



## Using Multimetric Accountability Systems to Create Equity: Examining the Whole Child

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### What Does It Mean to Educate the Whole Child?

Each child, in each school, in each community deserves to be:

- Healthy, safe, and engaged in teaching and learning (both cognitively and non-cognitively)
- Supported in personalized learning goals
- Challenged academically
- Prepared for success in college and/or employment and participation in a worldwide environment.<sup>1</sup>

That's what a whole-child approach to learning, teaching, and community engagement really is!<sup>2</sup>

ASCD's Whole Child Initiative was born from the idea of creating equity for all students despite their varying array of needs. Supporting a whole child is not merely grounded in the fundamental idea of student achievement *academically*, but also deeply rooted in a variety of other ways to gauge student success. One lesson learned from NCLB is glaringly evident: A one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning does not work.

The demands of the 21st century require a new approach to education policy and practice—a whole-child approach to learning, teaching, community engagement and accountability. While measuring academic achievement and growth is important and necessary, if we fail to enhance our views beyond a narrow curriculum and accountability system, coupled with a narrow definition of success, we will have failed to adequately prepare children for their futures.<sup>3</sup>

### How Does Equity Relate to Accountability?

Educational equity refers to the principle of fairness. Equity includes a wide variety of educational models, programs, and strategies. Even if your school focuses on ensuring equal access to quality education, you may need a more holistic view to fully implement your policies.<sup>4</sup> Measuring equity involves a broader definition of student success.

1 ASCD. "A Whole Child Approach to Education and the Common Core State Standards Initiative." (n.d.): n. pag. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.

2 ASCD. "About." Whole Child Education. ASCD, 2015. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.

3 ASCD. "Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child." (n.d.): n. pag. Making the Case for Educating the Whole Child. ASCD. Web. 30 Sept. 2016.

4 Lewis, Amanda E., and John Diamond B. Despite the Best Intentions: How Racial Inequality Thrives in Good Schools.

Equity in education encompasses improving different areas that span a variety of inequities: social, staffing, familial and cultural, programmatic, instructional, assessment, and even linguistic. Increasing fairness in education has long been—and perhaps always will be—marked by disputes and controversy.

When exploring equity, it is critical that we examine the needs of the whole child and widen how we define student success for 21<sup>st</sup>-century learners. Accountability systems for these learners must be rooted in a vision of student success that speaks to the whole child and all of the areas that make them unique.

## Using a Multimetric Accountability System to Create Equity

The aim of using a multimetric accountability system (MMAS) is to create equity for students in a variety of areas despite challenges that they may face demographically, socioeconomically, or otherwise. Using multiple measures elevates district and school performance by sending a clear signal to educators, families, and communities that accounting for and attending to certain areas of student well-being are essential.

A meaningful accountability system promotes continuous improvement and alignment with broader outcomes. An MMAS should incorporate a variety of measures that more fully reflect a comprehensive view of student success, accurately measure student learning, and systematically track educators' efforts to engage and support learners. An MMAS should provide us with real-time information about the whole child (a student global performance system, if you will) and thus promote equity based on individual needs.

An accountability framework should effectively address the barriers to teaching and learning and also re-engage students who are otherwise disconnected. Within a whole-child approach, we must raise questions about school culture and curriculum; instructional strategies and family engagement; critical thinking and social-emotional wellness.

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) calls for “non-traditional measures” of student success and performance, supporting this broader model of student and school success. By including information about a student’s level of engagement and well-being in your overall evaluation of a student, you can see a more holistic view of student performance. This differs sharply from the earlier model in NCLB of simply examining a narrow set of student test scores and grades. In short, using multiple measures allows educators, communities, and families to have a more comprehensive understanding of a students’ overall development and a more realistic view of where students are on their journey to success.

## Non-Traditional Measures: The Power of Surveys

So how do surveys measure information about student engagement and well-being? Surveys have the unique ability to directly gather information about perception. They capture how students feel about the process of learning and how they feel about the environment in which they are learning. Whether they feel safe, supported and a part of

a community can determine how well they learn. A more comprehensive definition of success for schools includes the degree to which students are motivated, curious, and able to work well with others. These concepts have obvious merit, but they have often been left out of the equation because of the challenges in measuring their progress.

Surveys represent a form of measurement that, when done right, can accurately assess these essential outcomes. However, creating a valid and reliable survey is not fast or easy. It requires starting with the correct content, asking questions in a way that is accessible to students, and ensuring we are measuring what we think we are measuring. This concept is referred to as construct validity. To gather evidence for construct validity means that we must develop surveys using an established validation framework that both rigorously tests and improves survey items along the way. The end result is a reliable instrument that can collect information about these essential outcomes of schools.

Not only must we have the right survey, we also must have the right process for administration. Survey administration plans must include strategic plans for sampling, logistics that minimize disruption to learning, and the prevention of gaming. While none of these elements of survey administration are reasons that should lead away from this highly useful method of measuring student perceptions, they do highlight the importance of having the correct approach, something that can be created by enlisting those with expertise and experience in both developing and administering surveys.

## How Can Scantron and My Student Survey Help?

Students in today’s society require a whole-child approach that uses multiple measures to allow educators, communities, and families to have a more comprehensive understanding of students’ overall development and a more realistic view of where students are on their journey to success.

Scantron has an extensive track record providing computer-adaptive (Performance Series) and fixed-form formative (Achievement Series) assessment solutions as well as high-quality item banks and a world-class assessment services team to help thousands of customers succeed in developing assessments that measure and accelerate student growth. We’ve delivered billions of assessments since 2010—more than 100 million of them online—and we are always exploring new assessment methodologies to help you move the needle forward.



My Student Survey, a leading provider of education surveys since 2010 specializes in providing K-12 survey solutions that are comprehensive yet easy to design and administer. Their team of researchers and former educators has the expertise you need to engage students, parents, teachers, and support staff in meaningful surveys that deliver actionable results. Surveys are an important part of the backbone of an evidence-based approach to measuring the whole child and driving school improvement. My Student Survey is dedicated to ensuring you get the best information to make the best instructional decisions.

Beyond assessment vehicles, Scantron offers Scantron Analytics, powered by Qlik—one of the foremost analytics pioneers. Scantron Analytics presents up-to-date accountability information through highly visual, easily understood dashboards. By storing all information in memory, Scantron Analytics delivers powerful analytics without the need for a separate data warehouse. Using information you're already collecting, sourced from a wide variety of educational systems, Scantron Analytics displays easy-to-read, graphical dashboards and data visualizations. Important trends and previously hidden connections jump out, so you can spend your time developing creative solutions instead of trying to make sense of rows and columns of numbers.

ESSA allows considerations of growth as an optional component in states' accountability plans. In states where this option is exercised, conversations will turn to how to best measure growth and how we now define student success. Examining the whole child and using multiple measures to aid in this process is critical as we move forward in defining success for today's learners. Whatever the measurement assistance you need, Scantron has the products, tools, services, and expertise to help you ensure that you have the right program for your students. Our award-winning, web-based software, combined with our comprehensive suite of assessment services, help you get the most out of your assessments and results.

We hope this article helps you to identify considerations important to your whole-child measurement approach and see how Scantron and My Student Survey can meet you where you are and help you get to where you want to be.

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### About Ryan Balch



Ryan Balch is a national thought leader on using student surveys at the elementary and secondary level has expertise in measurement development. Before founding My Student Survey, Ryan Balch completed his Ph.D. in Education Policy at Vanderbilt University as an Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Fellow, where his dissertation focused on the development and validation of student surveys on teacher practice. He was the principal investigator for the student survey pilot of more than 15,000 students in seven districts as part of Georgia's Race to the Top initiative and worked for the National Center on Performance Incentives. In addition,

Ryan was the director of teacher and principal evaluation for Baltimore City Schools. During this time, he oversaw the creation and implementation of the district's new systems of evaluation. Previously, Ryan worked as a science teacher and administrator for seven years at Riverwood High School in Atlanta, Georgia. He has a B.A. in Psychology from Duke University and an M.A. in Science Education from Georgia State University.

### About La Keshia Neal



La Keshia Neal is a preemptive, high-energy educator, professional development consultant and chief learner with a proven ability to implement a stable teaching and learning community that increases both student achievement and teacher efficacy. With expertise in turning around low-performing schools, a proven track record developing relationships and building trust and buy-in, she joins us with excellent organizational skills combined with the ability to adapt to new challenges. La Keshia has outstanding interpersonal and communication skills, with expertise in using data as a tool to guide instructional decision making. She has demonstrated the ability to maximize all resources to support a coherent instructional and assessment program.

La Keshia currently serves as an Educational Consultant for Scantron. Prior to joining the team, she served as both a Program Supervisor in the Detroit Public Schools Office of School Turnaround as well as a Student Achievement and Assessment Manager with Detroit Rising College Prep High Schools. She also has an array of experience in the public school as well as publishing sectors. Those skills range from curriculum writing and instruction, assessment literacy, professional development, coaching, supervisory tasks and building 21<sup>st</sup>-century classrooms, just to name a few.