



# North Carolina Accountability Task Force Meeting 1

Dr. Juan D'Brot, Dr. Carla Evans, & Dr. Chris Brandt

*The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment*

February 19, 2026

9:00 - 3:30pm ET

Raleigh, North Carolina



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# 1.1. Welcome & Introductions

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9:00-9:10am



**WELCOME**

# NCDPI Task Force Support

Rupen Fofaria	<b>Staff to Task Force</b> , Director of Board Operations and Policy, State Board of Education
Michael Maher	<b>Staff to Task Force</b> , Chief Accountability Officer, NCDPI
Maria Pitre-Martin	Deputy State Superintendent, NCDPI
Stacey Wilson-Norman	Chief Academic Officer, NCDPI
Geoff Coltrane	Senior Director, Office of Government Affairs, NCDPI
Curtis Sonneman	Acting Director, Office of Accountability

# Center for Assessment Team

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## Center for Assessment

- Educational non-profit
- We work mainly with states or large districts around the design, implementation, and/or evaluation of their assessment and accountability systems

[www.nciea.org](http://www.nciea.org)

# Agenda

Time	Description
9:00	1.1. Welcome and Introductions
9:10	1.2. Overview of the Process, Roles, and Norms
9:25	1.3. The Promise of Accountability
9:40	1.4. Educational Vision and Strategic Plan in North Carolina
10:15	Break
10:30	1.5. Successes and Challenges of North Carolina's Current Accountability System
11:20	1.6. Who is Responsible for What? (Reciprocal Accountability)
12:00	Lunch
12:30	1.7. Theory of Action Foundations
12:45	1.8. Theory of Action: A Vision for Education in North Carolina
2:00	Break
2:15	1.9. Theories of Action in Action: From Vision to Action
3:15	1.10. Wrap-up and Next Steps
3:30	Adjourn

## 1.2. Overview of the Process, Roles & Norms

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9:10-9:30am

# Outcomes

- Define Purpose and Vision of System
  - Recognize excellence in public schools
  - Identify schools in need of support to reach excellence
  - Redefine expectations of what schools should do to support students, parents, and communities
- Guide NCDPI and Work Group's Development of New System
  - Create multiple valid and reliable measures across grades K–12
  - Emphasis on readiness beyond graduation (college, career, military)
  - Recognition of growth and equality of opportunity
  - Transparent reporting for parents, educators, and communities

# Task Force



- Develop Theory of Action
- Guide Research and Stakeholder Engagement
- Review and provide feedback to indicators and system design
- Guide development of final system and 'school performance profiles'
- Recommend final framework to State Board of Education

# NCDPI (Work Groups)

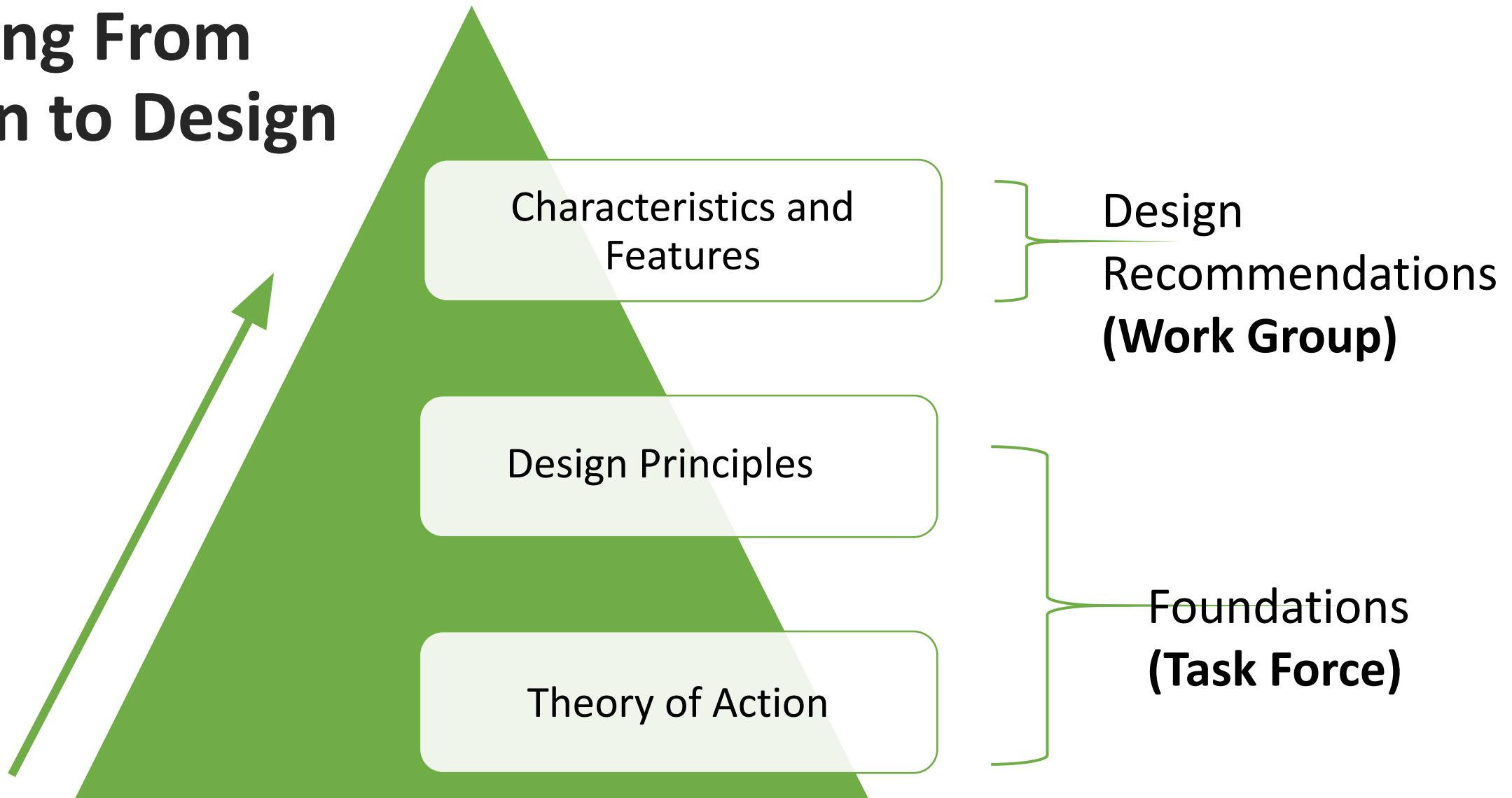
- Use Theory of Action to Identify Indicators and System Design
- Conduct Research and Stakeholder Engagement
- Develop and propose indicators and overall system design
- Pilot and test indicators and models for validity and reliability
- Develop 'school performance profiles'

# A Key Challenge...

A key challenge this task force will face is not getting into the weeds of indicators, measures, aggregation methods, etc., but rather staying at the theory of action and design principles level and then providing feedback on the indicators, measures, aggregation methods, etc. suggested by the work group.



# Moving From Vision to Design



# What is a Theory of Action?

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A theory of action

- Identifies both goals and mechanisms thought to support those goals
- Describes the assumptions and conditions which must hold in order for the desired change to occur
- Indicates near and longer term outcomes that should be observed
- Informs design and validation

In the best case, a theory of action is dynamic. It is referenced frequently and refined as needed as more information is available to confirm or falsify assumptions.

# Design Principles

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- Design principles are considerations that guide (or constrain) system components.
- They help support the theory of action to ensure the state's vision for education is achieved.
- They function as a roadmap that informs design decisions.
- They help address competing priorities.

# Characteristics and Features

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- Indicators and associated measures
- Design decisions (e.g., aggregation methods; identifications)
- Reporting decisions

# Initial Reactions

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What initial questions do you have about the goals or purpose of this Task Force, including what is within the scope and outside the scope?

What questions do you have about your role as a Task Force Member?

# North Carolina Accountability Design Resource Page

Task Force Page

Bookmark the following URL:

<https://tinyurl.com/NCDPITaskForce>



# Process for Making Decisions

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- Review and discuss options as a group
- Respectfully listen to all opinions and perspectives
- Weigh pros and cons of different alternatives with the goal of coming to agreement
- If agreement cannot be achieved, then dissenting views and rationales will be clearly documented
- In some cases final recommendations may be deferred pending additional information
- Recommendations will be documented in a final report

# Meeting Norms

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- This is a large group -- listen as much as you contribute
- State views, listen to understand, and ask genuine questions
- Acknowledge many forms of expertise
- Show up as your full self, not just as your job title
- Ask the next hard question
- Stay present
- Dream boldly
- Other?

## 1.3. The Promise of Accountability

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9:30-9:50am

# The Promise of Accountability

## State accountability systems:

1. Signal what outcomes are valued,
2. Provide information on school performance on those outcomes,
3. Monitor school and district performance &
4. Build public trust and engagement.



## THE CASE FOR STATEWIDE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

*National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment*

March 2025

Statewide school accountability systems have been required by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) for more than 20 years. However, many states implemented school accountability systems well before federal requirements, demonstrating a recognition of their role in supporting school improvement.

As a new administration takes office with a pledge to reduce the federal government's role in education, there is growing uncertainty about oversight of ESEA's requirements. What if states have increased latitude to implement statewide school accountability systems? Should accountability as we know it be dismantled?

In this brief, we make the case that states should continue to implement high-quality school accountability systems—regardless of the level or nature of federal oversight—and also pursue opportunities for innovation and continuous improvement. We contend this is a bipartisan position that elevates shared priorities for improving educational outcomes for America's public schools. To support this assertion, we adapt and extend the principles we described in our companion brief, *The Case for State Testing*.

*States should continue to implement high-quality school accountability systems regardless of the level or nature of federal oversight.*

Statewide school accountability systems are vital for:

1. Building public trust and engagement
2. Signaling what's important to district and school leaders
3. Monitoring group, school and district performance
4. Supporting school improvement initiatives.

<https://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/The-Case-For-Statewide-School-Accountability-Systems-FINAL.pdf>

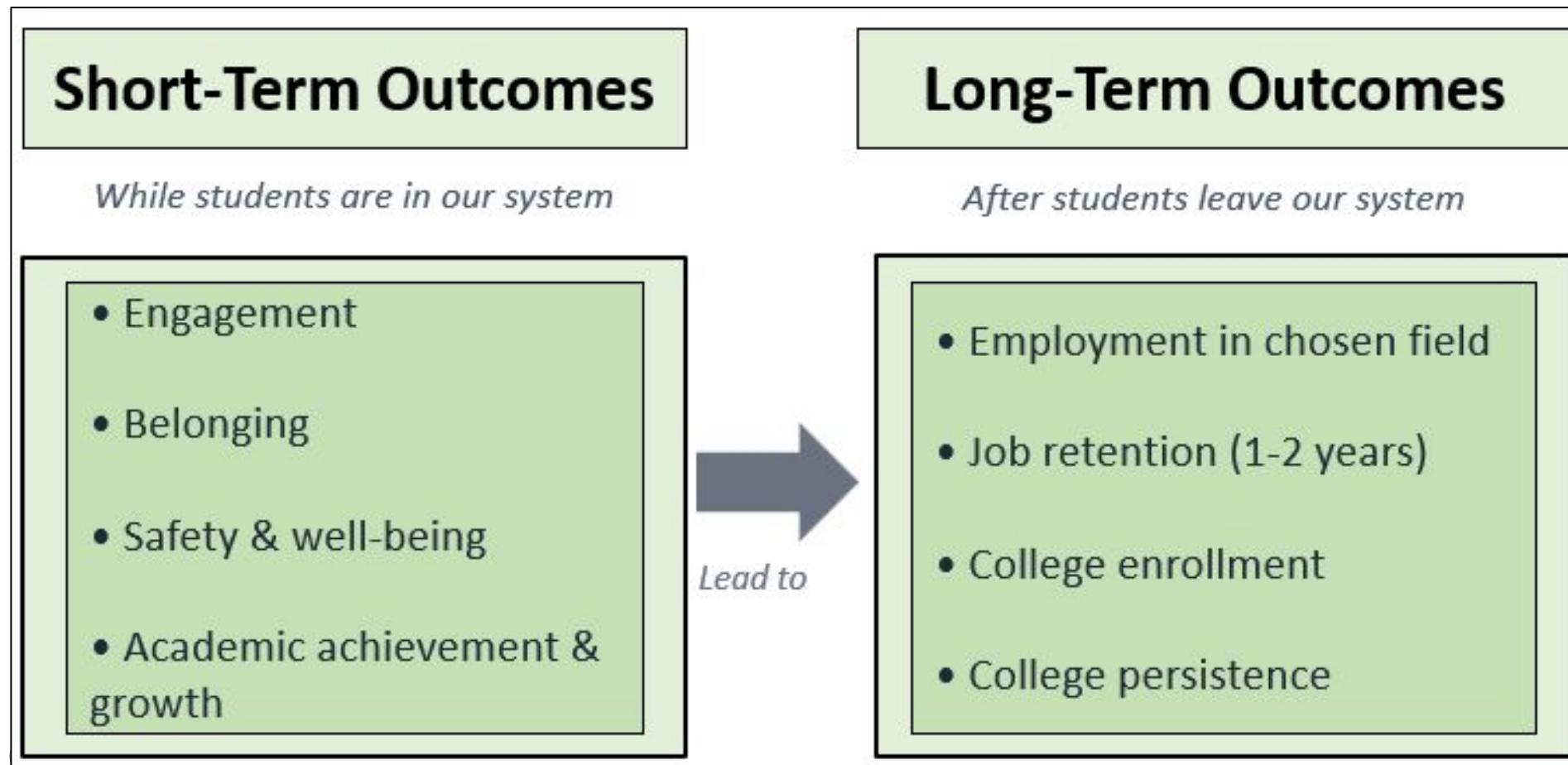
# Components of Accountability Systems

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Components	Guiding Question
Goals	What do we envision for our schools and our students?
Indicators	How will progress toward those goals be measured?
Design Decisions	How will we combine information to meaningfully differentiate schools and identify those needing support?
Consequences	What actions will be taken based on the results?
Communication	How will results be shared to inform and engage constituents?
Support	What resources and supports will schools receive to improve?
Monitoring	Are our schools making progress over time? What trends do we see?
Evaluation	Are our supports leading to improvement?

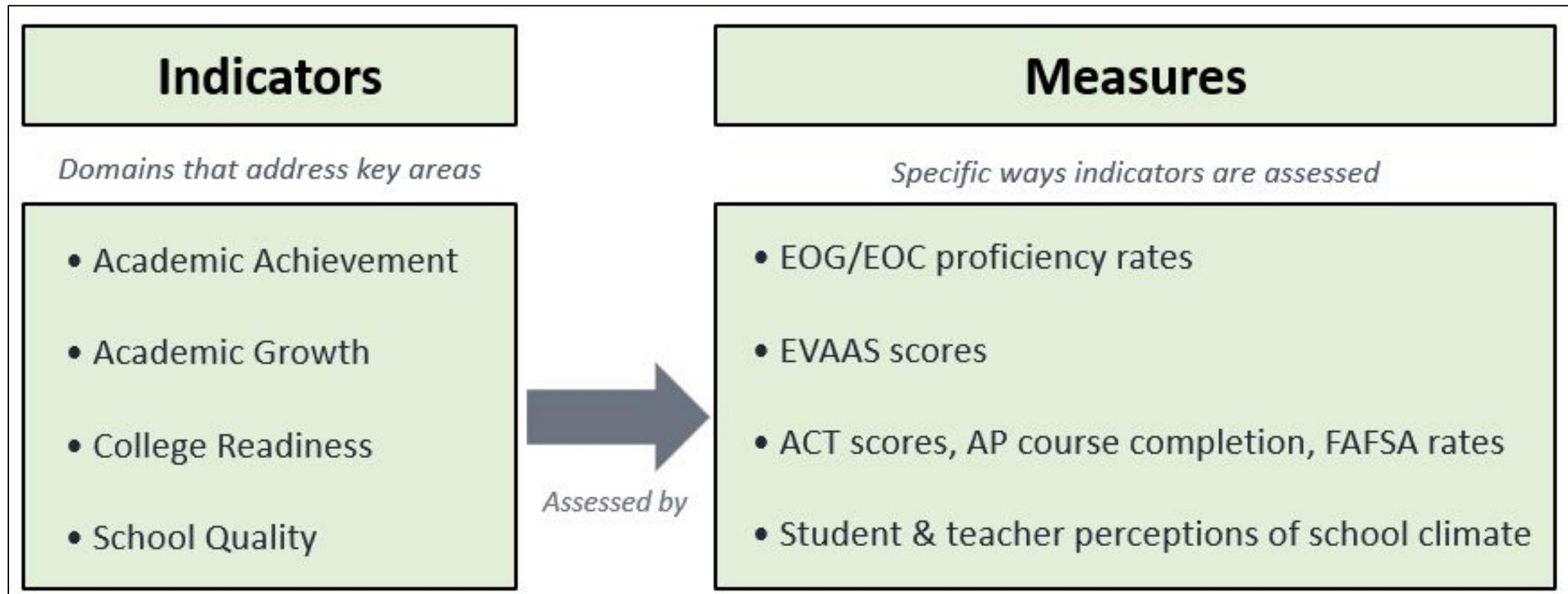
# Goals: What do we envision for our schools?

- Goals should be shared, specific & inform design decisions.



# Indicators & Measures: How will progress be measured?

- Indicators & measures are data sources that contribute performance information.



# Design Decisions: How is information combined?

- Design decisions are *rules* for how indicators & measures inform results.
- Key questions: How are indicators combined? What is “good enough” performance? How are exceptions handled?

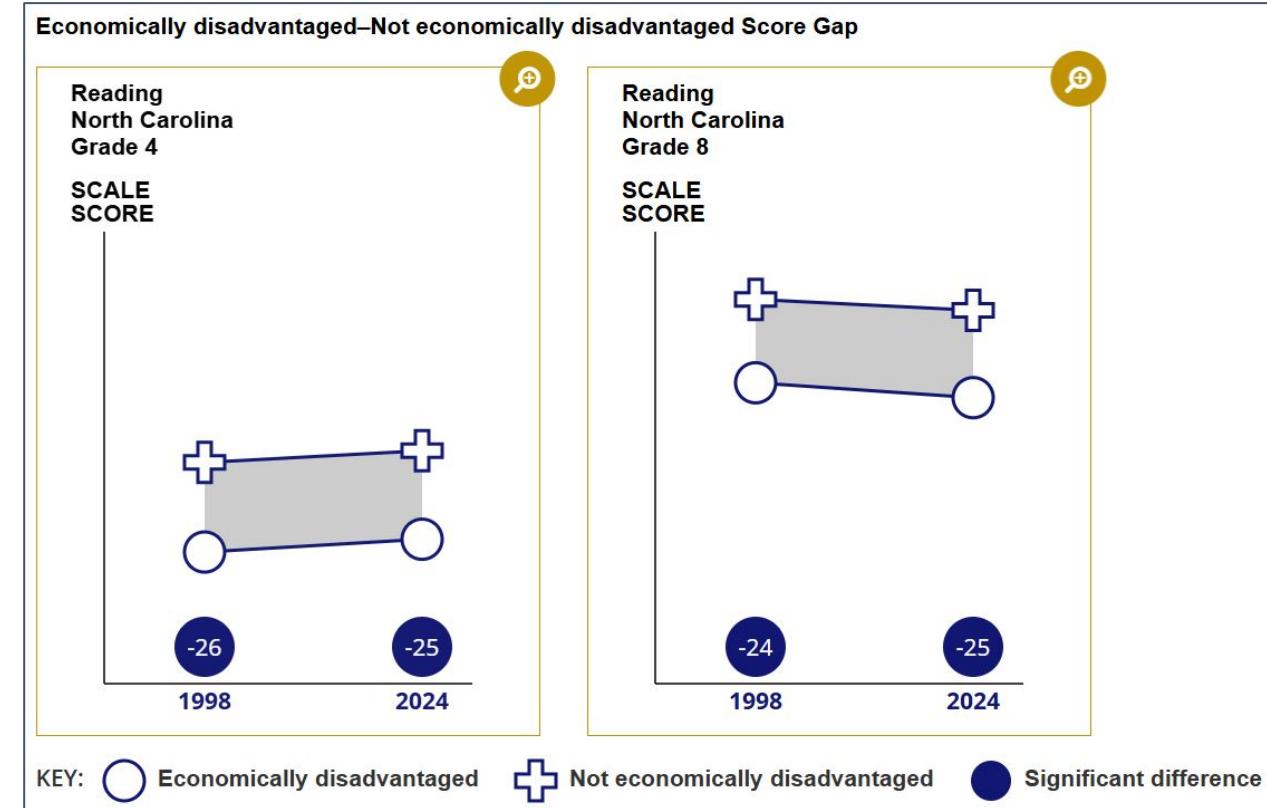
Compensatory	Conjunctive
<p><i>Measures are weighted and averaged</i></p> <p><b>College Readiness Indicator</b></p> <p>ACT Scores = 75 AP Coursework = 55 <b>Average Score = 65</b></p> <p><b>✓ School is proficient</b></p>	<p><i>Must meet minimum thresholds on all measures</i></p> <p><b>College Readiness Indicator</b> (Threshold = 60 for each measure)</p> <p>ACT Scores = 75 → <b>✓ Meets</b> AP Coursework = 55 → <b>X Below</b></p> <p><b>X School is NOT proficient</b></p>
<p><i>High ACT score offsets lower AP coursework</i></p>	<p><i>Must meet threshold on both measures</i></p>

# Communication: How will results be shared?

- Good communication (1) transforms complex results into *accessible, meaningful* and *actionable* information & (2) builds trust via transparency.

## Examples

- Static reports & interactive web-based tools
- Manuals, interpretation guides, learning sessions
- Contextual information to place results in context



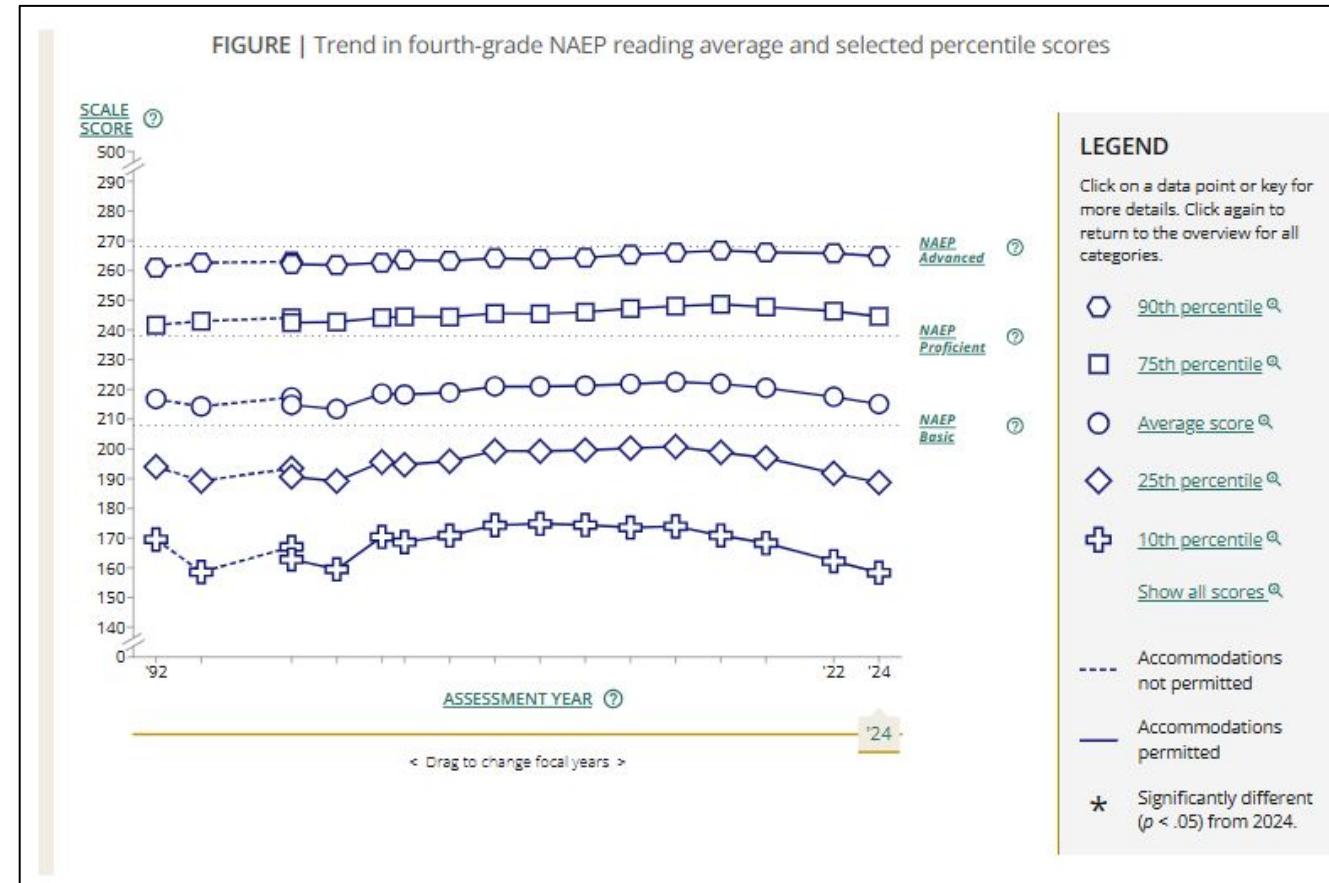
# Consequences & Supports: What actions will be taken?

- Consequences and supports define what happens after schools are identified.

Consequences	Supports
<i>What happens based on performance</i>	<i>Resources &amp; assistance to improve</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Public reporting of results</li><li>• School identification (CSI, ATSI, TSI)</li><li>• Recognition for excellence</li><li>• Required improvement plans</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Professional development</li><li>• Evidence-based strategies</li><li>• Additional resources</li><li>• Technical assistance</li></ul>
<i>Both should drive improvement while avoiding unintended outcomes (e.g., narrowing curriculum, teaching to the test)</i>	

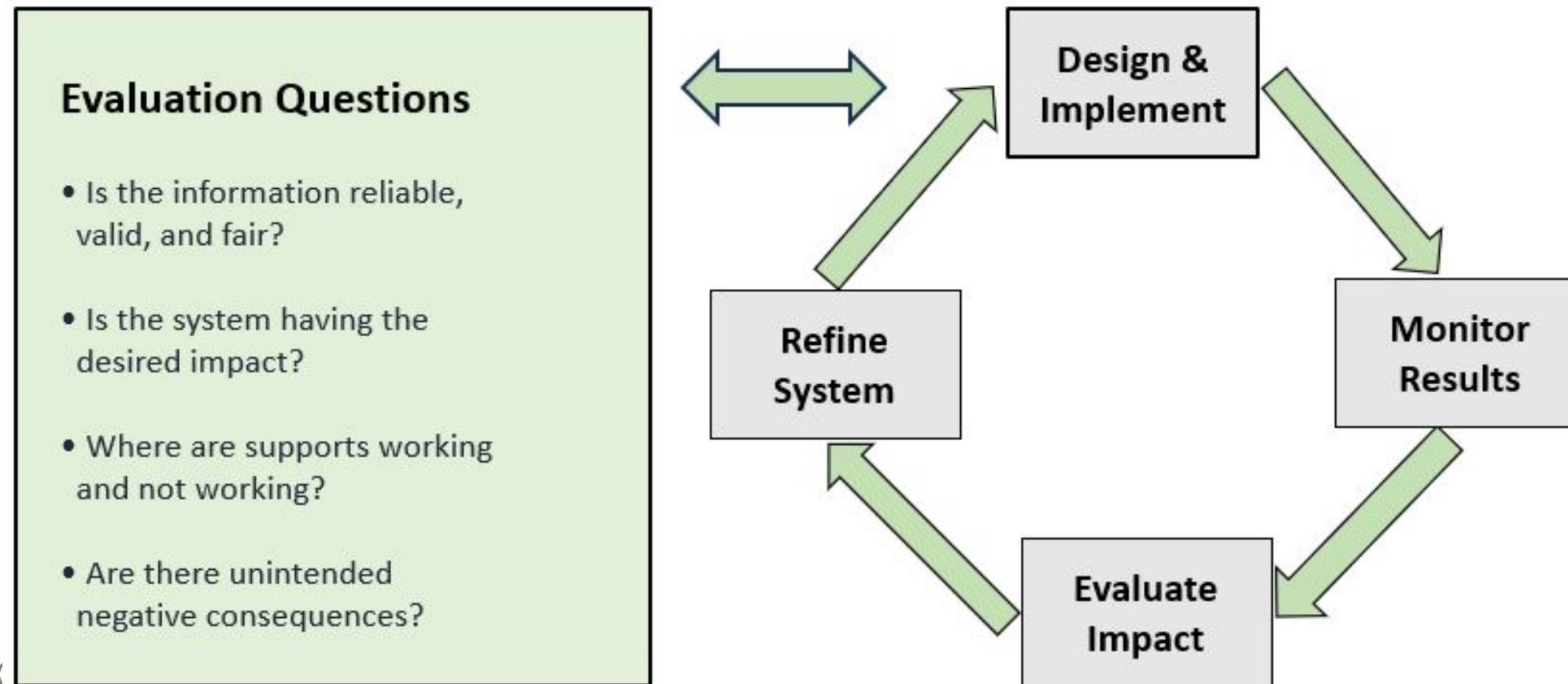
# Monitoring: Are our schools making progress?

- Monitoring tracks performance toward goals over time.
- It tells us whether schools are improving, but not why or how.



# Evaluation: Are supports leading to improvement?

- Useful evaluations are both summative (is the system working as intended?) and formative (how can the system be improved?)



## 1.4. Educational Vision and Strategic Plan in North Carolina

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9:50-10:15am

# ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL **EXCELLENCE**

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2025-2030  
Strategic Plan for  
North Carolina Public Schools





# ACHIEVING EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

**PILLAR 1**

Prepare Each Student for Their Next Phase in Life

**PILLAR 2**

Revere Public School Educators

**PILLAR 3**

Enhance Parent, Caregiver, and Community Support

**PILLAR 4**

Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments

**PILLAR 5**

Optimize Operational Excellence

**PILLAR 6**

Lead Transformative Change

**PILLAR 7**

Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education

**PILLAR 8**

Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education



## Pillar 1

Prepare Each Student for Their Next Phase in Life

### FOCUS AREAS

- Ignite early learning
- Elevate teaching and learning
- Promote excellence for all
- Reimagine the student experience
- Launch life-ready graduates



## Pillar 2

Revere Public School Educators

### FOCUS AREAS

- Improve educator recruitment and retention
- Expand career pathways for education professionals
- Increase educator compensation
- Elevate and restore pride in the education profession



## Pillar 3

Enhance Parent, Caregiver and Community Support

### FOCUS AREAS

- Engage and empower families
- Strengthen community partnerships



## Pillar 4

Ensure Healthy, Safe and Secure Learning Environments

### FOCUS AREAS

- Ensure safe school environments
- Improve student and staff health and well-being



## Pillar 5

Optimize Operational Excellence

### FOCUS AREAS

- Improve NCDPI's services to stakeholders
- Improve collaboration and communication across NCDPI offices
- Modernize NCDPI and PSU operations



## Pillar 6

Lead Transformative Change

### FOCUS AREAS

- Transform schools through research and development
- Connect North Carolina public schools through education networks
- Promote integrated support systems for schools and districts
- Explore accountability and funding reform



## Pillar 7

Celebrate the Excellence in Public Education

### FOCUS AREAS

- Develop comprehensive public education messaging
- Engage partners on education
- Share public education messaging and stories



## Pillar 8

Galvanize Champions to Fully Invest in and Support Public Education

### FOCUS AREAS

- Build community voices
- Promote engagement initiatives
- Move champions to action

# Discussion

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**Turn and talk in groups of 3 or 4: (15 min)**

- What are the implications of the Strategic Plan and the 8 pillars for the accountability redesign work?
- What resonates with you from the Strategic Plan as you envision this group's charge?

**Select one or two points from your discussion to share with the whole group. (10 min)**

# 15 Minutes



## 1.5. Successes and Challenges of North Carolina's Current Accountability System

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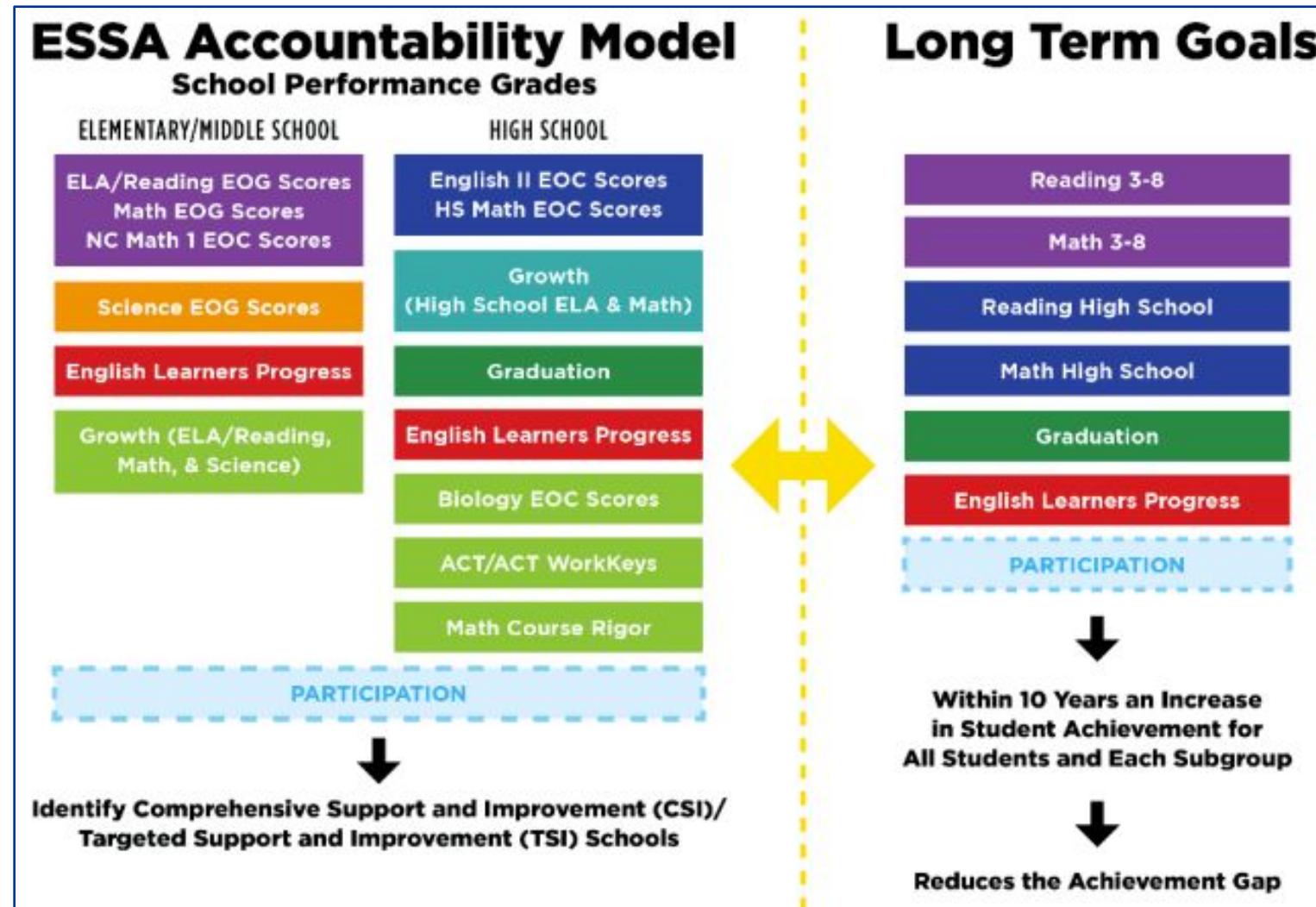
10:30-11:20am

# North Carolina's Accountability System

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10 min

# North Carolina's Accountability System



# North Carolina School Grading Scale

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- Schools graded on a weighted A-F scale
  - A = 100-85
  - B = 84-70
  - C = 69-55
  - D = 54-40
  - F = 39 and below
- Composite score calculation is weighted as follows:
  - Achievement = 80%
    - **Elementary/Middle** [# Proficient (Rdg + Math + Sci)] + EL Progress
    - **High** [# Proficient (Eng + Math + Sci)] + EL Progress + CGR + MCR +ACT/WKS
  - Growth = 20% (EVAAS Composite Score)

# North Carolina School Performance Grades 2025

Grade	All Schools		Elementary		Middle		High	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
A	196	7.6	48	3.8	22	3.2	126	19.2
B	535	20.7	278	22.3	89	13.0	168	25.6
C	1040	40.2	510	40.9	271	39.7	259	39.5
D	681	26.4	349	28.0	245	35.9	87	13.3
F	132	5.1	62	5.0	55	8.1	15	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,584</b>		<b>1,247</b>		<b>682</b>		<b>655</b>	

# Successes and Challenges of the Current System

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40 min

# Successes and Challenges of North Carolina's Current Accountability System (25 min)

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- Count off by 5 (which includes the online group if relevant).
- Using a marker, please indicate things that have been working well and things that your group perceives as problems with the current accountability system for the user groups listed below. Each group will consider all user groups.
- Assign a reporter who will summarize your group's findings.

User Group	Working Well	Not Working Well
1. Students		
2. Parents		
3. Teachers		
4. School/District Leaders		
5. State Leaders		

# Full Group Sharing (15 min)

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We will go around the room and each group's recorder will summarize **what is working well** and **what is not working well**, starting with the 'Students' group. Then we will move to the next group and they will share out about 'Parents'.

- Listen for similarities you hear across the different groups, as well as differences.
- Consider how these themes could inform design priorities for North Carolina's accountability system.



## 1.6. Who is Responsible for What? (Reciprocal Accountability)

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11:20-12:00

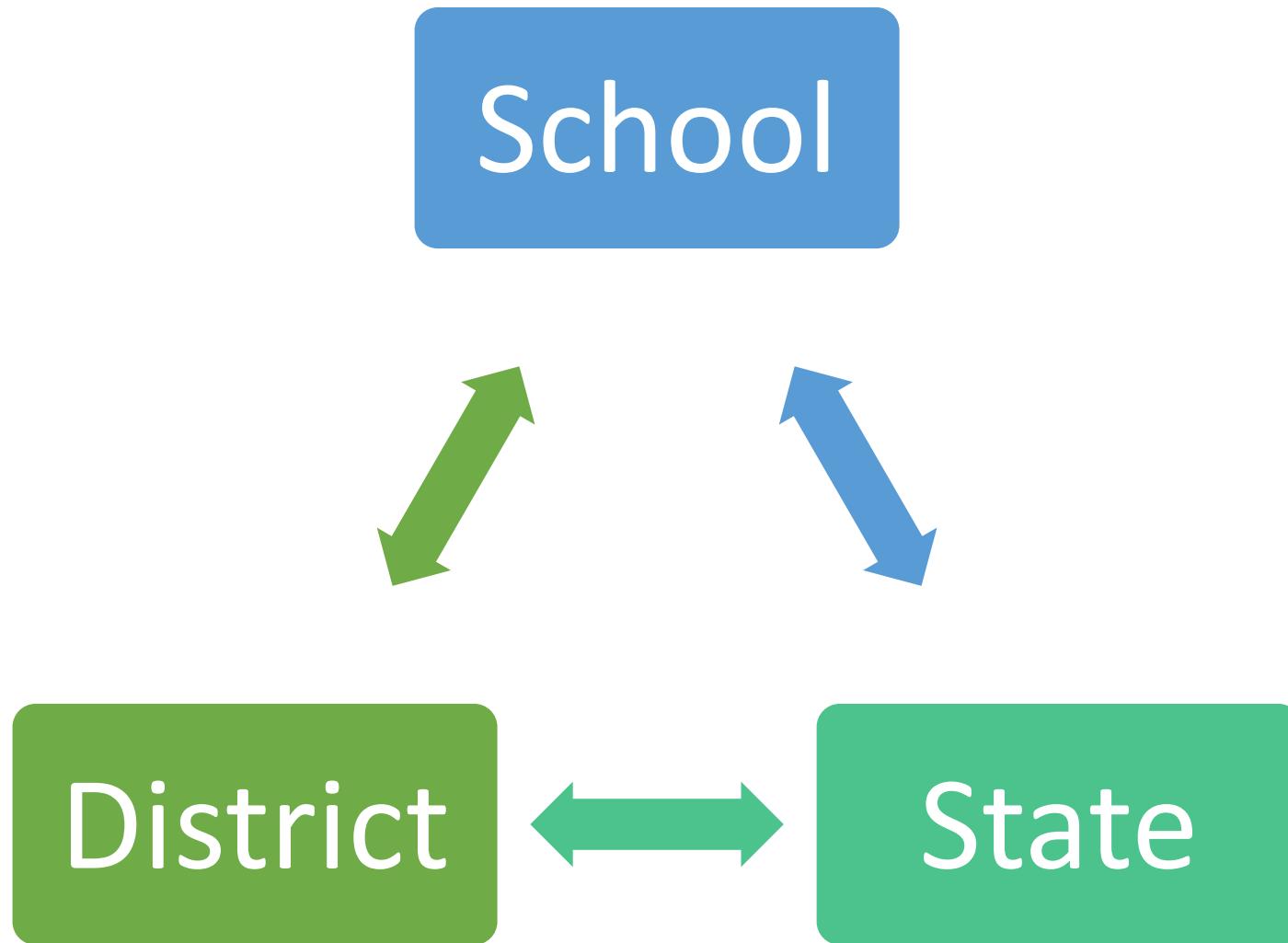
# Reciprocal Responsibility (Accountability)

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*Accountability must be a reciprocal process. For every increment of performance I demand from you, I have an equal **responsibility** to provide you with the capacity to meet that expectation. Likewise, for every investment you make in my skill and knowledge, I have a reciprocal **responsibility** to demonstrate some new increment in performance. This is the principle of “reciprocity of accountability for capacity.” It is the glue that, in the final analysis, will hold accountability systems together (Elmore, 2000).*



# What Could a Reciprocal System Look Like?



# The District Role

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## VISION AND OVERARCHING GOALS

*Achieving Educational Excellence is the vision for this strategic plan. This vision has three main components: high academic achievement, character development and making North Carolina public schools the best in the United States of America.*

- What is the district's role in supporting **schools** and **students** to achieve educational excellence?
- How does a district support the **state's** vision and overarching goals?

# The State Role

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## VISION AND OVERARCHING GOALS

*Achieving Educational Excellence is the vision for this strategic plan. This vision has three main components: high academic achievement, character development and making North Carolina public schools the best in the United States of America.*

- What is the state's role in supporting **districts, schools and students** to achieve educational excellence?
- How does the state support its own vision and overarching goals?

# The School Role

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## VISION AND OVERARCHING GOALS

*Achieving Educational Excellence is the vision for this strategic plan. This vision has three main components: high academic achievement, character development and making North Carolina public schools the best in the United States of America.*

- What is under the **school's control** when it comes to supporting students to achieve educational excellence?
- What **outcomes** are directly related to what a school controls?

# Who Is Responsible For What? (25 min)

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As you think about the various roles and responsibilities of each of the levels of the system in terms of **Achieving Educational Excellence**, **please indicate what responsibilities belong in each column** (e.g., ensuring every teacher has access to high-quality instructional materials is often a district responsibility, but fostering a safe and supportive learning environment is often a school responsibility).

Please record your responses in this [Google document](#).

## Group 1

School	District	State
•	•	•

# Shareout (15 min)

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***Who is responsible for what?*** We will start with the “School” column. Each group will read one of their bullets. We will keep going around the room until all bullets have been spoken aloud for schools. No need to repeat what other groups have said.

School	District	State
•	•	•

12:00-12:30pm

LUNCH  
TIME



## 1.7. Theory of Action Foundations

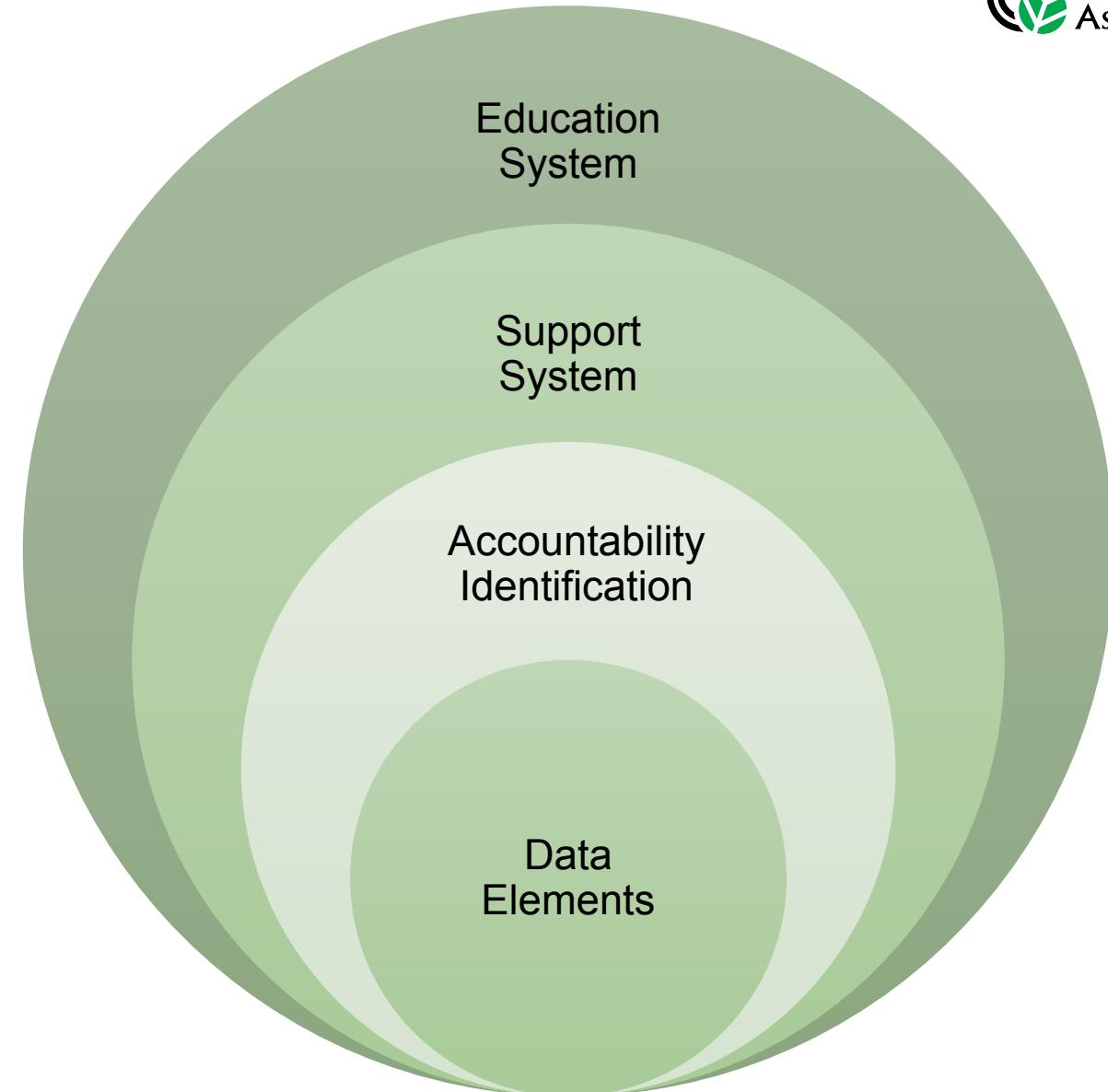
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12:30-12:45pm

## Theories of Action are like Nesting Dolls

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- Should be coherent within systems
- Come with their own set of claims and assumptions
- Can be independently verified
- Must be dependently verified
- Each may have unique or common actors



# Audience Considerations

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- The intended user should always be a major consideration
- Our responsibility is to determine the role and responsibility of each interest group
  - Should be verified and revised
  - Consider capacity and interest
- Specifying the user can help us anticipate next steps (or the data needed to support *next questions*)
- We need to connect the dots...

# Connecting the Dots

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*“You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.”*

*-Steve Jobs*

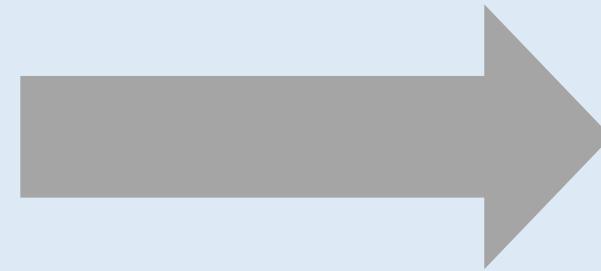
# So What is a Theory of Action?

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# Current Situation

Where are we now?

**How do we  
get there?**



Develop a  
**theory of action**  
to articulate the  
“how.”

# Desired Situation

Where do we want to be?

## Definition:

A theory of action outlines the **components of the system**, while clearly specifying the **connections among these components**. Most importantly, a theory of action must specify the **hypothesized mechanisms or processes for bringing about intended goals**...the theory of action should describe how the **particular clear goals** will be achieved as a result of the proposed...system(s).

-Marion, Lyons & D'Brot (2016)



A logical argument that connects the **goals** of a system to its **component parts**



By describing the **actions and conditions** that lead to the goals



as well as the **rationales, assumptions** and **evidence** that support and justify the connections within the system

# The Importance of a Theory of Action

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By making the **design of a system explicit**, a theory of action (TOA):



Acts as a roadmap for design and a touchstone for iterative design



Provides shared language & understanding



Supports the investigation of problem areas

# Multiple Layers of Complexity

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- To truly serve its role, a theory of action **must be developed at multiple levels of detail.**
- Often, theories of action fall short because they were not developed in enough detail.
  - One check is to ask: “Could I test this part of the theory of action by gathering data?”



How complex does our theory of action need to be?

Complex enough that we can **examine the assumptions**  
that underlie it.

# So... what does this mean for us?

Problems

- We must be clear about the problems we are trying to solve with this new system.

Goals

- We must be even more clear about what we want to accomplish with a new and/or revised system.

Process

- We must attend specifically to the processes and mechanisms by which the **goals may be achieved**. Magic or miracles don't belong in a theory of action!

Indicators

- We must clearly identify a set of near- and longer-term indicators that we can use to monitor both the intended and unintended outcomes.

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# 1.8. Theory of Action: A Vision for Education in North Carolina

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12:45-2:00pm



# THE CASE FOR STATEWIDE SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

*National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment*

March 2025

Statewide school accountability systems are a key part of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) framework. They help states implement school accountability systems that are aligned with the goals of ESSA, demonstrating a recognition of the importance of accountability in education.

As a new administration takes office, it is important to consider the role of the federal government's role in education, the ESEA's requirements. What if state school accountability systems? Should they be strengthened or reformed?

In this brief, we make the case that states should continue to implement high-quality school accountability systems—regardless of the level of federal oversight—and actively pursue opportunities for innovation and continuous improvement. We contend that this is a bipartisan position that reflects shared priorities for improving educational outcomes for America's public schools. To support this argument, we describe in our companion brief,

Statewide school accountability systems are vital for:

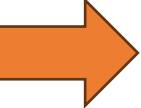
1. Building public trust and engagement,
2. Signaling what's important to district and school leaders
3. Monitoring group, school and district performance
4. Supporting school improvement initiatives.

## State accountability systems are vital for:

1. Signaling what outcomes are valued,
2. Providing information on school performance on those outcomes,
3. Monitoring school and district performance &
4. Building public trust and engagement.

<https://www.nciea.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/The-Case-For-Statewide-School-Accountability-Systems-FINAL.pdf>

# Elements of Accountability Systems



Components	Guiding Question
Goals	What do we envision for our schools and our students?
Indicators	How will progress toward those goals be measured?
Design Decisions	How will we combine information to meaningfully differentiate schools and identify those needing support?
Consequences	What actions will be taken based on the results?
Communication	How will results be shared to inform and engage constituents?
Support	What resources and supports will schools receive to improve?
Monitoring	Are our schools making progress over time? What trends do we see?
Evaluation	Are our supports leading to improvement?

# Statewide School Accountability System Goals

- Goals are the *short- and long-term outcomes* that the system is designed to promote.
- Prioritizing goals can inform design decisions.
- We will identify goals based on your responses to our visioning activity.

# Activity Sequence

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We'll engage in two key activities for this portion of the agenda:

1. Establishing a broader vision for students, schools and accountability systems in North Carolina (30 minutes).
2. Identifying key purposes and uses of the accountability system based on that initial vision (60 minutes).

# Activity 1: Establishing A Vision

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*We can't talk about the goals for the accountability system without talking about the goals of the educational system.*

*Recall our conversation regarding the state's strategic plan.*

# Activity 1: Establishing A Vision

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## Task

1. Working individually, please write responses to each of the 3 questions you will see shortly, in the following [Google doc](#).
2. We will have an opportunity to discuss these responses in small groups during the next portion of the activity.
3. We will summarize the responses and provide them to you during our next Task Force meeting

# Activity 1: Establishing A Vision

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1. Describe your vision for the prototypical **NC high school graduate** in five years. What kinds of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors do they possess? Please be as specific as possible.
2. Given this vision for students, what is your vision for **NC schools** in five years or more? How should they be structured? What kinds of teaching and learning will we see? What type(s) of content and skills will students be learning? Please be as specific as possible.
3. For what **negative consequences** do we need to watch?

# From Educational Vision to Accountability Goals

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We've just described:

- Our vision for students
- Our vision for schools
- The broader educational outcomes we value

Now we need to ask: *What role should the accountability system play in advancing that vision?*

# From Educational Vision to Accountability Goals

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Not everything that matters in education should be measured or driven by accountability. So our next task is to identify:

- The specific purposes the accountability system should serve
- The uses that reflect its proper role
- The outcomes it can reasonably be expected to promote

This is where we narrow from educational vision to accountability-system goals

## Activity 2: Purposes & Uses for Accountability

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- Do not restate educational goals. Identify the accountability system's role in advancing them.
- We are narrowing from broad educational vision to the specific role of accountability.
  - What purposes should the accountability system serve?
  - What uses should it support?

## Activity 2: Purposes & Uses for Accountability

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- Do not restate educational goals. Identify the accountability system's role in advancing them.
- We are narrowing from broad educational vision to the specific role of accountability.
  - What purposes should the accountability system serve?
  - What uses should it support?

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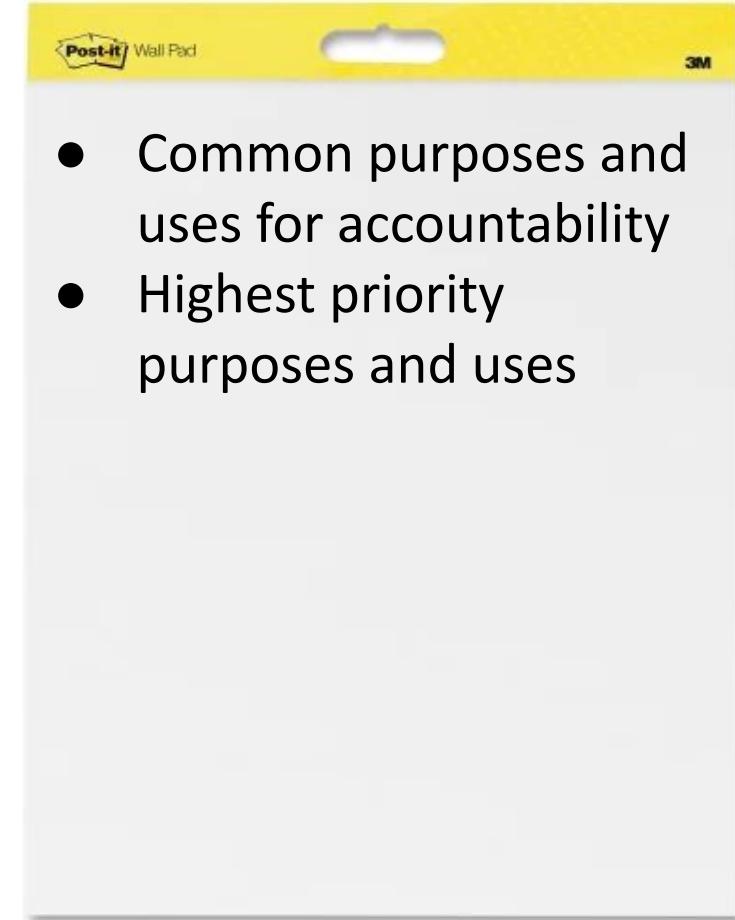
*The prioritized purposes and uses we identify today will serve as signals of the outcomes the accountability system must be designed to support.*

# Activity 2: Purposes & Uses for Accountability

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Please use the visioning results in the Google doc for the next activity.

- You will initially **work independently** to answer a series of questions.
- You will then **work in small groups** to identify commonalities.
- On poster paper, **please record** these commonalities.
- We will then do a quick **gallery walk** to review other groups' results.
- After asking a few **clarifying questions** in large-group, we will then walk around and **rank our highest priorities** *individually* (1-3).



# Activity 2: Purposes & Uses - Overview

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1. *Spend 5 minutes independently* completing this sentence 3–5 times: “To help advance our vision for students and schools, the accountability system should...” Focus on what the accountability system itself does, not what schools or students should do (think in terms of **actions** like identify, signal, report, incentivize, monitor, support, highlight, trigger.).
2. *Spend 10 minutes in groups of 5–6* discussing what you wrote to identify common themes. Combine similar ideas where possible.
3. *Spend 5 minutes having a group note-taker* record your group’s highest priority statements on the poster paper so others can see them.
4. *Spend 5 minutes independently* reviewing the work of the other groups.
5. Facilitators will lead a *5-minute large group discussion* where task force members may ask clarifying questions of other groups.
6. *Spend 10 minutes independently* identifying your top three priorities from all the priorities listed on poster paper around the room. Use the markers to write a ‘1’ next to your highest priority, a ‘2’ next to your second highest priority, and a ‘3’ next to your third highest priority.
7. Facilitators will lead a *15-minute group discussion and debrief*. Do we want to make any changes to the emerging priorities?

# Activity 2: Purposes & Uses - Overview

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## Small Group Work

1. *Spend 5 minutes independently* completing this sentence 3–5 times: “To help advance our vision for students and schools, the accountability system should...” Focus on what the accountability system itself does, not what schools or students should do (think in terms of **actions** like identify, signal, report, incentivize, monitor, support, highlight, trigger).
2. *Spend 10 minutes in groups of 5–6* discussing what you wrote to identify common themes. Combine similar ideas where possible.
3. *Spend 5 minutes having a group note-taker* record your group’s highest priority statements on the poster paper so others can review them.

# Activity 2: Purposes & Uses - Overview

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## Gallery Walk and Discussion

4. *Spend 5 minutes independently* reviewing the work of the other groups.
5. Facilitators will lead a *5-minute large group discussion* where task force members may ask clarifying questions of other groups.

# Activity 2: Purposes & Uses - Overview

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## Gallery Walk and Discussion

6. *Spend 10 minutes independently* identifying your top three priorities from all the priorities listed on poster paper around the room. Use markers to write a '1' next to your highest priority, a '2' next to your second highest priority, and a '3' next to your third highest priority (**only one '1', one '2', and one '3' per person**).
7. Facilitators will lead a *15-minute group discussion and debrief*. Do we want to make any changes to the emerging priorities?

# 15 Minutes



# 1.9. Theories of Action in Action: From Vision to Action

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2:15-3:15pm

# From Vision to Action

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- A vision, goals, and desired uses are meaningless without concrete paths to achieve them.
- Our next step is to begin identifying the activities, resources, and those who we believe are the main actors to make this vision a reality.

# From Vision to Action

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## What We Have Now

- Through the purposes-and-uses activity, we've surfaced and prioritized the most important ways the accountability system is expected to function.
- We are going to treat these high-priority uses as goal anchors for the accountability system. That is, *the outcomes the accountability system is responsible to promote*.
- In the next activity, we'll ask:
  - **If this use really matters, what would have to be true for it to actually help achieve the outcomes we care about?**

# Your Task (Small Group Work)

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1. We will count off to form groups.
  - a. Please identify a volunteer to take careful notes in this [Google doc](#) for your group.
2. As a group, select one high-priority use (goal anchor) as your starting point.
  - a. Facilitators will help coordinate so all goals are covered across groups.
3. In one clear sentence, define the goal anchor (the outcome this use is meant to support) so everyone in your group has a shared understanding.
4. Build a simple “use story” for accountability:
  - a. Focus on actions that accountability information can reasonably support or influence, not everything that matters for this outcome.
  - b. How could accountability information help move North Carolina toward this goal?
  - c. Who would use the information, and to do what, differently than today?

# Building a Use Story

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Answers don't need to be perfect, just thoughtful.

1. **Who uses the information most directly?**  
(e.g., teachers, school leaders, districts, the state, families)
2. **What do they need to see from a reporting standpoint?**  
(General types of information, not specific indicators or formulas)
3. **What do they do differently because of accountability information?**  
(Decisions, actions, or behaviors that change)
4. **What has to be true for this to work?**  
(Timing, capacity, resources, authority, support)
5. **What could go wrong?**  
(Misuse, unintended consequences, equity concerns)

If your chain of logic depends on “and then people just do the right thing,” pause and make the missing assumption explicit.

# Capturing Your Group's Work

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Please summarize your group's thinking electronically: **What is the primary goal anchor (outcome to be supported)?**

1. Who uses the information most directly?
2. What do they need to see?
3. What do they do differently because of accountability information?
4. What has to be true for this to work?
5. What could go wrong?

Please nominate a note-taker to work in this [Google doc](#)

## 1.10. Wrap-Up & Next Steps

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3:15-3:30pm

# Wrap-Up & Next Steps

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- **Next Meeting**
  - April 16, 2026 (NCDPI suggesting this is changed to in-person; June then would be changed to virtual)
- **Accountability Task Force Resources Website**  
**(<https://tinyurl.com/NCDPITaskForce>)**
  - All meeting dates and times
  - All materials from today
  - Advanced reading materials for the next task force meeting



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