



Arizona Business & Education Coalition

2019 Annual Conference

Excerpt from the day's agenda

Afternoon Panel:

What are assessments/testing supposed to do? Are more frequent, high quality assessments an essential part of both student and faculty success that can help us better focus and direct precious resources as well?

Panelists:

Toni Badone, *Regional Director, Cognia (formerly AdvancED/Measured Progress)*

Karla Fisher, *Provost, Maricopa County Community Colleges*

Chad Gestson, *Superintendent, Phoenix Union High School District*

Scott Griego, *State Solutions Advisor, NWEA*

Randy Kimmens, *Vice President, Futures, Inc.*

Manuel Valenzuela, *Superintendent, Sahuarita Unified School District*

Moderator: Darcy Renfro, *Chief of Staff, Office of the Chancellor, and Director of Workforce Development, Maricopa County Community Colleges.*

Toni Badone: You have significant service in both the assessment business and as a major school district superintendent in Arizona. Are the goals of assessments universally understood and accepted by both the testing community and the academic community? If not, what are some areas you would advise us that need attention? Are we getting the right bang for our buck?

Karla Fisher: Arizona's community colleges are a primary workforce development opportunity for tens of thousands of students every year. How do you view Arizona's assessment process in terms of facilitating what a student's needs are as they enter postsecondary education?

Scott Griego: Scott, as you work to improve assessment testing and applications, what suggestions can you give us that would further support both a rigorous and supportive process for properly assessing Arizona student performance that can work for students, faculty and parents?

Randy Kimmens: Randy, as a longtime leader in workforce development how do you see the role of student assessment benefiting student growth and providing valuable student data that facilitates your role in producing workforce ready graduates?

Dr. Gestson: Student equity is on the mind of every Superintendent. Yet, achievement gaps continue to exist. Can the assessment process be one of the tools that can help us deal with student equity? Are we assessing in a way that really gives superintendents and their staff the best feedback for continuous improvement of faculty and student growth?"

Manny Valenzuela: Rural schools and rural school districts face many different opportunities and challenges than more urbanized areas. Is the assessment process used in Arizona equitably working in our rural schools for the benefit of greater Arizona student needs?"



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RAPID FIRE ROUND: 1 or 2 questions (optional)

1. Do we test too much and if so, do we get value from every test and must simply choose or do you see other opportunities that could serve Arizona students, taxpayers and educators better?
2. Are students checking out or giving us their best effort under the current regimen?

RESERVE QUESTIONS (AS TIME PERMITS):

Additional questions for any panelist to weigh in on:

- 1) Should Arizona's assessment be a high stakes end of year exam or should it be engaged throughout the academic year and if so, why?
- 2) The concept of student equity is widely understood to mean that not all students start at the same point but must ALL finish at the same point for a school to get a letter grade of "A". Do we sufficiently account for the differences in a student's initial ability versus their universal ability to learn and succeed?
- 3) School grading will likely always be somewhat controversial as every district, charter or private venture does not serve the same student nor do they have the same student trajectory for measured growth. Given this fact, can assessment testing become more of a useful tool if we included additional factors in grading a school, measuring student achievement or assessing a teacher's performance?