Implementation not Implosion:

Lessons learned & evolving decisions in the move to a Proficiency-based Learning System

CES Fall Forum 2016
Introduction

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Principal of South Portland High School
Agenda

Background on SPSD & move to Proficiency-based Learning

Overview SPSD’s Proficiency-based Learning System

Implementation Status

Lessons Learned

Compromises and Adjustments
South Portland School Department

3100 students

5 Elementary Schools

2 Middle Schools

1 High School (approx. 900 students)
Standards-based Movement in SPSD

• Standards-based report card at elementary (over 10 years ago)
• SBG Committee (8-9 years ago)
  □ Comprised of MS and HS administrators and MS and HS teachers
  □ Met monthly
  □ Researched/read problems with grading practices, formative assessment vs summative assessment, trending vs averaging, etc.
  □ Invited people to speak to the group, visited schools
  □ Some teachers were shifting their practices but reporting traditionally
4 Agreements

- SBG Committee Spring 2012
- 4 agreements
  - Report out on targets synthesized from the MLR grade span indicators/Common Core
  - Separate scores for behaviors from content learning
  - Use a 4* pt scale (1= does not meet; 2=partially meets; 3=meets; 4= exceeds)
  - Use trending to honor that students do not all learn things at the same time
ME's Proficiency-based Diploma Law

LD 1422

- diploma requirements
  - issue diplomas based on students’ achievement of proficiency on the 8 content areas of MLR & Guiding Principles
  - require learning experiences in English, Math, Science and Technology each year in HS

- multiple pathways for acquiring proficiency
ME's Proficiency-based Diploma Law

- LD 1627

- Phase-in to all 8 content areas
  - 2021 - 4 content areas (ELA, Math, Sci, SS) + Guiding Principles
  - 2022 - 4 content areas + 1 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
  - 2023 - 4 content areas + 2 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
  - 2024 - 4 content areas + 3 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
  - 2025 - all 8 content areas + Guiding Principles

- IEP ... may become eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency in state standards established in the system of learning results through performance tasks and accommodations that maintain the integrity of the standards as specified in the student’s individualized education program

- CTE
  - 2021 - Industry cert. + Math, ELA, SS + Guiding Principles
  - 2022 - Industry cert. + Math, ELA, SS, + 1 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
  - 2023 - Industry cert. + Math, ELA, SS, + 2 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
  - 2024 - Industry cert. + Math, ELA, SS, + 3 of student’s choice + Guiding Principles
Implementation Year 1

- School year 2012-13
  - Adopted a leveled progression of learning targets – Essential Learning Targets (ELTs)
**Graduation Standards**

**GRADUATION STANDARD 1: Number & Quantity** - Reason and model quantitatively, using units and number systems to solve problems.  
(CCSS.NBT; CCSS.OA; CCSS.NS; CCSS.N-RN; CCSS.N-Q; CCSS.N-C)

**GRADUATION STANDARD 2: Algebra** - Interpret, represent, create and solve algebraic expressions.  
(CCSS.OA; CCSS.EE; CCSS.A-SSE; CCSS.A-APR; CCSS.A-CED; CCSS.A-REI)

**GRADUATION STANDARD 3: Functions** - Interpret, analyze, construct, and solve linear, quadratic, and trigonometric functions.  
(CCSS.OA; CCSS.F; CCSS.F-IF; CCSS.F-BF; CCSS.F-LE; CCSS.F-TF)

**GRADUATION STANDARD 4: Geometry** - Prove, understand, and model geometric concepts, theorems, and constructions to solve problems.  
(CCSS.G; CCSS.G-CO; CCSS.G-SRT; CCSS.G-C; CCSS.G-GPE; CCSS.G-GMD; CCSS.G-SRT; CCSS.G-MG)

**GRADUATION STANDARD 5: Statistics & Probability** - Interpret, infer and apply statistics and probability to analyze data and reach and justify conclusions.  
(CCSS.S-ID; CCSS.S-IC; CCSS.S-CP; CCSS.S-MD)
## Foundational Concepts

- **GRADUATION STANDARD 1: Number & Quantity** - Reason and model quantitatively, using units and number systems to solve problems.  
  *(CCSS.NBT; CCSS.OA; CCSS.NS; CCSS.N-RN; CCSS.N-Q; CCSS.N-C)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STANDARD</th>
<th>Foundational Concepts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Operations - Addition &amp; Subtraction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Operations - Multiplication &amp; Division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Counting &amp; Cardinality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Place Value</td>
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<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Fractions, Decimals &amp; Percents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Tools of Measurement - Measurement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Tools of Measurement - Money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Tools of Measurement - Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number &amp; Qty</td>
<td>Integers, rational, real, imaginary #s, exponents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Attributes &amp; Properties</td>
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<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Geometric Measurement</td>
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<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Coordinate System</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>Expressions, Equations &amp; Inequalities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algebra</td>
<td>Foundational Algebra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Interpreting Functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Functions</td>
<td>Building Functions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistics/Probability</td>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
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<td>Statistics/Probability</td>
<td>Probability</td>
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Essential Learning Targets

- Each Foundational Concept has key/essential skills and understanding that comprise it
- These are the things students need to know and be able to do in order of have command of that foundational concept

### Number & Quantity: Tools of Measurement

<table>
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<tr>
<th>LEVEL A</th>
<th>LEVEL B</th>
<th>LEVEL C</th>
<th>LEVEL D</th>
<th>LEVEL E</th>
<th>LEVEL F</th>
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<td>Understands &quot;more&quot;, &quot;less&quot; when comparing objects. Is skilled at sorting, classifying, and categorizing objects using length and width.</td>
<td>Is skilled at estimating, measuring, and expressing the length of an object to the nearest inch and centimeter</td>
<td>Is skilled at measuring in half-inches Is skilled at measuring in quarter-inches</td>
<td>Is skilled at measuring length or distance Understands when to use the appropriate measurement tool for length or distance</td>
<td>Is skilled at measuring liquid volume and weight Understands when to use the appropriate measurement tool for liquid volume or weight</td>
<td>Understands the relationship among units of measure</td>
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Essential Learning Targets

- Essential Learning Targets (ELTs) are parsed out to grade levels purposefully

Number & Quantity: Tools of Measurement

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<td>Understands “more”, “less” when comparing objects</td>
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### Essential Learning Targets

- Essential Learning Targets (ELTs) are a progression

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<th>MATH SCOPE OF FOUNDATIONAL CONCEPTS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STANDARD</strong></td>
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Implementation Year 1

• School year 2012-13
  □ Adopted a leveled progression of learning targets – Essential Learning Targets (ELTs)
  □ Created a Habits of Work rubric

  Preparation for Learning

  Engagement for Learning

  Interactions with Peers and Teacher
Implementation Year 1

- School year 2012-13
  - Adopted a leveled progression of learning targets - Essential Learning Targets (ELTs)
  - Created a Habits of Work rubric
  - Committee members had been “dabbling” (i.e., formative assessment not “counting”)
Implementation Year 2

- School Year 2013-14 all grade 6 teachers would implement these practices
- Chose a grading tool that would allow us to implement the 4 agreements
  - Report out on targets synthesized from the MLR grade span indicators/Common Core
  - Separate scores for behaviors from content learning
  - Use a 4* pt scale (1= does not meet; 2=partially meets; 3=meets; 4= exceeds)
  - Use trending to honor that students do not all learn things at the same time
Implementation Year 3

- School Year 2014-15 all grade 5-8 teachers implemented these practices
Implementation Year 4

• School Year 2015-16 all grade K-8 teachers implemented these practices
• 9th grade core classes
Implementation Year 5

• School Year 2016-17 all grade K-10* teachers are implementing these practices
Implementation Year 6

• School Year 2017-18 all students and teachers will be* in a full proficiency-based learning system
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<th>1</th>
<th>INITIATING</th>
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|   | Some efforts have been made to align coursework with career and college-
|   | ready learning standards, but in practice many teachers continue to use
|   | lessons that are unaligned or outdated. The school uses a standardized
|   | credit system based on seat time, letter grades, number averaging, and
|   | other traditional practices to measure academic progress and determine
|   | readiness for graduation. There is a great deal of variation from
|   | classroom to classroom in grading practices and standards. Students are
|   | often unaware of learning expectations for courses and lessons, and they
|   | rarely receive descriptive feedback on assignments. High-stakes external
|   | assessments often unilaterally drive instruction and lesson design. |

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<th>DEVELOPING</th>
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|   | School-wide curricula and instruction have been aligned with common
|   | learning standards, but this effort has not been systematic or systemic.
|   | District and school leaders have engaged in conversations about adopting
|   | a true standards-based system, and the principal and teacher leaders have
|   | visited schools that are using effective standards-based practices.
|   | Teachers are employing multiple formative assessment strategies in the
|   | classroom, and academic support is being provided to ensure that
|   | struggling students have learned material before they move on to the next
|   | lesson. Some departments have developed common rubrics to enhance the
|   | consistency of grading and reporting, but this practice has not been
|   | embraced by all teachers or institutionalized school-wide. In some
|   | cases, learning expectations remain unclear and many students are still
|   | unaware of their own learning strengths and weaknesses or which learning
|   | standards teachers are addressing. |

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|   | The school has publicly committed to becoming a true standards-based
|   | learning community, and graduation policy has been modified to require all
|   | students to demonstrate mastery of learning standards and high levels of
|   | college and career readiness before receiving a diploma. The faculty has
|   | prioritized learning standards in every content area so that the most
|   | essential content, skills, and habits of mind are covered in depth before
|   | teachers move on to additional material and standards. Multiple assessments
|   | are used to determine that students have mastered what they have been
|   | taught, and underperforming students are provided with additional
|   | instructional time, academic
|   | support, and alternative learning options to ensure that they are able to
|   | learn and demonstrate achievement in ways that work best for them. All
|   | teachers use common scoring guides that provide detailed descriptions of
|   | required learning proficiencies at each developmental stage and expected
|   | level of performance. |
Check-in

• What do you think?
• Question thus far?
Lessons Learned

We have learned a lot about the importance of ...

• Calibration and Consistency
• Managing change
• Compromise and Adjustment
Calibration and Consistency

Read the first two pages of our district’s “Grading Guide”

- Identify one thing that you find intriguing
- Identify one thing that you find perplexing

Share at your table.
Calibration and Consistency

- Grading Guide
- Rigor Taxonomies
- Student work review protocols
Managing Change

The Change Curve

- Stage 1: Information
  - Denial
- Stage 2: Support
- Stage 3: Direction
  - Exploring
  - Acceptance
- Stage 4: Encouragement

Confidence, Morale & Effectiveness

Looking to the past  Looking to the future
Managing Change

• Understanding the stages of change
  □ Be sensitive to the emotional trajectory
  □ PD needs to be a spiral
  □ It’s not the WHY and then the HOW
Compromise and Adjustment

- Implementation requires compromises and adjustments to be sure that we don’t “lose” this incredible, transformative change.
Adjustments

- Latin Honors + Strength of Schedule
- No academic bar for co-curricular eligibility
Our Compromise Process

• 4 lenses that every possible adjustment or change is viewed through:
  □ Best for students
  □ Original 4 agreement
  □ Improve instruction
  □ Manageability
What's best for students?

- Does it preserve or provide additional opportunities for students to learn?
- Is it less of a disruption for students?
- Is it more transparent for students?
- Does it disadvantage students post HS opportunities?
Does it still honor the agreements?

• Does it still give students feedback on what they know and can do specifically?
• Does it still keep the “behaviors” for learning separate from the content learning?
• Does it preserve the notion that a score should honor learning over time?
Will it improve instruction?

- Does it promote making the pathway or progression to the target clear for students?
- Does it promote giving clear, descriptive, actionable feedback to students?
- Does it honor assessing is about finding the evidence that students have learned and not about the task that is given?
- Does it support rigor in instruction?
Does it make it more manageable?

- Is this something that teachers find helpful?
- Is this something that is easier for students to understand?
- Is this something that is easier for parents to understand?
- Is this something that makes things more do-able in the given schedule?
Our Compromise Process

• 4 lenses that every possible adjustment or change is viewed through
  - If it meets the 1st two for both of us then it becomes about debate and advocacy.
Our Compromise Process

• 4 lenses that every possible adjustment or change is viewed through
  □ If it meets the 1st two for both of us then it becomes about debate and advocacy.

Ryan - advocates for manageable
Becky - advocates for improved instruction
Compromises

• ... are achieved when both Becky and Ryan feel the integrity of the system is not in jeopardy, students interests are forefront, the agreements are being honored, instruction will still improve, and it is manageable.
Compromises

• Adding a 3.5
• Honor Roll twice a year
• Maintaining the Power Law over a Decaying Average
• Not doing a conversion at the classroom level
• Rolling in year-by-year over the HS all at once