Mastery-based Learning
in Washington State

MASTERY-BASED LEARNING WORK GROUP MEETING
August 26, 2021 Meeting Agenda
1:00-4:00 p.m.
Location: Zoom meeting

Agenda:

1:00-1:15   Welcome
Alissa began the meeting with a native land acknowledgement then welcomed one new work group member. Representative Alex Ybarra introduced himself as the new Republican Representative on the work group (replacing Rep. Corry).

Alissa also shared an update on outreach efforts to solicit feedback to inform development of the Profile of a Graduate so far. We have had 57 attendees at the first three public listening sessions. Alissa has also had discussions with various other stakeholder groups via meetings, as well as a few one-on-one meetings with parents and recent graduates. From the listening sessions, the top skills attributes so far have been self-management, critical thinking and problem-solving, and global citizen/culturally competent. These are the same top three skills from the Profile of a Graduate survey results so far.

The Athena Group report highlights some of the same skills, but the affinity groups also prioritized empathy, independent life skills to effectively navigate life and systems, and wellness of the whole person. Work group members are still concerned that we have not heard enough from the Pacific Islander community. Alissa will continue doing outreach to try to address this gap.

1:15-2:00   Snoqualmie Valley Profile of a Graduate Implementation
              Dr. Robert W. Manahan, Former Superintendent, Snoqualmie Valley School District

Dr. Manahan shared a [presentation](#) regarding Snoqualmie Valley's Profile of a Graduate development process and implementation. See the presentation for more details, but key takeaways include:
- Developing a Profile of a Graduate shows the community the broader picture behind the purpose of education—it is much more than academic content standards. Academics are key, but we want to make sure we are helping develop engaged citizens, people who are kind and empathetic, and who have a good work effort. These are vital skills (I've found there to be a negative connotation with "soft skills"). In all the community conversations I've had, with business partnerships as well, the focus has been on these life and work-ready skills. I believe we are teaching these, but we aren't always explicit about it. We need to help communities really see the significance of the work we are doing.
- Snoqualmie Valley had public listening sessions and a survey for feedback—12 general themes emerged from the stakeholder outreach.
- Students naturally became the facilitators in the community group discussions. Toward the end of the process, a student gave a speech about how empathy needed to be part of the Profile of a Graduate—which was incorporated as the last essential skill.

- Initial implementation: Dr. Manahan encouraged schools to explore, have fun, don't let perfect be the enemy of good, and he provided funding to each school based on FTE to implement. He feels that giving schools autonomy within each Profile theme worked well.
- Eventually, he'd like to see displays of student work connected to the Profile. The Profile could be tied to the student's High School and Beyond Plan, so that students' culminating exhibitions talk about personal progress and growth on the Profile of a Graduate characteristics.
- Eventually, it may help to develop rubrics as a starting point for each characteristic for educators to adapt as works for their individual classroom.
- Biggest challenge for developing a Washington State Profile of a Graduate might be scaling up—SVSD serves 8,000 students. Dr. Manahan believes a state Profile of a Graduate could do a lot of good in the system as long as there is room for each district to adapt the state themes to their own context.

Q&A with work group members:
- Often I'm talking to people who have grown up in a different system. I didn't see recognition of the significant change our students will experience in the economy they're moving into versus their parents. We're moving into a digital world. We need to enable our students to thrive in a 21st century economy—can you talk about that?
    - That's reflected in Snoqualmie Valley's Profile of a Graduate but hidden in the verbiage on adaptability/resources. In the video we showed our community groups to start their thinking, it talked about the workforce changing from manual labor to more digital skills. As we develop rubrics, you may also see more about these digital skills.
- Did you change the academics based off the Profile of a Graduate?
    - For us, it fell into our CTE and our College and Career Readiness department, that's where we emphasized those more. We acknowledged we don't know what skills a kindergartener will need when they graduate 13 years later, that's why we emphasized adaptability/resourcefulness.
- Several questions: 1. What kind of timeframe are we talking about to get the buy-in? I understood you wanted it to be iterative (but then the pandemic hit). What timeframe should we be looking at with a much larger audience? 2. Where would you advise us to keep our eyes open regarding stumbling blocks? Particular stakeholders we need to engage with more? 3. To what extent do you believe what we're trying to accomplish is not additive, but aligns with what we already have on the books? I find missing in our MBL conversations, whether you're an administrator or teacher, is the power and efficacy of multidisciplinary work. Whether the multidisciplinary is the "hard disciplines" or a hard discipline with the soft skills. To what extent do you think that encouraging a multidisciplinary approach to "selling" the Profile of a Graduate and implementing it into what we already have (aside: Can we get rid of some of these things)?
    - 1. Timeframe=5 month. We had to garner enough stakeholder support to be representative of the community and then just get it out there to start. Buy-in for teachers really came when they had a chance to start implementing (that's another whole year). That next year is how do we play with it/how does it align with what we are doing versus what needs to change.
    - Can we really make this multidisciplinary? Probably will be some rolling of eyes, but to really use a multidisciplinary approach is the best way to happen. That will get some pushback from staff too regarding them not having time to do this. In SVSD, to just let them play with it to start, they figured it out/and saw that it aligned with what they're doing. Profile of a Graduate is a great tie in with a student's High School and Beyond Plan and culminating projects.

- Several questions: 1. When you left, what did you feel were the most impactful accomplishments in that time period? 2. What barriers did you encounter in your process that you would warn others, or need policy or regulation to overcome? 3. You accomplished this under existing regulations. What do you which you could have done but couldn't given the policy constraints?
- Pacing staff pressure points, validating the good work they're already doing, and using this as a way to advocate for public education and show how we are changing lives in so many ways. Taking the time to have those stakeholder conversations and easing staff into it. Telling teachers it's not that you're not doing the right work—we are showing the full community all the work you are already doing for our kids.
- Put yourself in our position as legislators—what would you do if you had our job?
  - The ESD tours you did made me feel heard—maybe something like that. Also, I didn't tell a school how to do this. I gave them funding, but didn't tell them what characteristics to emphasize from the Profile or how to do this work. Allow autonomy within a theme, as opposed to specific constraints.

2:00-2:15   Public Comment

Sarah Butcher: Parent and Co-Founder of Roots of Inclusion

I wanted to express my gratitude for this work—it's an opportunity to center equity and access and inclusion. For the first time I see what my boys need represented in this work. Please continue to center students. Make sure the language put out as a result of this work on any documents or products is accessible and inclusive.

2:15-3:30   Profile of a Graduate Components Discussion

Work group members participated in breakout rooms to brainstorm via a [Google document](#) about what existing policies may help ease the implementation of the Profile of a Graduate and what policies may be barriers, as well as what new policies may need to be developed.

Work group members also began discussions about their report that is due on December 10 and thinking about: What needs to be in it? What do we want to highlight versus what may be less essential? How will the Profile of a Graduate be used by districts?

They reviewed the legislative charge to the work group and began identifying gaps in their outreach to date to ensure we continue to hear from our various stakeholders to inform the Profile of a Graduate development.

Based off the comments and possible themes to include in their report discussed at this meeting and the September 8 retreat, Alissa will take the table shared on screen and start building a report outline for members to review after the retreat.

3:30-3:55   Discussion: Debrief the Day

Work group members shared the following thoughts:
- Schools are focused on the here and now and contending with so much with the ongoing coronavirus impacts. The more we can lay a foundation and get our message out the better—you have to say things 7 times for them to stick. We need to be sharing what does MBL look like in action and asking our allies to help spread our message.
- How much local control do districts have about adding to or modifying the state Profile of a Graduate?
  - Several members want a significant amount of local control.

- Mastery-based learning isn't real if students don't have agency, you have to meet seat time requirements, etc. Just like in mastery-based learning, there will be core elements we need to consider essential to the statewide Profile of a Graduate (just like our graduation requirements)—there needs to be a core that remains unchanged. Core values in my mind: equity, inclusion, and access cannot be negotiable. If we water it down, then those kids who have always been excluded will continue to be excluded. I would like the Profile of a Graduate to be universal enough that no district says I can't do that/don't want to. Aiming for something that is universal that everyone would want for their student. All parents want their kids to learn, be successful, etc. But then how every district exhibits how they've met that is within the district's control
- We need to help families understand that districts will have a measure of local control, but also that every student has the room to thrive with the Profile of a Graduate. We have to share with parents about why there's going to be a transformation in the process—we want your children ready for the economy and world they move into after high school.
- For local flexibility, often a policy is put in place (e.g. Profile of a Graduate), then WSSDA creates a sample policy for local school districts, then each individual school board can adapt the policy as necessary to fit their local context.

3:55-4:00   Next Steps
Alissa will send out the agenda for our retreat next week. We will also be asking you to watch an overview video of diploma requirements as prework for the retreat that will inform our discussion toward recommendations for changes in the system based off the Profile of a Graduate.

4:00   Adjourn