that support students' social-emotional health and learning. According to the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education (SCOPE), "social and emotional supports for students in school have frequently been called the 'missing piece' in the accountability-driven practices that are the legacy of No Child Left Behind:"[20]

> Social-emotional learning aims to educate the "whole student"; support students' capacity to know themselves, build and maintain supportive relationships, and participate in their school communities as socially-responsible citizens; and foster academic achievement.[21]

> ***Social-Emotional Learning:***
> *The educational process that focuses on development of social-emotional competencies (the skills, behavior, and attitudes needed to manage an individual's affective, cognitive, and social behavior).*
>
> *- American Institutes of Research*

There is an abundance of research underlining the **positive effect of social-emotional learning on students' college and career readiness, and on students' willingness to engage in deep, challenging learning**.[22] Furthermore, the development of social and emotional skills is particularly advantageous for students living in urban, rural, or otherwise under-sourced areas. According to the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes of Research, students who face a multitude of added stressors are better able to seek help, manage their emotions, and problem solve in difficult situations when they have developed effective social-emotional competencies.[23] Given researchers' increasing understanding of the importance of psychological, social, and emotional aspects of education as drivers of student achievement, there has been a newfound focus on understanding how schools can integrate social-emotional learning into their curricula.

To this end, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has worked to identify five key components of social-emotional learning that should be incorporated into students' educational experiences. These competencies are interrelated, and include the following:

[20] Hamedani, M. and Darling-Hammond, L. "Social Emotional Learning in High School: How Three Urban High Schools Engage, Educate, and Empower Youth." Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. p. 1. https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/scope-pub-social-emotional-learning-execsummary.pdf
[21] Ibid., p. 2.
[22] Yoder, N. "Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices that Support Social-Emotional Learning in Three Teacher Evaluation Frameworks." Center on Great Teachers and Leaders, American Institutes of Research, January 2014. p. 1. http://www.gtlcenter.org/sites/default/files/TeachingtheWholeChild.pdf
[23] Ibid., p. 2.

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
- **Responsible decision making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.[24]

Finally, SCOPE identifies a number of concrete best practices for schools aiming to support students' social-emotional learning (Figure 2.3). These strategies fall into the following areas: school climate and culture, school features and structures, and school practices. Together, these three key areas work to promote social-emotional learning across entire schools and communities, thus nurturing the whole child.

[24] Bullet points quoted verbatim from: "Social and Emotional Learning Core Competencies." Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. http://www.casel.org/social-and-emotional-learning/core-competencies/

Figure 2.3: Leveraging a Whole-School Approach to Support Social-Emotional Learning

AREA	BEST PRACTICES
School Climate and Culture	▪ Social-emotional learning is highlighted in each school's mission and vision, reinforced through community norms and values, and articulated in expectations. ▪ Strong relationships and a respectful community characterize school culture and set the stage for social and emotional learning to take place. ▪ Students' psychological needs are not secondary to their academic needs. The culture at each school views psychological needs as necessary for academic success and achievement. ▪ Clear norm setting fosters a safe, trusting, and supportive school climate. ▪ An interdependent community values and requires empathy, social responsibility, and action. Being a community member at each school entails standing up for one's community.
School Features and Structures	▪ Small school size and opportunities for personalization support an intimate environment where social awareness and relationship skills are necessary, and social-emotional learning can take place. ▪ "Family" structures (e.g., house or academy systems) serve to further personalize relationships and foster social responsibility. ▪ Advisory provides a regular time and place to focus on social-emotional skill building. ▪ Community-based partnerships, projects, and learning opportunities inspire responsibility, engagement, and action, and enable students to practice social-emotional and social justice education skills in real-world settings and situations. ▪ To best support students' social and emotional needs, adults' needs must also be a priority. Each school works to provide professional development, collaborative opportunities, and shared leadership structures to support school staff in giving the time, care, and energy they need to their students.
School Practices	▪ Curricular design and instructional practices integrate social-emotional learning with academics through both content (what students learn) and process (how they learn it). ▪ Collaborative, project-based learning teaches social-emotional skills and fosters social awareness and engagement. ▪ Performance-based assessments foster reflection, resilience, responsibility, and a growth mindset. These learning experiences provide opportunities for students to reflect on and demonstrate their academic progress, while understanding the social and emotional journey that it took to get there. ▪ Restorative disciplinary practices preserve relationships, foster responsibility, and respect students' dignity. When disciplinary action is needed, schools provide opportunities for students to practice social and emotional skills, develop personal responsibility, and remain part of the community. ▪ School traditions, rituals, clubs, and activities build community, honor students and families, and support voice and agency. Social-emotional support is both broad and tailored to the needs of each community.

Source: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education[25]

[25] Text in figure quoted almost verbatim from: Hamedani and Darling-Hammond, Op. cit., pp. 5-6.

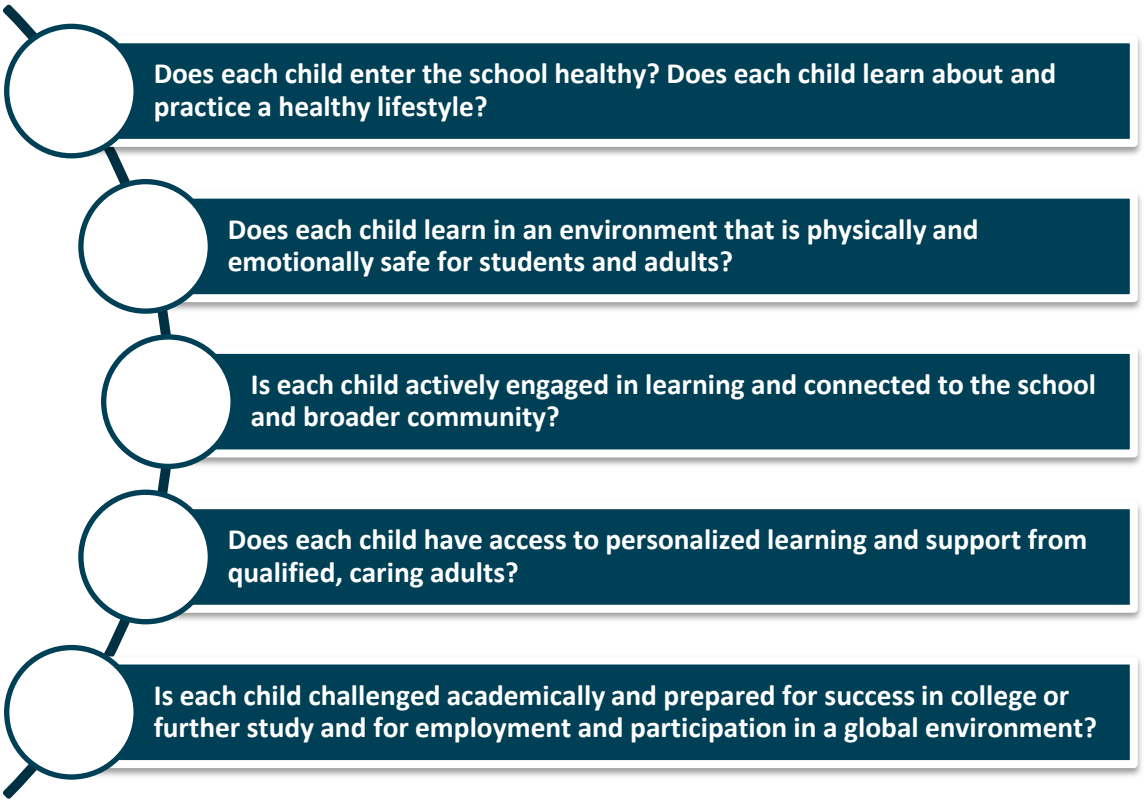
SECTION III: ASSESSMENT

This final section discusses best practices in assessment – of school quality as well as student growth and achievement – within the whole child model. The section concludes with detailed profiles of the whole child assessment practices of three exemplary districts.

SCHOOL QUALITY

A 2015 article published by the ASCD states that "in an ideal world, school quality would be measured by assessing how closely each school's reality matches the ideals of the whole child approach to education."[26] To this end, school assessment would focus on questions that are aligned to each of the whole child tenets (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: Measuring School Quality by the Whole Child Tenets



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[27]

[26] Mingle, M. "In an Ideal World, How Would You Measure School Quality?" Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, March 2015. http://inservice.ascd.org/in-an-ideal-world-how-would-you-measure-school-quality/

[27] Ibid.

ASCD further elaborates that answering these questions is the most reliable way of measuring school quality, even though the analysis "requires far greater time and effort than merely looking at easily quantifiable information [such as] standardized assessment proficiency, graduation rates, attendance, or student/teacher ratios."[28]

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND GROWTH

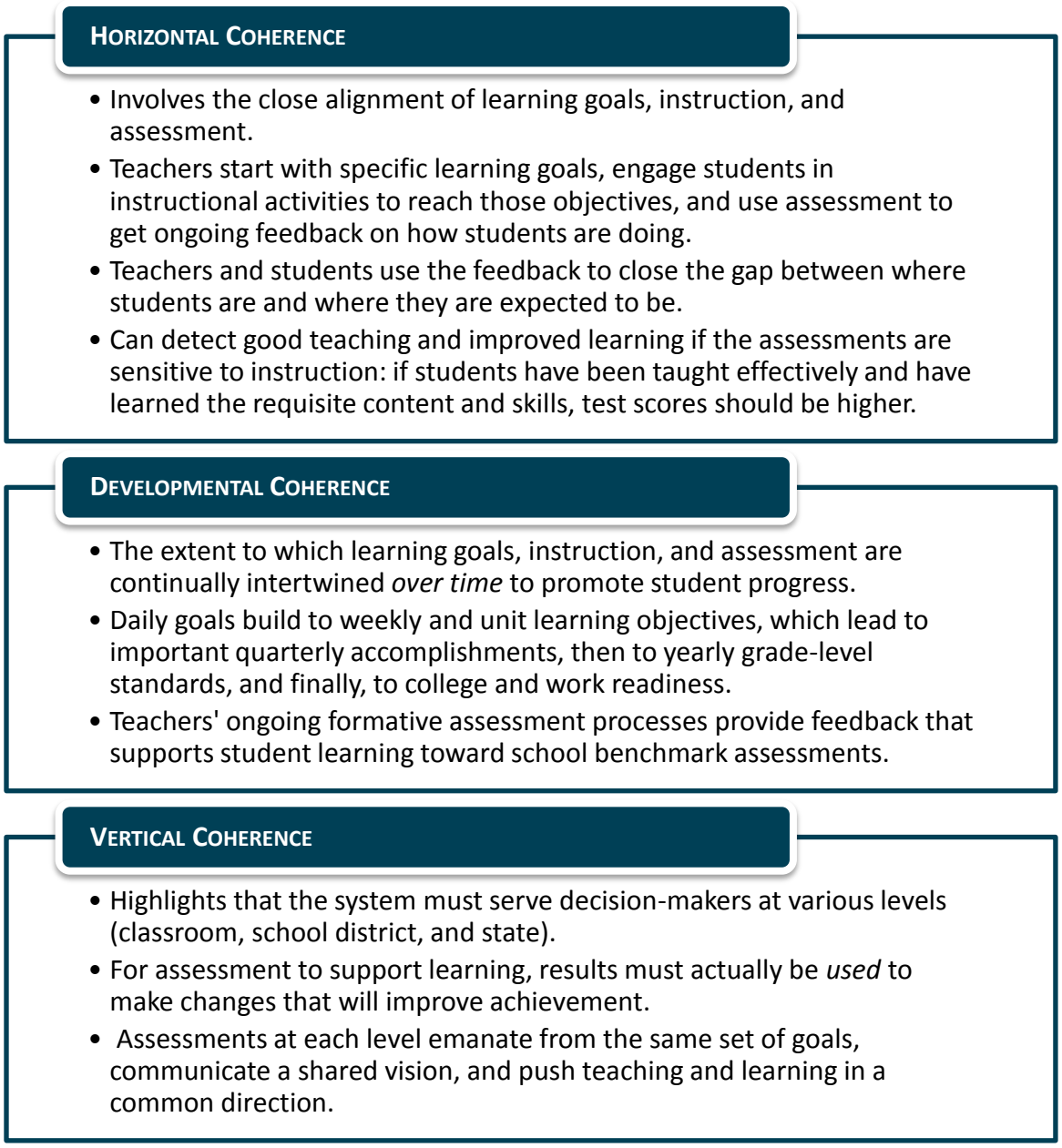
Experts on the whole child form of education agree that effective assessments include multiple measures of learning. For example, an article published on ASCD's Whole Child Blog explains that it is possible to gain a "more comprehensive and continuous picture of student achievement and long-term success" through "a combination of assessments of and for learning."[29] As the Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center (AACC) at the University of California – Los Angeles notes, coherent *systems* of metrics can "illuminate a broader, deeper perspective of student knowledge and skills," while a solitary assessment does not have the ability to provide sufficient information.[30] Therefore, the AACC proposes a comprehensive assessment system that is "horizontally, developmentally, and vertically aligned to serve classroom, school, and district improvement" (Figure 3.2).

[28] Ibid.

[29] Scharberg, K. "Comprehensive, Continuous, and Coherent Assessment." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, January 2012. http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/comprehensive-continuous-and-coherent-assessment

[30] Herman, J. "Coherence: Key to Next Generation Assessment Success." Assessment and Accountability Comprehensive Center, University of California – Los Angeles, 2010. p. 2. http://www.cse.ucla.edu/products/policy/coherence_v6.pdf

Figure 3.2: Coherent Assessment System Model



Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, University of California – Los Angeles[31]

[31] Text in figure quoted almost verbatim from: Ibid., pp. 4-5.

Moreover, the ASCD explains that there are a wide variety of measures that are particularly effective when used in combination, as detailed in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Examples of Comprehensive, Continuous, and Coherent Measures

▪ Growth models ▪ Portfolios ▪ Criterion-referenced tests ▪ Norm-referenced tests	▪ Computer adaptive assessments ▪ Diagnostic evaluations ▪ Formative, interim, and summative assessments

Source: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development[32]

Overall, it is important that students are able to demonstrate their understanding of course material and knowledge in multiple ways. Therefore, **schools should also allow student retakes and revisions – without penalty –** in order to provide more fairness to students who learn at different paces.[33]

Lastly, the ASCD notes the importance of **considering the ways in which assessments may serve student, classroom, school, and district goals.** To this end, it is critical to ask the following questions when developing assessment systems:

- Are the assessment tasks aligned with significant learning goals? Fair and free from bias? Accessible for all students?
- Does the interpretation of student responses to the task yield accurate inferences about student learning? Does the interpretation support the intended purpose?
- Does performance on the assessment reflect important capability? Does it transfer to other settings or applications beyond the assessment?[34]

CASE PROFILES

TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Located in the state of Washington, the Tacoma Public Schools' educational model emphasizes building whole children through social-emotional learning. According to the district's website, a partnership between the school district and the University of Washington-Tacoma "is assisting to develop a sustainable school system both now and for the future."[35] Currently, 26 of the district's 57 schools are involved in the whole child initiative, and there are plans to expand the model to the entire district.

[32] Scharberg, Op. cit.
[33] Townsley, M. "There's Still Time To Learn the Standards! A New Look at Grading." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, August 27, 2015. http://inservice.ascd.org/theres-still-time-to-learn-the-standards-a-new-look-at-grading/
[34] Bullet points quoted verbatim from: Scharberg, Op. cit.
[35] "Tacoma Whole Child Initiative." Tacoma Public Schools. http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/information/departments/studentlife/pages/twci.aspx

In developing its whole child educational model, the Tacoma Public Schools first identified four main goals for its students: "academic excellence and the elimination of disparities among student groups; partnerships that engage parents, community, and staff; early academic success; and safe learning environments."[36] From there, the district aimed to identify the most effective measures of success in each of these areas, incorporating multiple indicators.

Tacoma Public Schools' 2015-2020 strategic plan details the specific measures and indicators that the district uses to determine student and school progress in the four identified areas of whole child education. As shown in Figure 3.4, **the indicators include typical accountability metrics** (e.g., student assessment results; graduation rates) **as well as a variety of non-traditional measures** (e.g., school climate survey participation and results; student participation in extracurricular activities)**.** Furthermore, the school district notes that data in the Academic Excellence, Safety, and Early Learning areas are broken into subcategories in order to identify differences among student groups. Specifically, the district examines: ethnicity; poverty (free and reduced lunch rate participation); gender; region; English language learners; and special education.[37]

Figure 3.4: Measuring the Whole Child, Tacoma Public Schools

GOAL	MEASURES/INDICATORS
Academic Excellence: All students will perform at or above grade level and we will eliminate disparities among all groups.	▪ **Pre-K to 5:** Each elementary school will complete an annual summary of the building's Social Emotional Learning Action Plan ▪ **Grade 5:** % of students scoring at each level of the state assessments (Smarter Balanced) in English language arts and math (annually); % of students scoring at each level in reading and math competencies on their report card (December and June) ▪ **Grade 8:** % of students scoring at each level of the state assessments (Smarter Balanced) in English language arts and math (annually); % of students earning a "C" or higher in algebra or geometry and in language arts 8 (each semester) ▪ **Grade 9:** % of students failing one class (weekly); % of students failing more than one class ▪ **Grade 11:** % of students scoring at each level of the state assessments (Smarter Balanced) in English language arts and math (annually) ▪ **Middle School:** % of students enrolled in extracurricular activities (annually) ▪ **Graduation** (*Priority Benchmarks*): % of students graduating on time; % of students graduating with extended time; % of students dropping out; % of students re-enrolled from drop out ▪ **Preparation for Life After High School:** % of students who have a verified acceptance letter from next institution (community college, university, military, apprentice program, etc.) ▪ **High School:** % of students enrolled in extracurricular activities (annually) ▪ **Eligibility/Readiness:** % of students taking at least one Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Running Start, or College in the High School course; % of students who have earned industry recognition

[36] Mellor, M. "Tacoma Public Schools: Measuring the Whole Child." Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, July 2014. http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/tacoma-public-schools-measuring-the-whole-child

[37] "Measuring the Whole Child: Accountability in Tacoma Public Schools 2015-2020." Tacoma Public Schools. http://www.tacoma.k12.wa.us/strategic-plan/Documents/TPS-Measuring-The-Whole-Child.pdf

GOAL	MEASURES/INDICATORS
Partnerships: We will fully engage our parents, community, and staff in the education of our children.	▪ **Welcoming Environment:** # of registered volunteers – i.e., families and community members – in schools, annually (*Priority Benchmark*); % of responses from students and parents/guardians at each level on the Climate Survey regarding diversity (annually); % of responses from staff and parents/guardians at each level on the Climate Survey regarding sustained family and community engagement (annually) ▪ **Effective Communication:** % of responses from students, parents/guardians, and staff at each level on the Climate Survey regarding communication (annually) ▪ **Partners Supporting Student Success:** # of community-based and youth-based organizations in formal partnerships with schools and/or school district, annually (*Priority Benchmark)*; % of responses at each level on the Community Partners Survey (annually); # of expanded learning opportunities created with partner organizations (annually); # of businesses, higher education institutions, and partner organizations supporting district or schools with donations, resources, and volunteers (annually) ▪ **Engaged Families and Parents:** # of parents participating in the School Climate Survey (annually)
Early Learning: We will focus on early assessment and intervention at the Pre-K through third grade levels to ensure early academic success.	▪ **Pre-School** (*Priority Benchmark):* # of students being served in preschool programs (annually) ▪ **Kindergarten:** % of students who showed growth when comparing the fall kindergarten reporting standards (WA Kids) and third trimester report card standards in literacy, math, and social emotional learning (annually) ▪ **Grade 1:** % of students scoring at each level of the reading and math competencies on report card (December and June) ▪ **Grade 2:** % of students scoring at each level of the reading and math competencies on report card (December and June) ▪ **Grade 3:** % of students scoring at each level of the reading and math competencies on report card (December and June); % of students scoring at each level on the English language arts Smarter Balanced state assessment, annually (*Priority Benchmark)*; % of students scoring at each level on the math Smarter Balanced state assessment (annually)
Safety: All schools will create and maintain safe learning environments that promote excellent academic achievement.	▪ **Grades 3 and 5** (*Priority Benchmark*): % of students with no exclusionary discipline (suspensions or expulsions), annually ▪ **Grades 6, 8, 9, and 12:** % of students with no exclusionary discipline (suspensions or expulsions), annually ▪ **Grades 5, 6, 8, 9, and 12:** % of students with behaviors that result in state-reported actions (by behavior), annually ▪ **Grades 3 through 12** (*Priority Benchmark*): % of students completing the Climate Survey (every other year) ▪ **Staff:** # of elementary, middle school, and high school staff completing the Climate Survey (every other year) ▪ **Parents:** # of elementary, middle school, and high school parents completing the School Climate Survey (every other year) ▪ **Grades 3 through 12:** % of students completing the Healthy Youth Survey (every other year)

Source: Tacoma Public Schools[38]
Note: Priority Benchmarks are defined as "the best indicator of success in the goal area."

[38] Ibid.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Montgomery County Public Schools, located in the state of Maryland, have implemented a whole child initiative deemed "Building Our Future Together." According to the district, this strategic planning framework seeks to provide students with the **skills needed for success in the 21st century – academic excellence, creative problem solving, and social emotional learning.**[39]

The district assesses students' progress towards these key competencies at five different times, also known as "district milestones," during grades 3, 5, 8, and 9, and at graduation. The measures and indicators that the district uses at each milestone are detailed in Figure 3.5.

In its strategic plan, the district notes that these data indicators will "guide schools and departments in developing action plans to improve student achievement," with a goal of increasing performance on each milestone and a reduction in the achievement gap between different student subgroups. As such, data will be disaggregated by student demographic and service groups.[40]

Figure 3.5: Measuring the Whole Child, Montgomery County Public Schools

DISTRICT "MILESTONE"	MEASURES/INDICATORS
Grade 3	▪ Reading at the proficient and advanced levels
Grade 5	▪ Reading and mathematics at the proficient and advanced levels ▪ Hope, engagement, and well-being
Grade 8	▪ Reading and mathematics at the proficient and advanced levels ▪ Algebra I with a grade of "C" or higher ▪ Hope, engagement, and well-being
Grade 9	▪ English with a grade of "C" or higher ▪ Mathematics with a grade of "C" or higher ▪ Eligibility
Graduation – College and Career Ready	▪ Algebra II with a grade of "C" or higher ▪ AP score of 3 or higher/IB score of 4 or higher ▪ SAT of 1650 or higher/ACT score of 24 or higher ▪ Hope, engagement, and well-being ▪ On-time graduation

Source: Montgomery County Public Schools[41]

[39] "The Strategic Planning Framework." Montgomery County Public Schools. http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/framework/#
[40] "Building Our Future Together: Strategic Plan." Montgomery County Public Schools. http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/about/strategicplan/framework/1492.13_StrategicPlanFlyer_6_20_13versionWEB.pdf
[41] "The Strategic Planning Framework," Op. cit.

CAMBRIAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

Located in San Jose, California, Cambrian School District "has a rich tradition of providing a curriculum that focuses on meeting the needs of the whole child."[42] To this end, the district has worked to retain and develop its arts and physical education programs, and has also emphasized a hands-on curriculum. For example, the district notes that it has a strong belief "in the importance of students learning by doing," and for the past three years, has "worked closely with the [University of California, Berkeley's] Lawrence Hall of Science to provide a strong curriculum in science that allows students to use the scientific method, and [to] think critically to perform science experiments."[43]

In its most recent 2015-2016 strategic plan, Cambrian School District set five main goals:

- **21st Century Skills:** We will provide a highly-engaging 21st century curriculum focused on developing global citizens.
- **Flexible Learning Environments:** We will create flexible learning environments, enabling students to reach their individual potential.
- **Whole Child:** We will provide a robust array of opportunities in a positive and safe atmosphere to address the needs of the whole child.
- **Student Achievement:** We will provide and support engaging, high-quality instruction which promotes active learning and maximizes student achievement.
- **Resources:** We will utilize our existing and future resources to support the goals of our district.[44]

Furthermore, the district also identified several "targets" and success criteria for each goal. On the next page, Figure 3.6 details the targets and success criteria for the district's "21st Century" and "Whole Child" goals. It is interesting to note that **Cambrian School District's forms of whole child assessment generally focus more on school quality, as compared to the Tacoma Public Schools and the Montgomery County Public Schools, whose whole child indicators emphasize student achievement and growth.**

[42] "Educating the Whole Child." Cambrian School District. http://www.cambriansd.org/Page/140
[43] Ibid.
[44] Bullet points quoted verbatim from: Ibid.

Figure 3.6: Measuring the Whole Child, Cambrian School District

GOAL	TARGET	SUCCESS CRITERIA
21st Century Skills	Expand integration of 21st century learning and innovation skills	▪ Digital literacy products used as a tool to demonstrate learning and teach others. Increase in digital resources and examples created by students, teachers, and administrators. ▪ Increased integration of technology instruction to provide student access to a digital learning environment.
	Provide rigorous, challenging, and experiential learning opportunities for students	▪ Participation and ongoing collaboration through the iPad/Digital Academy increased and shared at the school sites to support continuation of multiple tools for student learning/instructional practice. ▪ Content integration of science, ELA, math, and technology increased. ▪ Continued hands-on learning opportunities/experiential learning projects.
	Expand capacity for 21st century leadership skills	▪ Professional development and support to build internal leadership capacity (iPad and Digital Media, Gladiators, Curriculum Council, Faculty Senate, STEAM Committee, etc.).
Whole Child	Support the social and emotional needs of all students providing a positive school climate	▪ Sustained implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Project Cornerstone. ▪ Consistent expectations for a positive school climate demonstrated by students and staff. ▪ Counseling services to support student needs.
	Provide opportunities within the visual and performing arts (VAPA) for all students	▪ Expand VAPA opportunities through continued partnerships.
	Provide high-quality physical education instruction in grades transitional kindergarten through Grade 8	▪ Classroom teachers collaborating with physical education teachers to enhance the PE program and student wellness.
	Support and improve student wellness for all students	▪ Expansion of healthy food options during snack and lunch. ▪ Implementation of District Wellness Policy increased. ▪ Healthy food options provided at school and district events. ▪ Use of healthy alternative incentives and rewards evident at sites.
	Provide training and support to promote parent engagement to enhance student learning	▪ Parent engagement workshops continued and increase in participation rate. ▪ School events as a means to connect, communicate, and involve parents in the school community.
	Provide a safe and secure physical environment	▪ District and school site emergency preparedness plans updated/executed. ▪ District-wide disaster preparedness drill completed.

Source: Cambrian School District[45]

[45] "Cambrian School District Strategic Plan Targets 2015-16." Cambrian School District, June 2015. http://www.cambriansd.org/cms/lib07/CA01902282/Centricity/Domain/51/Strategic%20Plan%20Targets%20for%202015-16.pdf

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