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COMMON CORE ALIGNED ASSESSMENTS: YOU GET WHAT YOU PAY FOR?

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Featured Presentation:

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Panel Discussion:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, good morning. Thank you for braving the fierce weather to be here. Apparently there are serious traffic problems out and about, so one of our panelists is still en route moving at a snail's pace.

I'm Russ Whitehurst. I'm director of the Brown Center on Education Policy here at Brookings. And I do want to welcome you to today's event, "Common Core Aligned Assessments: You Get What You Pay For?"

I have to confess that when we took on this line of work some while back we sat around and worried about whether it would be of any interest to anybody because, you know, at a particular level it's a very detailed examination of what states are spending for particular types of assessments, so a very down in the weeds sort of activity. And, of course, the Common Core had been invented at that time, but not many people saw it as politically controversial. And yet in the period between our taking on this project and now, lots of things have happened, so the Common Core, which was thought of as just a cooperative effort by states with some assistance by the federal government to improve assessment standards across the country, all of a sudden became a political hot potato.

So we now have -- there's a place where I live that for the last 7 or 8 years has kind of cutely had protestors on two sides of an intersection: the liberals are on the left side of the intersection as I'm heading home and the conservatives are on the right side of the intersection. And for most of that period it's been about war. You know, it's get out of Afghanistan. Drone them to death. You know, it's been that kind of back-and-forth. And last week, it was let's kill the Common Core on the right side of the intersection and let's help teachers on the left side of the intersection. And so it's interesting how this kind of inside baseball topic has come to be of considerable importance.

And apropos of today's presentation and discussions, the cost of the Common Core assessments have risen to be a critical issue. And so we're seeing states either dropping out of the Common Core assessment effort or wobbling. Georgia dropping out, other states wobbling. And the politicians who are defending the actions are citing the high cost of a new assessment system as a reason for revisiting early decisions to participate in the Common Core.

We have principals in one of the assessment consortia that are developing the new assessments for the Common Core recently writing op-eds about, well, maybe we should cut the assessments back to just three over the course of a child's career and invest the money saved

in annual assessments in higher-quality but more infrequent assessments. So, again, cost is on the table.

So, you know, I think in this context, for the politics of the topic as well as practical and functional decisions going forward, it's very important to know what these things actually cost and what contributes to higher versus lower cost in the decisions that will have to be made about what kind of assessments are going to be brought to bear with respect to state and Common Core standards. And so that's what my colleague Matt Chingos has taken on as the topic of the report today. And it's my pleasure to introduce Matt, who will present the findings to you, and then we'll have a panel discussion of those findings.

Matt is really -- if you think about a Venn diagram in which technical competence, research methods competence is one circle and policy sense is another circle and the ability to work well and be flexible is another circle, the intersect of those circles is Matt. And the size of that intersect, I think, is larger than you can find for almost anybody else in this business. And so I'm always pleased when Matt takes on a topic like this because I know he will keep it relevant. He will do it technically well and he'll be able to communicate to an audience about what it all means.

So you will be able to do that today, right, Matt? (Laughter) Okay. So please join me in welcoming Matt Chingos to the stage. Thank

you. (Applause)

MR. CHINGOS: Good morning. Thank you, Russ, for the generous introduction. Thank you all for coming out today in the drizzle.

So giving all the controversy surrounding the Common Core Standards these days, Russ highlighted a lot of it, it's easy to forget that these standards are basically the law of the land in the vast majority of states, covering 85 percent of American students. And these standards have, in most cases, been in place or have been adopted at least 3 years ago. So the purpose of today's event is not to talk about whether the new standards are any good or not, but to focus on a key decision every Common Core state will have to make in the near future: what new assessment system to adopt to measure whether students have learned the material specified in the new standards.

So these new standards are supposed to, you know, get all students college and career ready. And that's a nice buzz phrase, but how do we actually measure it? And that's the challenge of the organizations that are developing the tests and it's a challenge that states face as they decide which system of assessments best meets that goal.

So until recently the two consortia of states that got grants from the federal government to develop Common Core tests -- PARCC and Smarter Balanced -- were basically the only game in town. But the

number of options recently has started to increase as some states have decided to leave the consortia and go out on their own and others are considering other privately developed options by individual testing vendors and by national organizations, like ACT. So a key factor in decisions about which tests to adopt and debates about Common Core in general is the cost of these new tests. And there's at least three reasons for this.

First is that the new tests are projected to cost somewhere between 20- and $30 per student for math and English language arts. So many states currently spend less than what the PARCC and Smarter Balanced tests are expected to cost, probably not the majority of states, but there's a significant number of states that fall into that category. So they have to decide can we spend more to get this test or is that going to, for whatever reason, be too much for us either financially or politically?

Second, there's uncertainty about the costs of the new tests because this is a, you know, collaborative effort, this is not a company that, you know, has investors and saying here's the price, you can buy it or not. They're saying here's an estimate of what the price will be, but that estimate could well change. And as the politics have heated up and states are dropping out, I think some states are starting to wobble and states that were previously committed are getting a little bit worried that price might go up. And, you know, they don't want to be left holding the

bag and year or two from now if the options they think are affordable now become unaffordable and they don't have a Plan B.

And third, I think there are political opponents of the Common Core who are hoping for exactly that outcome, that states get worried, they withdraw, there's more worry about the costs going up, and there's sort of this snowball effect where the consortia ultimately end up unsustainable because of an increase in the price. So the new report that we released today takes an in-depth look at the cost of these Common Core tests and I'll leave the details to the report, but I'll hit a couple of highlights.

So as you can see up on the screen here, PARCC's estimate for the cost of their tests, which is a computer-based test in math and English language arts, so that includes reading and writing. It's tested every year. It's $29.50 per student total for both subjects. That's the computer-based version. The paper-and-pencil version is estimated to cost between 3- and $4 more per student.

A Smarter Balanced estimate is $22.50 per student for it's computer-adaptive assessments, but its model is quite different from PARCC's in terms of the way the consortium is structured and the way that the costing is done. So PARCC has a quite centralized model where the consortium is developing the test and then it will procure services in

terms of scoring the tests and reporting the results whereas Smarter Balanced has a much more decentralized model where the consortium is responsible for developing the items, but the states have to figure out how it is they're going to score the tests and do the reporting and those kinds of things.

So when we see that 22.50 number that may not -- I think there's a little bit more uncertainty about that number than the 29.50 number. And the reason for that is that the 22.50 number for Smarter Balanced assumes that states are going to go and they're going to form mini consortia of about 2 million students total per mini consortia that will collaborate on these services that vendors will provide around scoring and score reporting and things like that. And that's really where -- you know, scoring is kind of the biggest driver of these costs, scoring not of the multiple choice items, right -- machines do that -- but scoring of essays and other constructed response items.

So the folks that estimated the cost for the consortia say that, on average, a state that goes it alone in Smarter Balanced in terms of those services instead of collaborating in a mini consortia would face a price that's about $10 higher. So that would push the price up to about $32.50 a student.

So the great advantage of the consortium model is

spreading the fixed costs, you know, the cost of developing. You know, let's say you need to develop an item bank of 2,000 items. You can develop an item bank of 2,000 items for 1 kid or for 10 million kids and it costs the same amount to develop that item bank. So the great advantage of the consortium model is that you can spread those fixed costs over a huge number of students. So let me give you an example.

The cost estimates that PARCC has released imply total fixed costs of about $70 million a year. So for PARCC that translates to about $4 a student, you know, close to a trivial amount. But if instead the same effort, same test were developed by one large state with about a million students, let's take Illinois, for example, it's about that size, it would instead be $70 a student just for those fixed costs. So the total price we'd be looking at would be $29, or $29.50 for PARCC, versus $95 for a state like Illinois going it alone. So modeling these fixed costs, which are the same amount regardless the number of students and get smaller in per-student terms as you have a bigger state or a bigger consortium, and then the variable costs, which is like, you know, the cost of scoring an essay -- which is going to be the same for each student whether it's, you know, a million students or 10 million students -- enables me to estimate how the total test costs might change if the consortia changed, particularly if states continue to withdraw and the consortia gets smaller.

So if you can see the figure from where you are, what this shows you is how the price per student is estimated to change with smaller numbers of students in PARCC. So way out here on the right you see the official estimate, 29.50, when the state had -- when the consortium had states with about 15 million students in tested grades, but since then 3 states with about 1.6 million students have left PARCC. That adds about 50 cents to the price according to my estimates.

There was recently big headlines when Florida decided to end its role as PARCC's fiscal agent. They still might use the test, but they might not. So Florida's 1.4 million students, if they don't end up using the test, that sounds like this really spells trouble, right? The cost must be going up a lot. But it turns out only 63 cents more.

Now, there's a core group of PARCC states who are administering field tests this spring. So let's say kind of pessimistically for PARCC that only those field test states end up using the assessment. That would imply a cost estimate of about $32, which is about $2.50 more than the original estimate. The bottom line is they can lost half of the field testing group and still keep the per student price under $40.

The story's very much the same for Smarter Balanced. Because the fixed costs are spread over so many students it's not a big deal whether so many students is 9 million or 6 million. Both students are

on a -- both consortia are on a relatively flat part of the cost curve. You can kind of think of analogy here. You know, where the big savings are is when you're a small state and you're teaming up with other states. You're on that steep part of the cost curve. That's where the savings are. I mean, it's kind of like, you know, if you share an apartment with one roommate and the roommate leaves and you're left with the lease, that's a big cost to you. But if somehow you had an apartment with 100 roommates and 1 of them left, you know, you probably wouldn't notice much of a difference. So that's the difference between the steep part of the cost curve and the flat part. So for Smarter Balanced with their cost estimates they can lose about half their members and stay below $30 and more than two-thirds before reaching $40.

So I mentioned earlier there's also this kind of snowball theory or worry that the politics of Common Core are going to undo the consortia by, you know, states leave, the price goes up, more states leave, the price goes up. So I took a look for some, you know, media reports about states where these political fights over Common Core, which sometimes cite costs, but are really about kind of the role the federal government has played in the development and adoption of the standards. So the states that have the fiercest debates over Common Core, if all of them were to leave PARCC or Smarter Balanced, you know, whichever

consortia they're a member of, I estimate the price would increase by no more than 2- or $3 a student. So in order for that theory to come true you'd have to have mass defections, much beyond anything that looks possible right now, at least based on cost.

So I mentioned earlier there's some other options that are being developed to assess the Common Core Standards that states are considering. ACT is right now the only national organization that has announced a Common Core Aligned Assessment, which is their Aspire testing system, which is going to begin this spring 2014. And it's a testing system that includes five subjects which are, as you probably know, the ACT College Entrance Exam. It's the same five subjects: English, math, reading, science, and writing.

Alabama got a good deal because they were an early adopter. They're going to be administering the test and paying $11.70 a student. And ACT folks tell me that they're planning to charge $20 a student eventually for the computer-based version of the test and $26 for the pencil-and-paper version, so basically in the range of the consortia prices.

The two states have commissioned Pearson to develop Common Core tests specific to those states. Kentucky has done that and they're paying, in terms of the contracted cost to Pearson, 30- to $35 per

student, and so has New York at a cost of about $34 percent student. Now, those states won't necessarily stick with those tests. I think they've -- the original reason they gave was this is a transition until -- because we want to have the test now, we have the standards now, so we want to have Common Core tests until the consortia tests are ready. But, of course, there's a possibility that they'll decide to stick with those tests because they've already developed them.

So there are certainly good reasons why cost is important, you know, chief among them getting you guys to show up today and read my report. But I think it's critically important that cost not be the only consideration. And I think it's especially true since spending on testing is really a drop in the bucket of overall per pupil spending in the country. So you look at last year, I did a report looking at what states currently spend in their test contracts with the companies that develop and score these tests and the average state spent something like $27 a kid doing that. Now, in the context of $10,500 spent annually, that's a really, really small number. So basically, in the current policy environment, the results of these tests are being used for really important decisions around student, teacher, and school accountability. You know, some places, you know, decisions about which schools to close are being made in part based on test scores, you know, which teachers to let go being based in part on test

scores, which students to hold back a grade being based in part on test scores. So it seems if we're going to make decisions about the $10,500 based in part on results of tests, we're going to want good tests, and maybe we ought to be willing to spend more than $27 to get there.

So quality's more important than cost, but what is quality? You know, what's a good test other than, oh, I kind of know it when I see it? So in the report I kind of outline a kind of framing principle and a couple ideas about that. And the key design principle is that tests should support and drive instruction in desirable ways.

Currently, there's this idea about teaching to the test, which is usually thrown around as kind of a derisive criticism of testing and test-based accountability. But I think instead we should embrace the likelihood that tests are going to send signals about what students should learn and the kinds of things that they ought to be able to do. And we ought to develop tests that send desirable signals about that instead of undesirable ones.

So first, tests should include the kinds of tasks that we want students to learn in school. If we think writing ability is important, tests should ask students to write.

Second, tests should cover the full range of content included in the standards. They should cover all the standards and they should not

have a bunch of stuff that's not part of the standards.

They should probe the depths of student thinking and levels of knowledge expected by the standards. There should be easy items, there should be challenging items, there should be items that challenge students to think in different ways. And they should accurately measure the performance of all students. So there's been this worry in the wake of No Child Left Behind that there's too much focus on, you know, measuring what's proficient, you know, what's kind of passing. While we want to be able to do that for sure, we also want to know, you know, who are our best students and our worst students. What are their strengths and weaknesses and how can we best serve them?

Third, assessments that purport to measure college and career readiness are put in place. We should demand evidence about whether the tests actually measure college and career readiness. So if, you know, 5 years from now when students have taken these college and career readiness tests and then have gone to college and careers, we ought to expect that the students did better on the tests were more successful in college or more successful in a career. So we should demand that evidence and we should demand that the tests be revised until it meets that standard.

And finally, states need not just good tests, but also good

reporting systems that provide timely and informative feedback to students, teachers, and schools.

So to wrap up, what should states take away from this report? I think first and foremost they should not be penny wise and pound foolish by accepting a low-quality test in order to save a couple dollars per student.

Second, they should, of course, maximize the value of taxpayers' investment by collaborating with other states to get a lower price for the same quality or higher quality for the same price. PARCC and Smarter Balanced are certainly the current leading options, but if states don't like those options for whatever reason there's also the possibility of a new consortium forming. So I think the real lesson here is that going it alone, especially for smaller states, really has a high cost in terms of either price or quality of the assessment.

Is there anything that can be done at the national level? There are two ideas that I think are worth considering.

First, the Department of Education is currently revising its review process for state standards and assessment. I think the revised process should make it harder for states to low-quality tests, but, at the same time, it's really important that the process be transparent and not look like it's cooked to favor a specific tests, such as, you know, the one

that -- or one of the two that got federal funds to be developed in the first place. Obviously, there are real sensitivities about federal involvement with Common Core.

And second, if and when Congress gets around to reauthorizing No Child Left Behind, I think they should add a provision that requires states to spend a certain minimum amount of their federal education funding on standardized testing. It could be something minimal like 30- or $40 a student. But for a lot of states, that would represent a pretty big jump in their spending on assessments. And I think what it would do, it would force states to upgrade this assessments or have to have money on the table and just turn down the money. But because this is the drop in the bucket I was talking about earlier, because it's such a small amount, it wouldn't have, you know, negative effects on anything else they're doing because it's not like we're shifting huge amounts of money and saying, well, you were spending 15 before, we're going to make you spend another 15 bucks a kid. I mean, that's such a small amount. If it was a big amount we might be more worried about it.

So this is clearly quickly moving territory. States don't yet have enough information about the Common Core tests to make an informed selection, but I think two facts are clear: taxpayers get more bang for their buck when they collaborate on assessments and students

cannot afford for policymakers to compromise on test quality.

So thank you for your attention and I'm very much looking forward to the discussion with our panelists.

MR. WHITEHURST: Part of my script is to now introduce the panelists, but since we're still waiting for the panelist who's on the way I'm going to introduce people as they speak, which probably makes more sense anyhow. And so what we'll do is we'll, you know, have short presentations from our panelists and we'll engage in a discussion up here, and then we'll ask you to join in to the discussion by sharing with us your comments and questions.

I'd like to introduce and have you listen first to Eric Smith. Eric and I go a ways back to at least 2001/2002. Eric at that time was a superintendent of a large district in Maryland. I had known him when he was a superintendent in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County and previously he was a superintendent in Florida. So at that point, Eric was in the large urban school district superintendency business and there was an early meeting in the Department of Education. This was shortly after No Child Left Behind was passed. And in that piece of legislation, the 1,100 pages, the words "scientifically based research" occurred 111 times. And it was a prescription that every practice that was to be carried out under No Child Left Behind was to be based on scientifically based research.

And so Secretary Paige had a meeting in a hotel somewhere here in Washington, and there were lots of superintendents there. I was talking to Eric, who I think I must have met either at that meeting or just shortly before, and he said, you know, I've got this large urban district and lots of my kids are really bad at math. You're the researcher here. You're responsible for the department's Research Office. What's the mathematics curriculum I should be selecting?

I said, gee, I don't know. (Laughter) We don't actually have any research on that. And he was appropriately incredulous, you know. The federal government's asking him to make decisions based on scientifically based research and there isn't any scientifically based research that would help him in making that decision. So actually there's a whole stream of research that came out of the U.S. Department of Education that I had something to do with setting in place because Eric asked me that question and I was embarrassed not to know the answer. So we actually now do have some evidence on comparative effectiveness of different mathematics curricula.

Eric as a state superintendent in Florida was there at the birth of the Common Core process, was actively involved in the negotiations, has a good sense of what the practical and the political issues are with regard to this topic, and I'm very interested in his remarks.

MR. SMITH: Thank you very much for that introduction and it's a pleasure to be here. It's great to receive this study and I appreciate you shedding some light on the cost issue. This might be the entire audience in America that really cares about this a whole lot, but we might read differently in the papers in the next couple of days. (Laughter) But anybody that finds a study on the cost of tests as an intriguing read, I think we're bound together, this group, somehow, but anyway.

It is a good study and I think it's a very useful one at this point in time and I appreciate, you know, many of the pieces of information that are found in it being brought to the surface. And I actually have read it twice now, not because I'm on the panel, but just because I found it intriguing and what it does -- how it helps us to better understand the issue of assessment and its role in public policy. So I'm going to take a bit of a larger view being former commissioner from the state of Florida and involved in the early days in negotiating the formation of PARCC and so forth. I have a keen interest in this issue.

You know, at first I started with just, you know, the need I think is obvious to all, I would hope, but maybe not. And so I've got to say it is our national ranking in education and reading and mathematics on international measures is appalling and is of concern from an economic standpoint for states, for individual states, and for our nation. And

perhaps the only area that we score lower on is our preparation of children for careers, so I think there is a strong need for, one, the Common Core Standards and then an assessment, you know, to measure those standards against is incredibly important for our country and for our children.

Where I came at from early on as commissioner in Florida was one of equity. And, you know, it started with my study of the data in Florida itself and we had students on the rise, more and more kids passing Algebra I, but we didn't know what Algebra I was. Is Algebra I the same in Miami as it is in Tallahassee or is it different? And we wouldn't know that until we started to give a common assessment against that to see whether or not Algebra I was really general math or not in Florida. And so in my conversations with other state chiefs the similar question would be between states. Is Algebra I the same? Should it be the same in other states? And should we be able to compare our performance in how we're attacking the issue of instructing children, and so forth?

So it seems pretty much commonsense that from an equity standpoint if we wanted to make sure that children, whether it be Algebra I or whether it be third-grade reading, there ought to be some measure in America to know whether or not the kids in Florida are doing as well or better or worse than the kids in California or Wyoming or wherever. And

so we started on this journey and for me, again, it was a chase after equity and it was a chase after individual student academic achievement issues.

In the report it talks about tests being the driver, helping to facilitate and encourage improved instruction, and I think that certainly is a piece of it. But the real driver, and 10 years from now when another study comes out it should be the real measure of quality of this exercise we've gone through as a nation, has it helped to drive student achievement up in our country and has it helped to do that for all children?

Equity can be measured only by the ability to compare, and so the issue of comparability between states is a key issue for -- was for me as commissioner of education, the comparability across states and the comparability internationally. And if we didn't have that, then we didn't have really much of anything. And comparability led to the notion of a commonly developed assessment to measure the commonly developed standards.

Again, I restate again, the -- and part of the beauty I think of the PARCC assessment, for example, is that they did capture this notion that assessments do drive either good or bad behaviors in the classroom, particularly if they're tied to high-stakes measures at the end. And so you can have teachers that opt to do things like "drill and kill" and a bad assessment that encourages that kind of inappropriate strategy in a

classroom. You can also have more finely tuned assessments that encourage higher order thinking skills and so forth reflected in the assessments, and, as a result, encourage better teaching practices in the classroom. And I think this would be certainly a positive move forward an issue related to the question of quality.

The issue of cost and quality, I think, is a keen one and, again, I appreciate the way this study helped lay that out. You know, quality, when I look in my early work with the assessment issue, when I looked at the quality of items, the quality of assessment items that were being constructed, there is, unfortunately, I think, a general opinion that multiple choice test items lead to nothing but drill-and-kill and lower level, lower forms of instructional quality, and I'm not one that subscribes to that. I do think you can have, and we do have, in many assessments today very highly developed, quality, multiple choice tests that do measure issues of application, do measure issues of comparing and contrasting, do measure issues of analysis and synthesis, much higher orders of thinking. So multiple choice should not be taken off the table or discounted. It depends on how that multiple choice is written, how it is put together.

There are other choices. That can be extended responses and some computer technology-enhanced types of items that add -- one minute, my goodness -- add greatly to the cost as reported. And, again, I

think the reporting of that in the study, 75 percent I think it was of per-student cost tied to scoring issues, is a huge factor.

I'll jump to my final point and leave some on the table for discussion later. So if the issue of the nature of the item is one of the major cost drivers, and if we're moving into an era with the entrance of other entities offering alternatives to PARCC and Smarter Balanced, we're moving into more of a market-driven -- which I think is a very healthy thing for America, to have a bit of a market-driven environment around these assessment consortiums, that the issues of the quality of the items, whether there are too many or too few constructed, the higher expense items in a test, is important information that in some cases we're not going to really know how that plays out until we've gotten in the game and played it about what is the right mix, what is the right cost factor. Is there a better, cheaper way of scoring without making extended response items formulaic? And believe me, the teachers in America are brilliant. And if it is formulaic, artificial intelligence scoring, they will figure the formula out and they will teach to the formula and it'll look a lot like drill and kill. So, again, that issue around test quality, item quality if going to be key.

If we lose in this political debate, the political landscape, the ability to compare the performance of our children against others in this country and against others internationally, we have given up a great deal

in this nation. We have an opportunity to seize the moment. We need to press on and get the job done. Thank you very much.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. To my right, at least on the stage, is my colleague Tom Loveless. Tom's a perfect person to have here today because I think uniquely among people who are concerned with testing and assessment, Tom doesn't operate up at the governance level. He gets down into the detail of the assessments themselves. What are they testing? How does that relate to schools that are important? And how do assessments differ on those dimensions? And so I think as we move forward not only with the topic of assessment, but choices that are going to have to be made and will be made by policymakers and officials with regard to the selection and use of assessments, it's going to be important to think carefully about not only item quality in the abstract sense, but item quality in the specific sense of what is being assessed.

So, Tom, we're very interested in what you have to say.

MR. LOVELESS: Thanks. I also want to congratulate Matt on this report because it is a topic that is under-researched. I think of all the points that Matt makes in the report, the one that I would underscore is the one he mentioned here towards the end, and that is we don't spend a lot of money on assessments, you know, maybe $30 per child, but it truly is the tail that wags the dog. So the $10,000 per child that we're spending

every year, to a large extent, we evaluate the quality of that $10,000 investment by the results of these tests. We have no other measures other than the happiness factor, which, in the United States, has always been quite high. (Laughter) When kids go home from school, they're pretty happy; parents are pretty happy with schools; politicians are happy with their own schools. But for some reason, none of us are very happy with our school system as a whole. So that's one of the things that Common Core is attempting to break through.

And there's a theory to the Common Core, so that's what I want to talk about, is what I'll be watching in the next few years is how the Common Core is implemented. And by that I mean, essentially, how does that investment of the $30 per child affect the other $10,000 per year that we spend on children, each child?

Now, the theory of the Common Core is that the Common Core will influence really the core aspects of schooling. And the two core aspects of schooling are teaching and curriculum, so instruction and curriculum. And the idea is that curriculum and instruction will change for the better because of our adoption of the Common Core and the data that we collect on the Common Core.

I've published papers saying that I'm a bit skeptical that the Common Core is going to have much of an impact on those two factors,

and I'm still skeptical today. In fact, I think when I read about the states that are leaving the consortia over the $30 cost being $2- or $3 more than they currently spend on testing that really they're using that as an excuse. The real fear, I think, is down the line where there will be significant costs and it's going to be related to that $10,000 per child.

Let's take a look, for instance, at curriculum. Curriculum essentially is defined as the "what" of schooling. It's the skills and knowledge that kids learn in school and it's embodied in textbooks, it's embodied in other learning materials. Right now what we have in the United States is every publisher has taken their current materials and they've slapped a sticker on it that says, "Common Core Compatible." They have tweaked the insides of the books some. They've tweaked the materials some. They've rearranged some of them to reflect the order; for instance, in mathematics the order of topics at different grade levels. But for the most part, you don't see radical changes from these publishers. And, in fact, the proof of this is in the fact that we do have textbooks that have vastly different philosophies of mathematics, but they're both -- I can think of two in particular -- they're both advertised as Common Core compatible and yet they have a completely different philosophy of how mathematics is taught and what mathematics consists of. So districts and states are going to have to buy new materials. That's very costly.

In terms of professional development, Secretary Duncan was on a panel at the University of Chicago, and I watched the streaming of that. And he mentioned that we currently spend -- that the federal government currently spends $2.5 billion per year on professional development and states and local governments spend another $2.5 billion. So about $5 billion per year is spent on professional development. So I have in the last year been doing some work looking at the effectiveness of professional development. What do we actually know about professional development? And if you think we don't know much about curriculum, we know even less about professional development. Russ mentioned, you know, we're trying to answer the question what curriculum would you recommend, let's say, for fourth grade math? We have a hard time giving a good answer to that. Well, we really have a hard time with professional development. Let me give you an idea.

There have been roughly 1,300 studies of professional development, pretty good studies that actually have numbers in them. I'm not talking about case studies. I'm talking about pretty good studies of professional development. Of those 1,300, 9 of them -- 9 -- were randomized trials where you could draw causal conclusions from the study. And those nine really show no effect of professional development on achievement. IES in the last 3 years has funded two brand new

studies of professional development. One in particular I was interested in because it looked at a subject that had not been looked at before, and that was middle school mathematics.

And, you know, I for one assumed -- I have a model in my head of what good -- I was a sixth grade teacher and I happen to love math, so I have a model in my head of what I would do in terms of a good professional development program, and essentially this program did exactly what I would have done. You know, it focused on one topic: How do teachers teach rational numbers, meaning fractions? How do they teach fractions? How do they teach rational numbers? And it had a follow-up component. It took everything we know that good professional development -- various characteristics that they should have, and it put it one program and it intensively professionally developed these teachers for 2 years. There was no significant effect. There was no significant effect on the teacher behaviors in terms of changing their way of teaching and there was no significant effect in terms of student achievement. So we are just at the beginning stages. I mean, we're not even in the first inning. We're still warming up as far as learning about how do we take teachers who are good and make them great? Or how do we take teachers who are struggling and make them better? And the Common Core, of course, it's entire theory is based on the fact that we can actually do that. So

getting good assessments, I think, is going to help us in that regard because then we're going to have measures that we can rely on in order to find out if we're getting the impact from good teaching that we need.

I'm going to end on another point and that is there will probably be, there almost certainly will be, and I'm looking forward to watching this as well, an impact of the Common Core on other tests that we take. So, for instance, NAEP. Now, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, our nation's report card, we've used that test for 40 years to tell us as Americans how our schools are doing. It's going to be very interesting as Common Core results come out for different states, what happens if they conflict with the results we're getting from the Common Core tests? What happens if NAEP tells us one thing and Smarter Balanced tells us something else about a particular state? Or NAEP tells us one thing and PARCC tells us something else? These are the implementation issues that I'll be watching over the next few years as Common Core unfolds.

MR. WHITEHURST: Tom, do you -- all right, come on up. Just in time. Have a seat, Paul. Yeah, we were about to the point in the program where I was going to get a "Stretch" sign from the back of room.

And so just to my right now is Paul Pastorek. Paul is the former state superintendent in Louisiana; was, you know, a principal in

dealing with New Orleans after Katrina; largely responsible for constructing the Recovery School District, which initially focused on New Orleans, is now statewide. You know, it's interesting to have two former commissioners here from two states that I think have been in the forefront of change. You know, if you're an advocate for what they're doing, you would call it reform. And if you're just looking back and describing what they're doing, you would say these are states that have changed a lot in their delivery of educational services. They don't look much at all like they did 20 years ago.

And Paul also has an interesting perspective because he came to the position of state superintendent in Louisiana from a corporate position. He's a lawyer by training and is the chief counsel of the American division of the European Aeronautics and Space --

MR. PASTOREK: Defense Company.

MR. WHITEHURST: -- Defense Company.

MR. PASTOREK: Airbus.

MR. WHITEHURST: Airbus. I wondered why, you know, why he didn't have a helicopter. He's gone back to that job, so why not a helicopter to bring you in today instead of surface transportation?

MR. PASTOREK: It would have been even more timely, indeed.

MR. WHITEHURST: And, you know, the business community has been a very significant factor in the support for the Common Core. And Paul retains a position as an advisor to PARCC, one of the two consortia, two principal consortia, that are developing PARCC tests. So I think his experience and insight's going to be important to our discussion today.

Paul?

MR. PASTOREK: Well, thank you, Russ, and apologies for the delay, but I'm glad to be here and I'm glad to hear about the report. I've been working very closely with the initiation of PARCC. Eric and I worked together to form PARCC with the state of Massachusetts and brought on many other states.

I went back into the private sector after that was formed and I've been helping with PARCC especially in the last 6 or 8 months, and really trying to show a business perspective. Because it's in the business community's interest, which I would argue is in the larger community's interest, to have Common Core implemented, to have a set of tests that work in concert with Common Core to be able to get the kind of information to teachers, to principals, to administrators, and to policymakers regarding the progress of students in our states and in our country.

You know, as a businessperson now working in the aerospace defense industry, thousands and thousands of jobs go unfilled in the United States, jobs that pay good money, not only in the professional arena, but in the mechanical arena, the technical-mechanical arena. Airbus is opening a plant in Mobile, Alabama, where we'll be building the A-320, which is the equivalent to the 737 Boeing. This is a brand new facility that will ramp up and it requires skilled technicians to be able to do the work to build these aircraft. Northrup Grumman, Boeing, Lockheed, Raytheon -- all of these companies are struggling to find the quality of talent that they need to support the industrial base. And whether that's a commercial industrial base or a military industrial base, it is important to the economy of our country, it's important to the security of our country. So the business perspective in this is how do we get a real true picture of what's going on in the education arena so that we can solve for problems, not penalize people, not point out the inadequacies for the sake of doing so, but for the sake of improving the system so we can get a better quality of students going to our colleges and universities, including our two-year community colleges, including our technical programs, so that kids and parents can be proud of their children's success; so that young adults will have high-quality jobs; so that our country will be stronger?

In the arena that I've been working in in PARCC, particularly around the cost issue, we have set a target for just under $30 for the delivery of these tests. It does run at the national average. There are some states that do less. But I do think that the report today is important because it demonstrates that the real issue here is not so much how many people are in the effort, but the real issue is what is the quality and what are the opportunities by bringing a consortium together? And we have been pushing real hard on this number.

The chiefs who decide what they want to test, what will be in the test, have decided what the maximum limit of the cost will be, these state chiefs, these leaders of the many states who have been involved in this, have set this as a target, and it's the goal of the consortium to actually reduce that number. And I think, as the report points out, the number was conservatively set. I think we're going to see that number go down. And I think over time it's really going to go down because as more and more technology comes online, the scoring of these tests will become cheaper to do. And the really important thing is the turnaround on the results will come quicker to teachers, will come quicker to principals, will be able to be managed.

You know, in Louisiana, when I was superintendent there, it was a real difficulty in having the test be as far to the end of the school

year as you could possibly have it, but not so far that you couldn't get the results until the following school year. And so when we continue to do paper-and-pencil, which we will have to continue to do even in PARCC in the early years, but if we continue to do that over the long haul, we'll continue to get untimely results and not as productive an environment for teachers and principals to operate in.

So I'm very excited about the prospect for PARCC and SBAC. I'm very excited for the prospect of Common Core. I think it's good for our kids, it's good for our schools, and it's good for our country.

MR. WHITEHURST: Thank you. I'd like for the panelists to talk about something that's of concern to me, and it has to do with what I think is the three components of a standards and accountability movement. There are the standards themselves, you know, the statements of what children should know and be able to do at particular points in their progress through school. There are the assessments, which are supposed to determine the degree to which students, in fact, have acquired the information that is described in the standards. And the third base is accountability itself. That is, once kids have been tested and once we know how well they're doing, what happens if they're not doing well?

And as we move forward in what I personally think is going

to be a better set of standards and assessments than most states have had heretofore and a set of standards and assessments that will allow comparability that was difficult to obtain before and a set of standards and assessments that are going to be less expensive for a unit of quality than we've had before, there has been, I think, a lot of backsliding on accountability. We've had federal waivers to states that allow them to decide who's going to be accountable for what and under what circumstances. We've had New York State announce last week that they're going to cut back on testing of eighth graders because there's another test that eighth graders take in the same period of time.

So the issue I'd like for us to discuss is are you concerned about accountability? Do you think that some of the gains that we might wring out of better standards and assessments will be compromised by weaker accountability?

MR. SMITH: Great point because it is a system and it has to be dealt with systems thinking. And the three issues go hand-in-hand, and a weakness in any part of the system means a weakness over all. And so obviously development of high-quality standards with no or poor assessments makes the standards really an irrelevant exercise. And a quality assessment that people don't act on the data when they find out that a child is not reading at third grade at an adequate level or advanced

children are not being pushed, they're allowed to coast and not encouraged to do more challenging work and more inventive work, that populations of special needs children are not actually being taught the standard curriculum, they're being taught to a much lower level, those kinds of issues, you know, just call for a consequence.

And so to be proud of the fact that we're moving on better standards, to be proud of the fact that we're working hard at developing better assessments and, at the same time, see us as a nation moving back and away from rigorous accountability for performance is, in my view, is very, very troubling. And, you know, again, the success of our nation is going to be dependent on our ability to move all populations to a much stronger achievement level, and that requires us to be aware of what is going on and take action on what we find out.

MR. LOVELESS: One of the things in terms of accountability to look for with the two consortia is where they set cut points because developing a test is really the easy part. In fact, developing standards is the easiest part of all. Standards are never more popular than when they're first thought of and they decline steadily in popularity, especially as they're applied with consequences for anyone. So both consortia, what they have to decide is, okay, what's the cut point for what we define as proficiency? They might come up with different cut points,

but they have such a variety of states, so whatever cut point they come up with it has to be the same -- you know, as Eric mentioned, it has to be the same for Mississippi as it is for Massachusetts. And currently, those states, you know, function about two-thirds of a standard deviation apart on NAEP.

So that's going to be the political trick: Where do you set the cut points? And will the states actually hold to that? Because there is kind of a bailout provision with both consortia where the states can say, oh, well, actually we might have to set another cut point; it's possible.

MR. PASTOREK: Well, let's start with the proposition that the purpose of the standards in testing has, at least at the basic level, the objective of accountability. If you have high-quality standards and you have a high-quality test, then you have a high-quality system of measuring the successfulness of kids, schools, teachers, principals, et cetera.

When we first got together and formed the consortium around PARCC, Eric and Mitchell and many others and I discussed what are the objectives of PARCC? And the principal objective, which held us all together, was accountability was the primary focus. It was also around the ability to get higher quality teachers and more fidelity in the test results to be able to evaluate teachers because many states at the time were considering new forms of teacher evaluation. So I think that there's no

doubt that the members of PARCC, and I think many other folks who are interested in Common Core and ultimately the test, are interested in an accountability system.

You know, I was intrigued by a comment recently by a commentator saying that there was a concern about Common Core and the test around it negatively impacting accountability. When I probed into that a little bit further what I found is that it's an issue, I think, around transition. And there is no doubt that when you transition from one system to another, you're going to have some potential for lack of accountability during that transition. So if I go back in 1994, when the state of Louisiana -- and, again, I'll speak from my perspective -- adopted a set of state standards and then spent years designing a test to apply to that. Went forward in '98 and used the test for the first time. People were nervous about accountability because the old set of test information was going to be generating a different result than the new set of tests. And how would you compare the old results to the new results? So there's always been a concern around changing your system because the rule of measurement will necessarily change, will not be continuous.

And I do think that the measurement for going forward on Common Core will be different than, say, Louisiana's measure or Florida's measure or anybody else's measures. And in that sense there will be the

shift. You have do you continue with the old test so you can continue to get accountability under the old test? When do you start the new test? Where do you have field tests? What do the field tests account for? These questions are normal questions in a state of transition.

But I think the ultimate objective is we must switch. We will lose some accountability because the measures of the past won't equate to the measures of the future, but we now start with a new baseline. And that new baseline -- and there must be a commitment to making that the new baseline and that the new accountability system so that we are going to get back on track notwithstanding the transition.

MR. WHITEHURST: One of the -- some conversations I've had with people who were involved in the process about the political controversy that has arisen, I mean, it seemed to surprise everybody. And so where did this come from and is it rational? So, you know, is it, in part, you know, a Tea Party concern? But I think there are other components of opposition that are worried about -- and the Tea Party concern is largely about federalism, I think, and what the appropriate role is for the federal government versus states and local school districts. But there also is their criticisms about the standards themselves, a possibility that once you set cut scores and once there's some bite to the new assessments that there will be a political drive to dumb things down because it's difficult to hold

people. Pain is always difficult politically.

So, you know, my question to the panel is about, you know, are you surprised by the opposition? What portions of the opposition's arguments, if any, do you consider rational and things that should be of concern?

MR. SMITH: I'm not surprised at all. You know, early on in our conversations with PARCC, you know, we had regular discussion around cost and time and the capacity to deliver, you know, from a technology standpoint in states, and knew that at some point this would be major issues for people or at least used as major issues by people in the political process. So, you know, it doesn't surprise me, you know, the amount of debate going on right now. I think it's important that we have factual information being presented, like has been done in this report, so that we can help have at least a little bit of an informed debate rather than uninformed debate and, hopefully, draw some better conclusions.

I think the issues around cost is going to be very useful for the states when they start to look at what their current cost is compared to the anticipated cost. And in some places, I think, when they do the fact-checking we'll find that the cost issue really is not as large an issue as they originally thought.

MR. LOVELESS: I wasn't surprised and I think we actually

have more controversy ahead. In the 1990s -- in 1989, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics put out a book of math standards that was endorsed by the Secretary of Education, by all the governors, by all the education officials, and every single state. It looked as if there was no one who opposed the NCTM standards. And within 2 years, there were communities being torn apart by the NCTM standards. And the reason was finally books and instruction modeled on the standards began to penetrate classrooms. When books and new instruction begins to happen in schools -- and I'm not blaming this on the Common Core, but once that happens, that's when you're going to have controversy.

There's a dynamic that occurs where you have local educators who had been waiting -- they have their pet curriculum and they've been waiting for a reason to use it, and they're going to use the Common Core as cover, political cover. So you have all kinds -- I've seen all kinds of -- for example, I've seen some National Science Foundation math programs that were very controversial and run out of communities in the 1990s. These are being dusted off and they're being called Common Core math and by local people. It's not the fault of either consortium or Common Core advocates. And so, once again, these curricula are going to wind up in classrooms and that's when you get pushback.

MR. PASTOREK: Yeah, I'm not surprised at all. Again, I'll

go back to the experience that we had in 1998/1999, when we adopted new tests and it had high stakes. Fourth and eighth graders would not advance to the fifth and ninth grade if they didn't pass the test. We had four lawsuits that were filed. You know, we had protests in the street. Being an amateur historian, this is nothing new. We've seen this movie before, you know.

But I think there's a little bit different tone and I'd like to tease out something that I think I've been learning in the last several weeks, keeping my ear to the ground. I talked to some of my siblings, my sisters and sister-in-law, and asked them about this. They're very nervous about this. They're very nervous about it. They're nervous about whether they're going to be able to be good enough parents to their kids to be able to deliver on supporting them while they are undertaking this new Common Core and the tests that go along with it. That's not an illegitimate concern. That's a real concern. So, you know, we can politicize some of this and get into political places, but, at the end of the day, it's a legitimate concern.

Now, where I think there's been a -- you know, I think on the public school sector there's been a pretty good advance of engagement with teachers. You know, when we adopted the Common Core we had teachers review all of the standards; feedback was given, changes were

made in response. Teachers who were part of that were very excited and pumped up in 2010. But the people we didn't communicate with were the private school and parochial school leaders. It was only tangential. And I think we may have missed the point because what's happened is now ACT and College Board are talking about changing their test, which aligned with the standards, and that affects more than just public school students.

And so what interestingly, to me, is happening is people who are not so affected typically by the public school discussion are engaged in this. And they're saying, hey, we didn't know anything about this. As parents, we didn't know this was going to happen.

Now, in a way, it's not really in their control. If ACT and College Board make these decisions to change these tests and their kids are ultimately going to take these tests for college admission, then other schools have to fall into some kind of orbit that's going to be in alignment there. And so I find that the real parental reaction is probably strongest in those communities and not so much in the public school communities. That's just an anecdotal feeling on my part.

MR. SMITH: And Russ, I could add also that I think the upside of this and a fairly well-storied history out of Florida about a decade of reform through the 2000-2010 period where there had been repeated

reform efforts that were brought in by state policy. And each time that occurred, the initial implementation would see a -- because more was expected, you'd see a dip in performance. But as the years -- out-years -- you'd see an increased performance of kids as the system adjusted to the new expectation and the new level of performance. And that takes political will and political resolve.

And part of the question in this period of history for America is whether or not there is the political will and the political resolve to stay the course; and belief in our children that, yes, they can do more and they can perform at a higher level; and belief in our teachers, yes, they can teach to higher standards and with higher quality; and as a nation, we can perform at a higher level when, in the face of it, the first wave is going to be a tough pill to swallow. And that's when it takes the resolve that as a nation we need to get through this and allow that evolution and change to take place.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, you know, the old saw is the problem with national standards is that Republicans don't like national and Democrats don't like standards. (Laughter) So I think we will have interesting days ahead.

I'd like to invite you in the audience to join the conversation. If you'd raise your hand, I'll call on you. Wait till you're called on. You'll

get a microphone. And then tell us who you are and keep your remarks or questions short.

I'll take the gentleman here.

MR. LEINWAND: Steve Leinwand at AIR. Matt, I'd like to go back to the report. I'm struck by the fact that there are two pages on PARCC and four pages on Smarter Balanced, and we've got two luminaries from PARCC. Did you find it harder to get information from one or the other and why that difference? It seemed like the Smarter Balanced analysis was much more detailed. Could you talk about that, please?

MR. CHINGOS: Sure. I did get more information from Smarter Balanced than I got from PARCC, so the cost estimates for both consortia were carried out primarily by a consulting group called Assessment Solutions Group. It's a group of folks with experience in the testing industry. They've built a proprietary model where they work with both consortia and also with states to get assumptions. Here's what the test is going to look like and then they come up with estimates of what it's going to cost.

So for Smarter Balanced, I was able to get through a Freedom of Information request to the state of Washington, which is their fiscal agent, copies of a lot of those working documents where I could get more details. And for PARCC, I pretty much wasn't able to get them.

MR. LEINWAND: Any reason why?

MR. CHINGOS: I think they just chose not to share them.

MR. WHITEHURST: This gentleman here in the front row, almost the front row.

MR. ALTMAN: Hi. I'm Fred Altman and my question is to Tom Loveless. You found that teacher development was essentially totally ineffective. How about teacher selection? Can we do better by a better job of selecting who's going into education?

MR. LOVELESS: Well, there's some evidence that we're -- we're accumulating better evidence on teacher selection. But in terms of what are the characteristics of a good teacher, we're finding it easier to tell good teachers from bad teachers. But to answer the key question of what exactly are the characteristics of those good teachers that differentiates them from bad teachers or just average teachers, we don't know a whole lot about that. So that's kind of the state of the evidence. Russ actually knows more about that topic than I do.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, you know, it's possible that Common Core will help here in the sense that we are defining highly effective and ineffective teachers based on their ability to raise student achievement on the assessments. The assessments differ from place to place, so the outcome is different. Maybe if there were a common

yardstick we could at least, you know, identify the pool or high- and low-performing teachers with the same yardstick rather than different yardsticks, which isn't a good place to start.

A questioner here in the front row.

MS. WERTHEIM: I'm Mitzi Wertheim with the Naval Postgraduate School. I need to let you know my bios. John Dewey was my godfather, so I've been interested in education since I was this high. I have two questions.

One is, is the intent that the tests be given at the beginning of the year and at the end of the year, so if you have kids who don't come from affluent communities in a class, that the teachers aren't held back because of that? And I guess my other -- the other thing I've watched about this is telling the story. And we haven't taught people how to tell the story so the listener gets it. I will tell you I think Barack Obama was great in campaigning. He lost his storytelling skills once he got into the White House.

I had an experience last week. I'm in the Defense Department world.

MR. WHITEHURST: I'm going to --

MS. WERTHEIM: But I want to make a point here, which is the fellow who was a Ph.D. from NDU had kids in school and we got into

this question of how do you tell the story, and I said, you know, the whole Common Core story sort of stands up for that. Most people I know think it's being run by the federal government. He said isn't it?

And my concern for you is getting the story out so that the general public understands it and that might help you with a lot of the political problems you're getting. But I'm told if you want to get a story out, it has to be written for 11-year-olds.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, let's take that question and make it whether the panelists think that a good job has been done of communicating what the Common Core is about or is there still a lot of work to be done in terms of getting the point to the general public? I get questions from, you know, just friends in the neighborhood who want to know what it's about. And they've heard of it, but they don't know what it's about. So it suggests to me that there is maybe a problem in communications so far.

MR. PASTOREK: I would just offer that. I think at the early stages of the Common Core discussion there was really good dialogue among state leaders and both in education and government and politics. I think, you know, what's happened is most people assume now that we've got Common Core down, so now we're going to move to the test part of it, and so we have tended to focus on the test.

I do think that not enough communication has been made, not -- the quality of communication has not been as good as it needs to be. I mean, it's shocking to me that people go around and say over and over again that these are driven by the federal government when, in fact, you know, state chiefs through this chief state school officers organization and the National Governors Association made the drive to create Common Core standards back in 2009/2010, brought chiefs together. I'll never forget, we all showed up in Chicago and had one of the first meetings around this, and said is this the kind of thing that we want for our states?

So, yes, we can do a better job and we need to do a better job.

MR. WHITEHURST: Gentleman in the third row here. I'm taking people on the aisle. You'll learn if you come here and you want to get called on, it's better to sit on the aisle. Go ahead.

MR. LIPPINCOTT: Hi. I'm Rob Lippincott from PBS. My question actually goes back to something that Paul said, which I think is really, in a sense, at the heart of the cost question for the testing. Part of it is how much does it cost to administer the test? Part of that is scoring. But really isn't it the impact of the result? And if we're after higher quality or more effective teaching, isn't it really how it affects teaching and the

instruction process? So, therefore, isn't the really crucial part of this the timeliness and the usefulness of the results rather than being, as they've said, an autopsy? It needs to be feedback. And do either of these tests do better at that? And do we have any hope that that really is what, in a sense, is going to be the good news of the Common Core?

MR. PASTOREK: Well, in fact, one of the other major objectives was to get feedback to teachers in a timely fashion. And so the idea was, the initial idea was, to create a computerized test that would allow for the larger portion of the work, not for all of the work, but for a larger portion of the work, so that it could be scored quickly. And that computerized test would be given at the end of the school year, as close to the end as possible, and yet turn around very quick results, so that over the summer and in preparation for the next school year teachers could be prepared. Whereas written questions and essay questions and mathematics, showing mathematics work, would be taken during the school year because it wouldn't necessarily be so tied to the end and it would take longer to score, but it wouldn't have that slow impact.

I mean, I think that this is key. I do think that both of the consortia have focused on trying to do this in such a way so that it benefits teachers and teaching. The real objective of these tests is to benefit teachers and teaching and to produce information so that that will occur.

MR. LOVELESS: There was a poll of teachers about the Common Core and basically teachers said, yes, we're familiar with the Common Core. We are receiving professional development on how to teach in accordance with the Common Core. And then overwhelmingly, they said, oh, by the way, we've already been doing this all along. So they don't see a big change with the Common Core.

MR. SMITH: I think that the timeliness is huge. You mentioned it in the study about, you know, two issues. One, the biggest robber of time around assessment isn't the assessment itself. It's around when the assessment is administered if it's a high-stakes assessment. And you'll have some states that because they're paper-and-pencil and they need them back before the end of the year, they give them in March, you know. Well, a lot of instruction in some places kind of quits after that assessment's given and some teachers will tell you that's when it really begins, depending on your point of view. But whatever the case, it changes after the assessment is administered. So the more we can move that to the end of the year, the more time we can get back into what would be considered to be high-quality instruction.

And a part of it is used by teachers looking at test scores in the ideal world. A lot of it is used in the summertime for scheduling purposes, for proper analysis of kind of remediation or support or

enrichment that a child needs. So administration can do work in a school and drive that. But we simply can and must do a much better job than we have in the past, and I think PARCC, Smarter Balanced, and other opportunities are going to provide that.

MR. CHINGOS: I think it'll be really interesting to see how the two different consortium's models will play out here. So for PARCC, they're going to have, you know, their centralized scoring and reporting system, so that kind of -- it'll be what it'll be. Whereas Smarter Balanced, each state is going to decide that for themselves. And they say, well, they like that because it gives states the opportunity to pick something that's right for them, but I think it'll be really interesting to see the distribution. You can imagine some states, you know, cheaping out and getting something that's really lousy and it's just sort of the autopsy, like you said. And maybe some states going in the other direction and getting something that's really good.

And I think one other point that is in the report, but I sort of glossed over it, is that both consortia are developing not just these end-of-year tests, but systems of assessment, including formative components that can be used throughout the year. And the cost of those, in a lot of cases, it's not that expensive. It's not in the numbers that I focused on today, but I think it was worth emphasizing that that's a potentially

important feature of these assessments, that they're not just end-of-year tests, but that they're systems that could inform instruction throughout the year so that it's something -- you're not surprised at the end of the year. You have some idea of what's coming.

MR. WHITEHURST: Here.

MR. LOWRY: Hi. I'm Bryan Lowry with Medill News Service. To me, these questions of cost and quality are most interesting when applied to the district level. I'm thinking of Chicago and Philadelphia, where we saw schools close because of deficits, and standardized tests played a huge role in that. So how do you balance the need for high-quality testing, better professional development, with those budgetary constrictions?

MR. SMITH: You know, and I've worked at the district level, I've worked at the state level. I've had to argue with -- I've had to defend with school boards and I've had to defend with legislatures the cost of assessment and so forth and all that goes with it. You know, at the end of the day, it still is a very small -- very small -- portion of the overall spending. And so it's a miniscule amount of investment, although when you multiply $30 or whatever times the 2.7 million children in Florida, you get a very big -- it looks like a big number to the taxpayers, and it is, but it has to be all put into perspective. But it is -- overall, it's a very small

number for assessment. And it is the only way we have a glimpse at what is going on in that building is worth going on. And so, you know, to me, it is the critical driver.

And so if I had a debate about what to cut, I might have -- I would have a very serious debate about what goes into our tests, how it's scored, how it's manufactured, how it's delivered, you know, yadda, yadda, yadda. But I would never put it in jeopardy.

In Florida, it was one of the musts that we had. We had to have our accountability system. Everything was driven by that.

MR. PASTOREK: Yeah, and if I could add, imagine this. You're in a hospital. You're in an ICU. And all you're doing is taking the person's temperature and blood pressure. That's all you're doing, taking the temperature and blood pressure. The doctor comes in and says, well, what do we have with this patient? How are we going to treat this patient? All you've got is the temperature and the blood pressure. That's what we're dealing with today. You need to have temperature and blood pressure, but you really need to have all these other sophisticated suite of tools and instruments to be able to deliver quality information to the doctor so he can treat the patient.

And kids are not unlike the patient. There are many kids who are in educational ICUs and they need doctors who have quality

information to be able to make proper assessments and they need that information quickly. You cannot do it in many states with the suite of tests that you have. You cannot do that kind of thing. That's what we need to move to.

And I would tell you that the costs are pennies on the dollar. The costs are miniscule compared. And the costs don't -- for this, don't close schools down.

MR. WHITEHURST: And you could compare it with your other hat, which is the aviation industry and the amount of money that is invested in quality control and systems testing and feedback, you know. And that --

MR. PASTOREK: Certainly wouldn't want to fly on a plane that doesn't have, you know, IFR, you know. You don't want to fly on an aircraft that only has VFR, you know, visual systems. You want to have, you know, instrument systems. So when you're putting high stakes into our country's future, not just kids' lives, but our country's future, you need to put a suite of tests and tools available to the teachers so they can do a better job.

MR. WHITEHURST: We have time for one more question. Make it quick and we'll have quick answers as well. I'll take the woman in the third row from the back in the middle. Yes, that's you. (Laughter)

MS. WOLFE: Hi. Thank you all very much. It's been very interesting. I'm Megan Wolfe. I'm with ASCD. We're a professional educator association, which we do primarily professional development.

There's been a great controversy that's arisen around the use of student assessment data in teacher evaluations. I know, you know, a lot of the teachers' unions are bringing this up as an issue and asking for a moratorium in the use of the student data in their evaluations. So I'm just wondering if you think that's a useful thing to do or does that defeat the purpose of trying to gather this new data?

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, it's a useful thing to do and I think we all agree on that. I mean, it has to be part of a wider suite of assessments. You don't catch everything that a teacher does well with student test data. There are many untested grades and subjects. It's a complicated issue.

But the evidence is very clear that you get a signal from test scores gains that's an important predictor of how teachers do in out-years. And it would be, I think, a serious mistake to throw away the information that's in that signal.

MR. PASTOREK: Yeah, you know, I had occasion to ask the speaker of the proposed moratorium, you know, well, if this isn't good enough, when will it all be good enough? I mean, nothing is ever good

enough in the real world for, you know, perfection. There's no such thing as perfection. So, you know, in the business world we evaluate people. We use a whole suite of tools to do that. We use dollar results. We use other objective data. You know, I wish I could say that that was perfect, but that's what we need and that's what we use every day to govern a business, and I don't think there's any real difference in looking at the teacher situation provided that the quality of the test data that you're using is good. And that's really the thrust of these new suites of tests to be able to drive even better information about that and to be fair and appropriate to teachers in the process.

MR. CHINGOS: In the past, one of the objections to using tests to evaluate teachers was these tests weren't designed to do that.

MR. PASTOREK: Right.

MR. CHINGOS: Well, now we have these new tests that are designed to do that, so, hopefully, that will help.

MR. WHITEHURST: Well, I thank you very much for being here today. I hope you'll join me in thanking our panelists and presenter. (Applause)

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