Public Understanding & Support Assessment Rubric

This rubric spells out the process of shifting our stakeholders' mental models of education and learning to align with school redesign efforts. It should be used to:

1. Assess a community's baseline for mental models and understanding of Act 77 and and proficiency-based learning.

2. Shape a communications campaign accordingly.

3. Track changes in community mental models as they evolve over time.

Building the public's understanding and support for educational change is a long-term process. It will typically take three to seven years, depending on the nature of your school and community, as well as the quality and persistence of your communications efforts.

This rubric charts changes in the public's mental models over time, in the following sequence:

Pre-Awareness: The stakeholder groups have little sense that there is any need for change. They are largely content with the present system and assume it is working well based on their current mental models of education and learning. Even if they are not fully content with the present system, they do not have the clarity or motivation to become involved in a change process.

Awareness: As our stakeholders move into "awareness," they begin to perceive that the present system may not be fully aligned with the future preparation requirements for students. They start to explore educational issues more deeply, recognizing their own preconceived notions of education and learning.

Understanding: Our stakeholders have begun to shift their mental models of education and learning. They understand what students will need to be well prepared for the future. They become aware of the gap between this new knowledge and elements of the present system. They begin to explore strategies to reduce the gap between their emerging mental model and current reality. They want to resolve the conflict between these two views of education and learning.

Engagement: Our stakeholders feel a responsibility to act on their new understandings of education and learning, and are primarily focused on doing this personally and within their own stakeholder groups.

Support/Advocacy: New norms emerge based on new understandings as the community develops a shared set of values in support of school redesign All stakeholder groups can articulate clear benchmarks for education and learning. The community is engaged in supporting and advocating for change across stakeholder groups. The process becomes synergistic, as the combined efforts produce increasingly powerful results.

Knowledge of Act 77 & Proficiency-Based Learning

CRITERIA	PRE-AWARENESS	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	ENGAGEMENT	SUPPORT/ ADVOCACY
Components of Act 77	Stakeholders have never heard of Act 77: Flexible Pathways. They have no understanding of dual enrollment, early college program, work-based learning, or virtual/ blended learning opportunities. They have also not heard about Personalized Learning Plans.	Stakeholders have heard the terms Act 77 and have a general sense of the new legislation to support learning, but are generally unaware of the specifics.	Stakeholders have been exposed to explanations of Act 77: Flexible Pathways. They are aware of the varied new "external" opportunities and why the school is instituting Personalized Learning Plans.	Stakeholders have a good understanding of Act 77: Flexible Pathways and are able to explain the core components to others. They have a good grasp of the basics of the Personalized Learning Plan implementation and believe it will enhance learning.	Stakeholders have a good understanding of Act 77: Flexible Pathways and its major components and are convinced that it will enhance learning. They help build support for implementing the legislation in their schools and communities.
Awareness of Act 77 adoption in your community	Stakeholders are unaware of any local implementation plan, or the thinking behind this legislation.	Stakeholders are not clear about what the local district is planning regarding implementation of Act 77, or why this change is happening.	Stakeholders have some information about what Act 77 will mean in the day-to-day life of their local school. They are beginning to explore why this legislation was enacted.	Stakeholders have been asked for input regarding certain aspects of implementation and have an emerging understanding of why the legislation was enacted.	Stakeholders are contributing to the implementation of this legislation. They are informed supporters and advocates for the Act 77 redesign effort.
Awareness of proficiency-based learning	Stakeholders have little or no understanding of proficiency-based learning principles and practices.	Stakeholders have some limited understanding of proficiency-based learning principles and practices.	Stakeholders have been exposed to an explanation of proficiency-based learning principles and practices. They have a basic understanding how it will positively impact learning.	Stakeholders have a good understanding of proficiency-based learning principles and practices and can explain the core components of proficiency-based learning to others. They believe it will enhance learning.	Stakeholders have a good understanding of proficiency-based learning principles and practices and are convinced that it will enhance learning. They help implement this new system and build support for this shift in their schools and communities.

Mental Models of Education

CRITERIA	PRE-AWARENESS	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	ENGAGEMENT	SUPPORT/ ADVOCACY
Collective versus individual mental model of education	Stakeholders believe that the purpose of education is for the individual child to succeed. If there is a problem with education, the responsibility rests with one (or more) of the three main "players": students, parents, and/or teachers.	Stakeholders believe that the purpose of education is for each child to succeed, but begin to see a greater purpose that involves the collective good. If there is a problem with education, the responsibility still tends to be assigned to students, teachers, or parents. but growing awareness of the collective goal starts to reduce simplistic blaming.	Stakeholders believe that the purpose of education is to ensure that individual citizens engage thoughtfully in their community, state, country, and world. If there is a problem with education, the stakeholders now acknowledge that education is a collective issue and blame should not be assigned to just one party (students, teacher, parents). Instead, it must be addressed by the community at large.	Stakeholders believe that the purpose of education is to ensure a successful future for their community, state, country, and world. They believe that all stakeholders play a key role in making this possible. They understand that improving education will only happen through a collective effort that avoids blaming any single stakeholder group.	Stakeholders believe that the purpose of education is to ensure a successful future for their community, state, country, and world. They believe that all stakeholders play a key role in making this possible. They understand that improving education will only happen through a collective effort that avoids blaming any single stakeholder group. Based on this understanding, they assume an active role in the change process.
Understanding of the need to change education to meet demands of a changing world	Stakeholders believe that the most effective approach to education is to focus solely on reading, writing and arithmetic, known as the 3 Rs. These are the fundamentals and they haven't changed for years. The solution is to "get back to basics."	Stakeholders begin to understand that the changes in the world require changes in current educational practices. They begin to explore what these changes might look like, with some fear and skepticism about moving away from "the known."	Stakeholders understand that it is important to continually remodel education to align with the demands of a rapidly changing world. Adult stakeholders accept that education will therefore "look different" from what they experienced when the primary focus was the "3 Rs."	Stakeholders pursue information about how to better align education to ensure that young people are prepared for a rapidly changing world. They support current school redesign efforts based on this new understanding.	Stakeholders understand that schools have a responsibility to continually remodel education to align with the demands of a rapidly changing world. Stakeholder groups advocate for redesign efforts.

CRITERIA	PRE-AWARENESS	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	ENGAGEMENT	SUPPORT/ ADVOCACY
Alignment of learning and teaching practices with current research	Stakeholders have little or no awareness of the current research on teaching and learning that is driving change efforts. They do not feel a need to pursue this information.	Stakeholders have some awareness of the current research on teaching and learning that is driving change efforts. They are somewhat curious yet cautious about pursuing further information.	Stakeholders have a basic understanding of the current research on teaching and learning that is driving change efforts. They begin to see how this new understanding might apply to their own situations.	Stakeholders have a deep understanding of the current research on teaching and learning that is driving change efforts. They actively seek new information in order to better understand and support school redesign.	Stakeholders actively pursue new information to enhance their deep understanding of current research on teaching and learning. They continually integrate this new information into advocacy efforts to support school redesign.
Mental model of the scope of education	Stakeholders believe education is largely mastering basic content (English, social studies, science, etc). They do not believe that addressing social, emotional, and life skills (communication, problem-solving, collaboration) should be a responsibility of the school.	Stakeholders believe education is largely mastering basic content. They acknowledge that social, emotional, and life skill development (communications skills, decision making skills etc.) should also be addressed as a secondary goal by the school.	Stakeholders understand that learning must blend content mastery with social, emotional, and life skill development.	Stakeholders understand that learning involves mastery of both content and social, emotional, and life skills, and they apply this understanding to their own education and/or school redesign efforts.	Stakeholders understand the essential nature of learning as mastery of content and social, emotional, and life skill development. They expect these components in school redesign efforts. They advocate for learning that includes these elements on a school/district level.

Mental Models of Learning

CRITERIA	PRE-AWARENESS	AWARENESS	UNDERSTANDING	ENGAGEMENT	SUPPORT/ ADVOCACY
Teacher and student roles in learning	Stakeholders believe that students learn best by passively absorbing content that others present (teacher-centered learning). They believe other methods will have a negative impact on learning.	Stakeholders have some awareness of student-centered learning, in which students take a more active role in shaping learning. They are somewhat skeptical that it can improve the learning experience and learning outcomes.	Stakeholders understand the basics of student-centered learning and its positive impact on student engagement and learning outcomes.	Stakeholders believe in the importance of moving toward student-centered learning practices to increase student engagement and learning outcomes.	Stakeholders advocate for increasing opportunities for student-centered learning in which students play an active role in their learning.
Student-teacher shared responsibility	Stakeholders believe sharing responsibility for learning has a negative influence on teacher's control over the learning experience and the students' level of respect for the teacher.	Stakeholders believe sharing of responsibility has a limited role in learning, but should be evident to some degree: e.g., chances for students to select topics or projects.	Stakeholders understand that shared responsibility in learning is central to engagement and learning outcomes.	Stakeholders value shared responsibility opportunities in learning and look for evidence of these options in school redesign efforts as an indicator of engagement and effective learning.	Stakeholders' support for shared responsibility in learning is the norm. They actively advocate for sustaining or expanding shared responsibility options school- and district-wide.
Perceptions of alternative learning pathways (rigor & equity)	Stakeholders believe "alternative" learning is less challenging or less rigorous. They believe it should be reserved for students who do not succeed in the regular classroom.	Stakeholders begin to understand alternative learning pathways can be rigorous in nature, but do not see them as valuable options for all students.	Stakeholders understand that alternative learning pathways are rigorous in nature and can benefit all students.	Stakeholders support and take full advantage of alternative learning pathways that are rigorous in nature and show benefit to all students.	Stakeholders advocate for alternative learning pathways at the school and district levels. They understand that offering alternative learning pathways for all students ensures equal access to a quality education.

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Impact of alternative pathways selection on post-secondary choices	Stakeholders believe that encouraging non-traditional pathways will hurt students' post-secondary choices.	Stakeholders begin to consider that non-traditional pathways for learning may not harm students' post-secondary choices.	Stakeholders believe that non-traditional pathways for learning create a strong foundation for post-secondary choices.	Stakeholders know that new student-centered pathways for learning are building life-long learning skills and will serve all students as they consider and pursue post-secondary choices.	Stakeholders help others understand that new student-centered pathways for learning are building life-long learning skills and will serve all students as they consider and pursue post-secondary choices.
Mental model of intelligence: Understanding of neuroplasticity	Stakeholders believe in fixed intelligence that is largely determined by genetics.	Stakeholders are aware of research that challenges the belief that intelligence is pre-determined.	Stakeholders understand that intelligence is not pre-determined (neuroplasticity of the brain). They begin to understand beliefs about intelligence negatively or positively influence learning.	Stakeholders understand the neuroplasticity of the brain and the importance of a growth mindset.	Stakeholders understand the neuroplasticity of the brain, and advocate for the promotion of a growth mindset in all aspects of school redesign.
Mental model of intelligence: Nature of expectations	Stakeholders' expectations of student performance are tied to assumptions about learning potential (some are smart, others are not).	Stakeholders begin to question their pre-conceived expectations of student performance that are based on a belief in fixed intelligence.	Stakeholders' expectations of student performance are beginning to shift based on a new understanding of the potential of all learners.	Stakeholders hold high expectations of all learners and encourage this understanding for those in their immediate sphere of influence.	Stakeholders hold high expectations for all learners and advocate for this in their school and community.
Mental model of motivation	Stakeholders believe that external (extrinsic) rewards (eg. grades, public awards) are the most effective means to promote motivation and learning. Stakeholders do not believe that students possess the motivation for self-directed learning.	Stakeholders see some limitations of extrinsic strategies to motivate learning and are curious about alternatives. Stakeholders are somewhat skeptical that students possess the motivation for self-directed learning.	Stakeholders understand intrinsic motivation is important to learning,. They begin to explore and value strategies that build internal motivation. Stakeholders begin to believe that most students possess the motivation for self-directed learning, with adult support.	Stakeholders understand and value intrinsic motivation. They actively pursue strategies to increase it. Stakeholders believe students are able to take a significant role in directing their learning, with adult support.	Stakeholders know that internal motivation is the key to lifelong learning. They advocate for school redesign efforts that embody this principle. Stakeholders hold high expectations for students' self-directed learning capacity. Students direct their learning with confidence and competence.