

California Performance Assessment Collaborative

What is CPAC?

The California Performance Assessment Collaborative (CPAC) was born from the vision of committed educators, policymakers, and researchers in response to the current policy environment. This group came together to share competency-based approaches to graduating students by assessing applied knowledge focused on deep learning of content and 21st century skills.

Purpose

The goals of CPAC are to:

1. Build a professional learning community focused on the improvement of performance assessment work, with CPAC members collaborating to deepen and refine their performance assessment practices in self-identified areas of growth.
2. Expand the number of districts/networks/schools using graduation policies that include performance assessment measures.
3. Engage with a broad group of higher education institutions to develop more equitable, authentic, and personalized admissions and placement processes.

If we are successful, CPAC will serve as a driver of innovation within the state where educators from various contexts—i.e., districts, schools, subject areas, grades—can collaborate within a professional learning community dedicated to the advancement of authentic, meaningful assessments. The learnings captured and documented through CPAC will support those seeking to engage with performance assessment work in their school, district, or network contexts, as well as inform the overall state policy landscape. Ultimately, the goal of CPAC is to shift districts and schools towards adopting graduation measures that enable students to demonstrate mastery of deeper learning competencies and readiness for postsecondary college, career, and civic life.

What does participation in the collaborative entail?

The CPAC community includes representatives from district/school network teams, individual schools, technical assistance providers, researchers, and funders. Some participating schools implement a senior capstone project and defense, while others offer a portfolio defense to students. This experience is often a graduation requirement, although many schools focus on preparing students in 10th grade or even earlier. CPAC members have developed a set of 10 unifying principles that guide our collective work (see below).

Our theory of change focuses on the “non-negotiable” elements needed to implement a high-quality performance assessment system at the district, school, and classroom level:

- At the **district** level, important elements include building connections with other district initiatives, having dedicated personnel, and connecting performance assessments with district policies such as graduation requirements and profiles.
- At the **school** level, important elements include tracking and ensuring equitable student access to and supports for performance assessments, providing structures for sufficient teacher collaboration and professional development time, and having strong teacher leaders.
- At the **classroom** level, important elements include sustaining a culture of revision and reflection, providing opportunities for peer-to-peer collaboration, and employing rigorous tasks and projects.

Meetings and Site Visits

CPAC convenes participants regularly in the Bay Area and in Southern California to deepen individual and collective practices related to performance assessment. Participants also have the opportunity to visit each other's sites to learn from each other and to observe professional learning regarding performance assessments and student differences.

What role does the Learning Policy Institute play in the collaborative?

The Learning Policy Institute supports CPAC by engaging in research and documentation of successful performance assessment practices and by communicating our learnings to California policymakers in pursuit of assessment and accountability policies based on sound evidence of what works.

Common Principles

Although the performance assessment systems vary somewhat across institutions, there are common principles that inform their practices and make the process simultaneously rigorous and relevant for students. These 10 principles are:

1. Features of the performance system are **aligned to clearly articulated student competencies** focused on assessing readiness for postsecondary success in college, career, and civic life.
2. The system is designed to take into account **the needs of the most underserved populations** (such as English language learners, recent immigrants, and students with disabilities) so that they can demonstrate what they know and are able to do.
3. The system includes the **collection and/or exhibition of evidence of student growth and proficiency** in relation to the competencies.
4. Presentation before an **authentic audience** allows for students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills by sharing their learning publically.
5. Students have **multiple opportunities to develop and demonstrate mastery**: if their exhibition or portfolio is not proficient, there is an expectation of revision until proficiency is achieved.
6. Performance is evaluated according to **rubrics and/or clear criteria of competence** across multiple dimensions of performance.
7. Outcomes from the performance assessments provide data on how students are performing in order to **improve curriculum and instruction**
8. The system enables students to **take ownership over their own learning and growth** and allows them to make choices about what they develop and exhibit.
9. **Reflection is a critical component** of the performance assessment process; students engage in metacognitive processes to reflect on, assess, and improve their own work and to plan, with their teachers and peers, for future learning and growth.
10. The development of students' **social emotional skills**, such as growth mindset and resilience, is included throughout the performance assessment process.