

CALIFORNIA PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT COLLABORATIVE

April 2020 Newsletter

CPAC Community Updates

The nation's current state is one of uncertainty, and many of our educators have stepped in quickly and without question to support the students and families that they serve. To support you, our CPAC community, and the important work you do, we are planning various virtual events over the next few months.

CPAC virtual community hour: This is designed for network members to connect, share resources, and check in with one another. This community hour will take place during a weekday morning. Please use [this Doodle Poll](#) to confirm the time/date combinations that work best for you.

Additional opportunities to connect will include:

- Book and article club
- "Defenses Online"—professional learning opportunities coordinated with Envision Learning Partners and the Linked Learning Alliance, including attending other CPAC members' virtual defenses
- Collecting and curating a library of work samples

We will follow up with more details in the near future. We encourage you to share your feedback on these options in [this survey](#).

California's Response to COVID-19: Assessment and Admissions

The California State Board of Education, California Department of Education, California State University (CSU), University of California (UC), California Community Colleges, and the Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities

released a [shared letter on April 1](#) that outlines their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The UC/CSU and k-12 systems have made changes to required assessments for students. The UC and CSU systems have decided to waive the SAT/ACT for applicants, while the k-12 system has [suspended statewide testing](#), including the SBAC/CAASPP and the summative ELPAC exam. The state received a [waiver](#) from the US Department of Education for federal testing and accountability requirements this year.

These testing developments may create interesting opportunities for members of the CPAC community whose students participate in culminating performance assessments, such as capstone projects. As CPAC member Young Whan Choi lays out in [his most recent blog post for Next Generation Learning Challenges](#), traditional standardized testing can often be problematic by design. The current disruption and new guidance around testing may provide an opportunity to envision a more balanced approach to assessment statewide.

Performance Assessments and Learning From Home

As school buildings are closed and more learning is happening in students' homes, Tom Vander Ark [writes in Forbes](#) how students can pursue virtual capstone projects. As he notes, "There are thousands of disconnected juniors and seniors out there struggling with worksheets and online quizzes or just not attending online—learners that might need a different and better option." One option could be an integrated project that allows students to use their natural inclination as learners to investigate a topic in a rich and meaningful way. This has become especially relevant since the state [provided guidance](#) on final grading that includes standards-based grading considerations.

Many of our CPAC community members have been [engaging with capstone projects](#) for years now and provide great examples for others to follow. We recommend you [read Tom Vander Ark's article](#) to learn more about how supporting students to engage in virtual capstone projects could be a powerful lever for meaningful engagement, along with resources to strengthen this work.

For schools and districts implementing a portfolio defense, Pasadena Unified provides an example of how one district is continuing to implement performance assessments during the COVID-19 disruption. Pasadena Unified, which requires its students to complete a senior defense to graduate, plans to continue this work virtually. When the district's schools closed, about 50% of students had already completed their defenses, which means that they had written a 6- to 8-page research paper, compiled a portfolio of artifacts that demonstrates their learning, written a reflection paper on these artifacts, and defended this portfolio to a panel of judges. To ensure that the remaining students have the opportunity to participate in the senior defense, the district has moved its rubric onto a virtual Google Form and is offering three options for virtual presentations:

1. Students can choose to do a live defense, with a virtual panel, on Google Hangouts Meet;
2. Students can record a presentation at home using Google Hangouts Meet or any other necessary method (including cell phone); or
3. Students can use [screencastify](#) to record their presentation and share it with the senior defense coordinator at their school site, who will facilitate the scoring.

The Pasadena Unified team is excited to see how their response to this challenge can provide insight for others who are working to implement a virtual defense, as well as to shine a light on the structures in place that continue to support them in moving the senior defense to a virtual format. We would love to hear more about how your learning community is navigating performance assessment and distance learning and invite you to share your story via our [Google Form](#) or by emailing cpac@learningpolicyinstitute.org.

State Seal of Civic Engagement Webinar Includes CPAC Participants

On March 11, Dr. Erica Hodgins, Director of [Leveraging Equity & Access in Democratic Education](#) and Co-Director of the [Civic Engagement Research Group](#), hosted a lively webinar with more than 20 participants to discuss the State Seal for Civic Engagement (SSCE, which the State Board of Education is expected to act on before January 2021).

After Dr. Hodgins provided an overview of the research on civic learning, participants shared their reactions to the concept of the SSCE and the current draft criteria in facilitated groups of four or five people. Participants shared their excitement and hopes for the SSCE to promote more frequent and more equitable civic learning experiences for students across California. Each group also surfaced concerns and identified supports/tools that might foster successful implementation of the SSCE. A few examples include providing good models for projects, ensuring teachers have high-quality professional development to understand and support the SSCE, and fostering authentic collaboration within communities. One participant voiced a commonly held view: "Linking the classroom with the means for demonstrating civic competency in many realms is both what we are excited about and worried won't happen." The SSCE has the potential to bring together academic content, critical skills and dispositions, student engagement, and community connections. It could also dramatically increase California districts' interest in and demand for high-quality performance assessments. And it may one day be included within the College/ Career Readiness indicator on the California School Dashboard, making it part of the state accountability system as well.

Read this [brief FAQ](#) for more information. And stay tuned for more updates and resources on this important topic.

Looking back on our learning together:

Assessment for Learning Project Convening | February 11–13, 2020 | San Diego, CA

We enjoyed seeing so many of our CPAC members at the Assessment for Learning Project (ALP) Convening in San Diego in February. We connected with teams from Envision Learning Partners, June Jordan School for Equity, Los Angeles Unified, Oakland Unified, Oceana High School, Pasadena Unified, and many others.

Before the convening, we held our CPAC Steering Committee Meeting, where members convened to provide feedback on the forthcoming CPAC district case studies and cross-case report. We received valuable feedback that will improve the final version of this work, which we plan to publish and share with our CPAC members as well as the wider performance assessment community.



CPAC Steering Committee members share their feedback on CPAC case study research findings and recommendations.



San Francisco Unified's crew reports a few highlights of their assessment ecosystem mapping work to other CPAC crews.

At the start of the convening, members of the CPAC community met in "crews" of 10–20 members to map and discuss their assessment ecosystems. Three crews met in individual school districts while a fourth crew brought several school communities together.

Many of our members presented at the convening. Some members even woke up at sunrise to engage in "The Magic of Play" with Esther Soliman from Los Angeles Unified, as well as the language of Hula from our friends in Hawai'i! CPAC members were featured in [ten presentations](#) over the course of the convening. Members shared logistical tips for tackling portfolio defense, the importance of an authentic audience in performance assessment, and ways to empower adult learners and ensure all students can succeed; they also hosted a consultancy on building a districtwide assessment system around a graduate portfolio.



Nancy Le shares LAUSD's Linked Learning performance assessment work and advises session attendees about how to handle their inevitable "meltdown moments."



CPAC's California Network Reception fosters new connections among attendees.



Pasadena Unified's crew strategizes next steps for their performance assessment work.

ALP Conference participants appreciated formal and informal opportunities to rethink assessment with colleagues throughout the entire country across four strands: 1) Performance Assessment, 2) Formative Assessment, 3) Community Engaged Portrait of Graduate, and 4) Exhibition & Defense. They also appreciated spectacular views of the beach. Our CPAC-sponsored California Network Reception fostered great connections with a stunning sunset. We look forward to what is in store for ALP in 2020–2021.

Recommended Learning

Envision Learning Partners Virtual Portfolio Defense Webinars

On April 14 and April 16, Envision Learning Partners hosted a set of webinars to support educators implementing virtual portfolio defenses, and they are hosting two [virtual defense design studios](#) in May. Envision has also developed a [Virtual Portfolio Defense Toolkit](#), which is an excellent resource for those who are continuing to implement portfolio defense at a distance.

New episode of "The Young and the Woke" is live!

"[Elements of Powerful Learning](#)" is the latest episode of the "The Young and the Woke" blog series by Oakland's Young Whan Choi. It features the work of Castlemont High School students Jessica and America in the Strategic Urban Development Alliance (SUDA) in partnership with the Black Cultural Zone, City Councilmember Taylor, Civic Design Studio, and the Pop-up Village.

Community Schools Where Teachers Support Performance Assessment

Anna Maier and her co-authors highlight the key role educators play in the community schools movement in [this article](#) published in the latest issue of *American Educator* (Vol. 44, No. 1). The article features teachers in three schools: 1) San Francisco Unified School District's **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Academic Middle School**, where project-based learning has been purposefully integrated into the community schools model to increase student engagement; 2) **Fannie Lou Hamer Freedom High School** in the South Bronx, NY, where students produce a portfolio of exemplary work; and 3) **UCLA Community School** in Los Angeles, where students do deep reflection on their engagement with a social action project. Read the article to learn details about how the four pillars of community schools foster deeper and engaged learning for students.

Four Expert Strategies for Engaging Your Child in Deeper Learning

Abby Benedetto of Envision Learning Partners offers her expert advice in [a piece in Forbes](#) on ways to engage children in deeper learning while learning from home. This piece might be a great resource for parents

that our members work with, especially those who are worried about students being prepared for culminating performance assessment, such as a defense of learning, when they come back to school.

PBLWorks Resources for Remote Learning

[PBLWorks](#) created a webpage on implementing project-based learning remotely. This page provides curated guides and upcoming webinars that can support teachers and families in this work, including project ideas and technologies that they recommend. We know that project-based learning provides the foundation for much of our members' performance assessment work, and we hope that these resources can support your instruction.

Conferences Cancelled, but Learning Continues

- The [American Education Research Association Annual Meeting](#) (April 17–21, 2020) has been cancelled, but our CPAC team is looking into other opportunities to elevate the research that we conducted in Los Angeles, Oakland, and Pasadena Unified School Districts.
- [PBLWorld](#) is now an online conference taking place June 16–18, 2020. Registration is open. You can find PBL for Remote Learning resources [here](#).
- [The Linked Learning Institute](#) scheduled for March 16–17, 2020, in Long Beach was postponed, but you can access resources compiled by the Linked Learning Alliance to support engaging, relevant and integrated high school experiences [here](#).
- [Deeper Learning 2020](#) has been cancelled, but DL2021 is on! It's set for March 23–25, 2021, in San Diego.

We are looking forward to staying connected with you all and hope to continue to provide meaningful engagement opportunities to our community of practice. Please email cpac@learningpolicyinstitute.org if you have any feedback for our team or would like to share recommendations for how we can support your work at this time.



About CPAC

The California Performance Assessment Collaborative (CPAC) represents educators, policymakers, and researchers who are working to study and advance the use of authentic approaches to assessment, such as presentations, projects, and portfolios, which require students to demonstrate applied knowledge of content and use of [21st-century skills](#). To learn more about CPAC, check out the [CPAC website](#).