Ensuring Higher Student Achievement Through Mastery-Based Learning

Executive District Leaders’ Roundtable Conference

March 30, 2016
From the Great Schools Partnership

David Ruff, Executive Director

Tony Lamair Burks II, Senior Associate
TODAY’S Materials

www.greatschoolspartnership.org/capss_edlr
Outcomes

Participants will be able to explain a framework for implementing mastery-based learning within a CT context
Outcomes

Participants will be able to articulate the processes associated with curriculum and assessment design in a mastery-based learning system.
Outcomes

Participants will be able to utilize the research basis for mastery-based learning.
Outcomes

Participants will be able to clarify implications of mastery-based learning regarding local district policy
Outcomes

Participants will be able to consider strategies to guide community engagement at the local level.
Agenda

Welcome & Agenda Overview

What is out of alignment with our current organizational design of schools?

What principles should guide us to implement MBL?

How can schools & districts coordinate standards for curriculum, instruction, assessment?

What research supports MBL?

How can we measure student achievement—and not get trapped in standardized testing?

Lunch!

How can schools best engage their communities?

How can we create supportive policy?

What are the implications for our schools and/or districts?

Final Thoughts
Is a non-profit support organization based in Portland working nationally with schools, districts and state agencies, providing coaching, and developing tools.
GSP has served as the coordinator of the New England Secondary School Consortium since its inception in 2009.
We Believe

In equitable, personalized, rigorous learning for all students leading to readiness for college, careers, and citizenship
We Believe

That schools must simultaneously attend to policy, practice, and community engagement.
We Believe

School improvement is **context-based**, not one-size fits all.
What is out of alignment with our current organizational design of schools?
If these kids aren’t physically growing at the same rate, why would we assume they will mentally learn at the same rate?
We assume equity by giving every student the same time
Equity demands different resources, approaches, and strategies for different students.
Practice makes perfect...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STUDENT 1</th>
<th>STUDENT 2</th>
<th>STUDENT 3</th>
<th>STUDENT 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Try</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Try</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Try</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Grade</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...except in school grading...
This counts
This doesn’t
This counts
What else seems inconsistent in our beliefs about learning?
What else seems inconsistent in our beliefs about learning?

• All learning lasting the same amount of time
• $A = A = A$
• Assuming any 4 credits in math represent the same depth of learning
• Combining effort and product into a single grade
• Expecting all students to demonstrate all learning the same way
What principles should guide us to implement Mastery-Based Learning?
SHIFTING CONCEPTS

What do we need to improve?

What needs to stop?

What remains the same?

What do we need to improve?
10 Principles Of Mastery-Based Learning
1. All learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students + families

2. Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations that are consistently applied to all students
Assessment Practices

3. All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced

4. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process

5. Summative assessments - which are integrated tasks requiring transfer of knowledge and skills, application, and performance in novel settings
6. Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately

7. Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement

8. Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.
Instructional Strategies

9. Students can demonstrate learning progress and achievement in multiple ways

10. Students are given opportunities to make important decisions about their learning
Applying the Principles

Review the ten principles and identify:

- the principle you feel most confident about
- the principle that challenges you the most
- the principle you are most excited about implementing in your school or classroom

Turn and talk with one or two others at your table
How can schools and districts coordinate standards for curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
(Un)Common Terms for “Standards”

- Descriptors
- Graduation Standard
- Learning Targets
- Priority Standard
- Power Standards
- Learning Objectives
- Benchmarks
- Proficiency Standards
- Competencies
- Performance Indicators
- Measurement Targets
- Mastery Objectives
Mastery-Based Learning Simplified

Cross-Curricular Graduation Competencies define a set of significant learning concepts that are not within the domain of a single content area, but are embedded in multiple areas. These are drawn from the Mathematical Practices of the Common Core, the Characteristics of Students Who are College and Career Ready from the ELA Common Core, and associated Connecticut state standards.

Content-Area Graduation Competencies define a set of significant learning concepts in each content area. These are drawn from the Math Common Core and English/Language Arts Common Core and associated Connecticut state standards.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Transcript and Report Cards</td>
<td>5-8 school-wide competencies</td>
<td>Demonstration by Body of Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>NO</td>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>Performance Indicators</td>
<td>Common School-Wide Assessments</td>
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<td>5-10 indicators per content-area</td>
<td>Common summative assessments ensure greater</td>
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<td>Formative Teacher Assessments</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guided by essential questions, teachers</td>
<td>Ongoing formative assessment is used to evaluate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>use daily learning</td>
<td>student learning progress</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>targets to create progressions that</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>move students toward the</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>demonstration of performance indicators</td>
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Graduation Competencies

Performance Indicators

Learning Objectives
Cross-Curricular Graduation Competencies define a set of significant learning concepts that are not within the domain of a single content area, but are embedded in multiple areas. These are drawn from the Mathematical Practices of the Common Core, the Characteristics of Students Who are College and Career Ready from the ELA Common Core, and associated Connecticut state standards.

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A Graduation Competency Is...

a standard that focuses instruction on the most foundational, enduring, and leveraged concepts and skills within a discipline.
Mastery-Based Learning Simplified

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A Performance Indicator

Describes or defines what students need to know and be able to do to demonstrate mastery of a graduation standard.
A Performance Indicator

Is measurable.
A Performance Indicator

Students can demonstrate their performance over time.
A Performance Indicator

The aggregation of proficiency on these performance indicators measures whether a student has met the graduation standard.
Cross-Curricular Graduation Competencies define a set of significant learning concepts that are not within the domain of a single content area, but are embedded in multiple areas. These are drawn from the Mathematical Practices of the Common Core, the Characteristics of Students Who are College and Career Ready from the ELA Common Core, and associated Connecticut state standards.

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Learning Objectives Are...

The component parts of a performance indicator - that is, the performance indicator has been broken down into a series of progressive steps and digestible chunks.
What Research Supports MBL?
Is not a stand-alone intervention
Is a suite of practices resulting from the thoughtful combination of best practices currently used by expert educators with solid support in the literature.
Some of the research is new; some is from seminal works in education.
Research Give + Go

- Read your research brief
- Boil it down - 1-2 sentences.
- Go find 4-5 more pieces of research from other people.
- Return to your group.
- Using the research you’ve gathered, make the case as a group that MBL is just “good teaching”.
Making the Case

How is MBL just a different way of saying “good teaching”? 
Visible Learning, John Hattie

Synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses of education research

Hattie has ranked most effective practices schools/teachers can engage in to improve learning
Visible Learning, John Hattie

• Teachers, working together, as evaluators of their impact.

• Helping students move from where they are to explicitly described criteria for success.

• Errors are welcomed as opportunities to learn.
Visible Learning, John Hattie

- Maximize feedback to teachers about their impact.
- Balancing surface and deep knowledge.
- The Goldilocks principle.
How can we measure student achievement—and not get trapped in standardized testing?
We believe that reliability results from the careful alignment of demonstrations tasks and instruction with intended learning outcomes. Comparability is possible when teachers assess student work with task-neutral common scoring guides and have time to calibrate their understanding and use. The graphic below represents five general learning pathways and how they can be assessed. While each of these has instructional value, only the first four will lead to greater comparability over time because they are assessed using common scoring criteria. We believe that these pathways are valuable and represent the many ways educators are personalizing learning for students in a proficiency-based learning system.
Crafting Scoring Criteria: Design Guide- 5 Components

Scoring criteria:

- Are task neutral
- Are aligned with the level of cognitive demand in the Performance Indicator
- Include all elements of the Performance Indicator
- Describe complexity rather than frequency
- Focus on what students can do rather than deficiencies
Avoid Terms Focused on Frequency

- Frequently
- Reliably
- Rarely
- Never
Use Terms
Focused on Cognitive Demand

- Create
- Explain
- Recognize
- Describe
**Designing Scoring Criteria:**

**Continuum of Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Demand</th>
<th>Weaker Statements</th>
<th>Stronger Statements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What <em>depth of knowledge</em> does the performance indicator demand?</td>
<td>• Lists tasks specific to assessments</td>
<td>• Can be applied to a variety of assessments or tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are there <em>defined levels of achievement</em> and rigor associated with each level of proficiency?</td>
<td>• Emphasizes only frequency rather than cognitive demand (e.g. rarely, sometimes, never; 1, 2, 3 times)</td>
<td>• Applies Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy, Marzano’s New Taxonomy, or Webb’s Depth of Knowledge scales when defining levels of achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do the scoring criteria identify <em>complexity</em> rather than frequency?</td>
<td>• Leaves out elements of the performance indicator</td>
<td>• Includes all elements described in the performance indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In the “partially meets” or “does not meets” categories, describes deficits, rather than describing what a student can do</td>
<td>• Describes what a student knows or is able to do at each level of proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe</td>
<td>Recognize</td>
<td>Explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can describe linear and exponential functions as increasing/growth or decreasing/decay.</td>
<td>I can recognize how a linear or exponential function must change for a particular problem.</td>
<td>I can explain the starting value and the change factor for a linear and exponential function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Designing Scoring Criteria

Scoring criteria describe levels of proficiency for each performance indicator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Does Not Meet</th>
<th>Partially Meets</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will be able to develop appropriate research questions. (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST. 11-12-7)</td>
<td>I can <strong>list</strong> some specifics about a topic that would help develop my understanding</td>
<td>I can <strong>identify</strong> broad questions that are relevant to my studies and focus my research</td>
<td>I can <strong>construct</strong> open-ended questions that build on one another and require evidence and support</td>
<td>I can <strong>analyze</strong> my own research questions to refine them based on my earlier questions and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Creating a Rubric for a Summative Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Accomplished</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use the periodic table as a model to predict the relative properties of elements based on the patterns of electrons in the outermost energy level of atoms (HS-PS1-1)</td>
<td>Student is able to locate an element on the periodic table, identify its basic properties, and determine the number of electrons in the outermost energy level.</td>
<td>Student is able to use the periodic table to accurately predict relative physical and chemical properties of elements. Student is able to describe the relationship between the pattern of electrons and other characteristics of that element.</td>
<td>Student is able to analyze observed relative physical and chemical properties of elements and classify them appropriately in the periodic table.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construct and revise an explanation for the outcome of a simple chemical reaction based on the outermost electron state of atoms, trends in the periodic table, and knowledge of the patterns of chemical properties. (HS-PS-1-2)</td>
<td>Student is able to determine the outcome of a simple chemical reaction.</td>
<td>Student is able to use their knowledge of the periodic table to predict the outcome of simple chemical reactions. Student is able to explain the outcomes by explicitly referencing the periodic table and its inherent patterns.</td>
<td>Student is able to compare the results of different chemical reactions and explain the differences in outcomes by explicitly referencing the periodic table and its inherent patterns such as outermost electrons, trends, and properties of reactants.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Use evidence and logic appropriately in communication</td>
<td>Recognize ideas, concepts, or hypotheses and generate a clear claim.</td>
<td>Analyze and integrate carefully selected evidence from diverse sources.</td>
<td>Apply evidence in a novel or unfamiliar situation to design a model or solution.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Science Performance Indicator**

**Cross-Curricular Performance Indicator**
Alignment in a Traditional Model

Cognitive Demand

Intention

Reality

Standards | Instruction+ Feedback | Assessment | Scoring
Alignment in a **Mastery-Based** Model

Cognitive Demand

- Standards
- Assesment Design
- Demonstration

Scoring Criteria
Instruction + Feedback
Scoring
From Standards to Units

- Standards
- Performance Indicators
- Scoring Criteria
- Curriculum Mapping
- Designing Summative Task
- Unit Design
- Instructional Design
- Instruction
- Formative Assessment
- Supports/Interventions
- Reporting Learning
- Scoring-with criteria
- Students attempt Summative Assessment
- Reflection + Refinement
- Reporting, Reflection, Refinement
- School-wide Planning
- Design for Learning
- Reporting, Reflection, Refinement
- Instruction, Feedback, Evaluation
- Supports/Interventions
- Formative Assessment
LUNCH!
How can schools best engage their communities?
Principles of Successful Community Engagement

1. Inclusive and equitable
2. Intentional
3. Connected to decision-making and change
What Do People Want?

1. To belong
2. To have a legitimate voice
3. To have an impact
Engagement Spectrum

Informing

Seeking Input

Deciding Together

**More** school directed

**Less** community involvement

**Less** school directed

**More** community involvement
Critical Considerations

What is the intent of the engagement effort?

• To what extent is it scaffolding the schools and community toward a larger goal for engagement?

• Are we clearly communicating about engagement activities and their purpose?
Critical Considerations

Why engage?

• How will engagement improve teaching and learning in our schools?

• How will engagement benefit the community?
Critical Considerations

Who needs to be involved?

- Who has historically not been at the table?
- What are the barriers to participation?
- What shared values would drive people to participate?
How can we create supportive policy?
What is a High Leverage Policy?

A high leverage policy:

• Increases academic aspirations, achievement and attainment for all students
• Promotes greater equity in learning, performance, or life outcomes for students
• Generates positive ripple effects throughout the educational system
The High Leverage Policy Framework

Success Factors

Policy Features

Implementation Contingencies

Systems Change

Positive Student Outcomes

Policy Theory of Action
Leverage Points

The intended objectives of an educational policy or the entry points within the educational system that policy makers desire to influence.
The intentional, predetermined features of a policy—both written and unwritten—as it was initially crafted.
Policy Features determine:

- The mixture between pressure (usually outlined in accountability expectations) and support (usually provided through appropriate educator development and/or financial incentives)
- The breadth and/or specificity of the leverage point
- Coherence with existing policies (or it identifies required policy changes)
- Where best to locate the policy on a “goal-strategy” continuum
Policy Features: Capacity Needs

- Monitoring Requirements
- Current School + District Capacity
- Educator Ownership + Local Control
High knowledge and skill gap requires professional development.

Monitoring Requirements:

Current School + District Capacity:

Educator Ownership + Local Control:

Policy Features: Capacity Needs

Prescriptive Strategy

Goal-Oriented Strategy
Policy Features: Capacity Needs

- **High** Monitoring Requirements vs. **Goal-Oriented Strategy**
- **Low** Educator Ownership + Local Control vs. **Prescriptive Strategy**

**Anger and aggravation** creates poor implementation.

- Current School + District Capacity
- Capacity Needs
Implementation Contingencies

The contextual factors and foreseeable contingencies that may arise during the implementation of a policy and that may influence how it is interpreted and enacted.
How the Framework Operates

Example: Graduation Requirements

LEVERAGE POINT
graduation requirements; senior exit exhibitions

Success Factors

POLICY FEATURES
state mandates; capacity-building

IMPLEMENTATION CONTINGENCIES
engagement of district/school leadership in the creation of exhibition model

REDESIGNED CURRICULUM AND PEADAGOGY; AlIGNED PD; REALLOCATION OF RESOURCES; ETC.

MASTERY OF 21ST CENTURY SKILLS; INCREASED COLLEGE READINESS; INCREASED COLLEGE-GOING AND PERSISTENCE
Personalized Learning
District and School Policy Checklist

✓ Graduation Requirements (Policy File IKF)
✓ Multiple Pathways (Policy File IKFF)
✓ Academic Recognition: Latin Honors and Grade Point Averages (Policy File IKD)
✓ Transcripts (Policy File IKC)
✓ Grading and Reporting System (Policy File IKA)
✓ Dual Enrollment and Early College (Policy File IHCDA)
✓ Assessment of Student Learning (Policy File ILA)
Personalized Learning
District and School Policy Checklist

✓ Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration (Policy File IKE)
✓ Demonstrations of Learning, Exhibitions, and Capstone Projects (Policy File ILA)
✓ Academic Interventions (Policy File JCDL)
✓ Personal Learning Plans (Policy File ILAPL)
✓ Portfolios (Policy Files ILA and ILAPL)
✓ Attendance (Policy File JEA)
✓ Academic Eligibility: Athletics and Co-Curricular Activities (Policy File JJIC)
What are the implications for our schools and districts?
3 Biggest Leadership Dilemmas

- Technical capacity of staff
- Managing the change process
- Collaborating with the broader community
Myths and Dilemmas

Instruction

- Blended Learning
- One-to-One Devices
- Individualized learning verses personalized learning
- Pace
- Averaging Grades
Myths and Dilemmas
School Design

• Rank in Class
• Transcripts and Report Cards
• Physical Space
### Action Planning Template

**GOAL:**

**RATIONALE:**

**STRATEGY:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION STEPS</th>
<th>EVIDENCE</th>
<th>TIMELINE</th>
<th>COORDINATOR</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>EXTERNAL SUPPORT</th>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
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<td>Describe the specific action steps that will be implemented to support the goal and strategy above.</td>
<td>Indicate the data and evidence that will be collected and how it will be tracked and analyzed.</td>
<td>Indicate when the proposed action steps will be carried out and when they will be completed.</td>
<td>Name the lead coordinator and supply any relevant information about the role.</td>
<td>List the names of additional participants and describe their roles in the process.</td>
<td>Indicate what role (if applicable) any external support provider will play in carrying out the action step</td>
<td>List the financial and material resources that will be needed to carry out the action step.</td>
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Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified
A Great Schools Partnership Learning Model

The Great Schools Partnership created Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified to help schools develop efficient standards-based systems that will prepare all students for success in the colleges, careers, and communities of the 21st century. For this reason, our model is focused on prioritizing and assessing the most vitally important knowledge and skills, while also balancing these high academic expectations with the need for flexibility, responsiveness, and creativity in the classroom.

We know that learning standards are powerful instructional assets that can bring focus and coherence to an academic program. But we also recognize that standards are sometimes translated into burdensome instructional checklists that can stifle instructional flexibility and limit learning options. In our model, standards are not checklists but prioritized learning goals that help schools and teachers design more effective academic programs and learning experiences that will meet the distinct needs of each student.

Throughout this website, school leaders and teachers will find detailed guidance on developing a proficiency-based system. We have strived to keep our guidance concise and practical, focusing only on the most essential policies, processes, and practices. In addition, we see our model as an iterative process, and we intend to revise, improve, and expand our resources over time.

For general questions related to Proficiency-Based Learning Simplified, contact Stephen Abbott: sabbott@greatschoolspartnership.org
Questions?
THANK YOU