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Quarterly Research & Updates
for California's Public Education





A Note from the President



The 92nd Annual CERA Conference is coming to the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California, for two full days on December 5 - 6, 2013. There will also be pre-conference sessions on December 4. The theme for this year's conference will be **Implementing the Common Core: Opportunities, Challenges and Innovation**.

Indeed, as the California educational community moves toward the full implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and continued pilot testing of Smarter Balanced Assessments, it is important for the CERA community to understand the unique role our members play in this highly significant change to public education. From teacher educators to researchers to policy makers to data systems developers to LEA administrators, our roles are critical to facilitate this change to produce positive outcomes for the 6.2 million public school students in California.

This year's conference will feature keynote addresses from prominent researchers and policymakers in the CCSS community including **Margaret Heritage** from CRESST/UCLA, who will return to CERA with an address focusing on the key role of formative assessment practices in Common Core implementation. **Stanley Rabinowitz** from WestEd will provide the latest information on development of the SBAC assessment system. **Joe Johnston** from NCUST/SDSU will speak to effective building level practices he has identified through his research program, and **Deborah Sigman** from CDE will give us an update on policy development around implementation of SBAC assessments in California.

As always, we encourage our membership to consider submitting a presentation proposal for the conference. One of our goals for this year's conference is to provide even more rigorous and timely paper presentations and break-out sessions aligned to our conference theme. Our members' participation will aid in building a program that helps CERA members learn which practices are effective and which strategies can be replicated.

The program continues to strengthen our connection with graduate students by highlighting graduate student presentations. Announcements requesting presentation proposals will be e-mailed to CERA members in the upcoming weeks. Proposals will be due June 30, 2013.

Conference and hotel registration information are available at <http://www.cera-web.org>. The participation of our membership in the annual conference via the dissemination of their individual contributions to the advancement and application of knowledge related to educational research, evaluation, and assessment will continue to improve outcomes for students as well as continue to make CERA a vital and relevant research association.

Wendell Callahan

Q&A



Significant Changes Ahead for California's Assessment and Accountability Systems An Interview with Deborah V.H. Sigman

By Rachel Perry
CERA Board Member

With the 2010 adoption of the Common Core State Standards and the development of new assessment systems based on those standards, there are many changes ahead for California's assessment and accountability systems. To learn more about those changes and the timeframe for implementation, I sat down with Deb Sigman, Deputy Superintendent of the District, School, and Innovation Branch and Keric Ashley, Director, Analysis, Measurement, and Accountability Reporting Division at the California Department of Education.

Q: In January, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson made 12 recommendations about the future of California's assessment system. Can you describe the process for how the recommendations get implemented?

DS: Superintendent Torlakson was directed by the Legislature to make recommendations about the future of assessment in California. This was a great opportunity for Superintendent Torlakson; an opportunity that had not happened before in the history of assessment programs in California. Superintendent Torlakson took the charge very seriously and the CDE consulted with thousands

of stakeholders throughout California in crafting these recommendations. His recommendations set a course for action, but will require legislative action. To that end, Superintendent Torlakson is sponsoring legislation, Assembly Bill (AB) 484, authored by Assemblywoman Susan Bonilla, seeks to implement many of his recommendations. See http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/pub/13-14/bill/asm/ab_0451-0500/ab_484_bill_20130219_introduced.pdf for the entire bill. Additional bills may be forthcoming that focus on other recommendations. To download a copy of the Superintendent's report, *Recommendations for Transitioning California to a Future Assessment System* go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/documents/suptrecrptjan13.pdf>.

Q: One of the most significant recommendations was to suspend assessments as early as spring 2014 in subject areas and grade levels that aren't required by federal law. How much money would that recommendation save the state and how would that money be used?

DS: Our estimates are that suspending certain assessments would save approximately \$14M, \$11M in contract costs and potentially \$3M in apportionment costs. We are suggesting that the savings could be used to begin rebuilding some of the assessments not provided for within the Smarter Balanced system and are reflective of

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Q&A



Significant Changes Ahead for California's Assessment and Accountability Systems An Interview with Deborah V.H. Sigman (cont.)

the priorities of Superintendent Torlakson and the State Board of Education (SBE). One of the priorities will be to re-build the federally required science assessments in grades five, eight, and ten based on the Next Generation Science Standards planned for adoption by the State Board of Education in November 2013. The SBE is also interested in developing new mathematics assessments that are consistent with the SBE's recent decisions around the mathematics standards. Math assessments in Algebra and Integrated Mathematics are likely to be critical in this development process.

Q. Some have criticized the recommendation to reduce testing because, especially at the high school level, the majority of assessments would focus on English-language arts (ELA) and mathematics, with the exception of grade 10 science. Won't this recommendation narrow the curriculum at the high school level, something Superintendent Torlakson said he was trying to reverse? How do you respond to those critics?

DS: Superintendent Torlakson envisions a system of high-quality assessments that assesses the depth and breadth of the curriculum and model high quality teaching and learning activities. He recognizes that the current system has limitations in accomplishing this goal. We are at-

tempting to strike a balance in order to achieve his vision, including assessing science, social science, art, technology and potentially other content areas that are part of a school experience. In fact, the legislation calls for us to meet with stakeholders to determine the best way to accomplish this. "Taking a temporary breather" from non-federally required assessments gives our schools some time and space for Common Core implementation activities as well as provides some savings that can be used to build a more robust system that educators have desired for years. Building this system will take time. This is not a one-year activity; building the system should be viewed as multiple, tiered activities that will take place over time. We believe that this is an educationally reasonable and fiscally responsible approach to attaining our goals. All this work represents a tremendous opportunity and a great investment in education, and we want to do it right.

Q. With the assessment system in a state of flux, what is your best advice to district testing coordinators for how to address and prepare for the future changes?

DS: We recognize school districts' need to plan calendars and we are hopeful that decisions will be made about the 2013-14 assessment sus-

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Significant Changes Ahead for California's Assessment and Accountability Systems

An Interview with Deborah V.H. Sigman (cont.)

pensions by July 1, 2013 as part of the budget process. School districts should plan to implement the Smarter Balanced assessments starting in 2014-15 and should continue evaluating their technology infrastructure and computer inventory to prepare for computer-adaptive testing.

The CDE has also made some structural and organizational changes to better support schools and school districts in this transition by re-aligning resources with the Superintendent Torlakson's priorities. The Assessment Development and Administration Division (ADAD) is focused on transition activities and charged with implementing the Superintendent's recommendations. Within ADAD, a new Unit called the Statewide Assessment Transition Office was created with the primary purpose of monitoring activities involved in the development of the Smarter Balanced assessment system, and responding to questions from the field.

Deb Sigman was recently elected to the Executive Committee for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium so I thought I'd ask her about her prediction for the future of the new assessment system.

Q. Many people are skeptical that the new assessment system will be ready for the 2014-15 school year. What is your prediction?

DS: *There is no doubt that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium will deliver this new assessment system in the 2014-15 school year. I believe our schools and districts are both excited about this new assessment system as well as concerned about the technology challenges that still exist in schools and school districts throughout California. With that said, the CDE encourages as many schools and school districts to take advantage of the computer-adaptive testing option. A paper and pencil option will exist in the short-term for schools and school districts still making necessary improvements in their technology systems.*

The response to this spring's Smarter Balanced pilot testing was remarkable. Over 360,000 California students across 1,400 schools are participating in pilot testing that is scheduled to end May 24, 2013. The purpose of pilot testing is to identify difficulties in the system and, indeed, difficulties have been identified. Now, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium will address those difficulties and problems to improve the system before field testing begins next school year.

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Q&A



Significant Changes Ahead for California's Assessment and Accountability Systems

An Interview with Deborah V.H. Sigman (cont.)

Q. How do you see the accountability system in California changing with the introduction of the Smarter Balanced assessments that will be vertically aligned and produce individual student growth scores?

DS: Significant changes are in store for the accountability system due to the passage of Senate Bill 1458 (Steinberg) last year, and the Superintendent Torlakson's desire to broaden the accountability system beyond student performance on a series of assessments.

While it is true that the change to Smarter Balanced assessments will provide student growth scores to include in the accountability system, that information is still information from an assessment. Superintendent Torlakson strongly believes that determining the quality of schools is more than a test score. He is interested in the bigger question about how we determine what a quality school looks like, and he has directed the CDE to gather input from stakeholders about their thoughts on the future of California's accountability system through regional meetings and other means.

Q. Along those same lines, if the recommendation to reduce testing is implemented, few assessments will be left at the high school level for accountability purposes. What is the CDE doing to minimize the accountability impact of the assessment changes? Will the Academic Performance Index (API) for high schools be based on results of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) only?

DS: The API has always been designed to accommodate changes over time – that's why we have a Base and a Growth API. The Base API reestablishes a baseline each year when changes in the assessment system take place. If the Superintendent's Recommendation #1 about suspending certain assessments is accepted signed into law, results from the CAHSEE, the grade 10 assessment in life science, and the grade 10 California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) in ELA and mathematics would be available. Many people may believe these results are not robust enough for high school accountability, but they would be adequate from a technical perspective. The CDE is working closely with the Public Schools Accountability Act (PSAA) Advisory Committee to identify other possible indicators for high school accountability that would complement the existing assessment results. Graduation rates and various measures of college and

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Q&A



Significant Changes Ahead for California's Assessment and Accountability Systems An Interview with Deborah V.H. Sigman (cont.)

career readiness are currently being discussed by the PSAA Advisory Committee. All recommendations from the PSAA Advisory Committee would go to the Superintendent Torlakson and the SBE for consideration and adoption.

Q. Several advisory bodies help guide accountability policy in California. Can you describe the process and how school or school district staff can provide input?

DS: California educators will have multiple opportunities to provide their thoughts and suggestions for the incorporation of graduation data and the college and career indicator into the API. The CDE will be obtaining the feedback through various venues. A series of regional meetings have been scheduled and these are opportunities for the public to provide comments on adding new data to the high school API. The schedule of these meetings can be found at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/apiregionalmtngs.asp>.

Information gathered from the regional meetings will be used in the development of a survey which will be posted on the CDE Web site for interested stakeholders and members of the public to complete.

As mentioned above, there is also a legislatively required committee, the PSAA Advisory Committee that advises the State Superintendent and the SBE on certain matters related to the API. The CDE has been meeting with the PSAA Advisory Committee on a regular basis to review options for incorporating new indicators. These meetings are open to the public and are broadcasted live. To access future PSAA meeting dates and archived Webcasts of past meetings, please visit the CDE PSAA Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/pa/index.asp>. Furthermore, an e-mail account has been established to collect comments and suggestions on changes to the high school API. The e-mail address is api@cde.ca.gov.

END

On the Ground

Alicia Henderson



Implementing Common Core and Preparing for Next Generation Assessments

The time has come, and the rubber is hitting the road. Those of us “in the trenches” are doing the legwork to implement the California Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and prepare ourselves for the new assessment system developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC). As superintendent of a small elementary district in northern California, I find myself immersed in both the big picture and the details. This is an invigorating journey, and I will share some insights.

The idea of having new standards that are internationally benchmarked and designed to prepare our children for more than winning Jeopardy contests has intuitive appeal. I have not encountered any push-back from parents, teachers, administrators or trustees on this notion. Yet buried within the CCSS are dramatic changes in both teaching and learning. *This is where the rubber hits the road.*

In English Language Arts (ELA), the focus on mastery of text is paramount. The CCSS expect that students read increasingly complex text, and utilize information gleaned from the text. There is a definite shift towards more variety in text genres and subjects, with an emphasis on building knowledge, gaining insights, exploring

possibilities, and broadening perspectives. The CCSS expect students to clearly express themselves in writing. Although narratives are included in the CCSS, there is a premium placed on expository writing. *Dealing with the increased text complexity, the responsibility for textual content, and the shift towards expository writing are changes that will need to be supported with professional development and new instructional materials.*

In Math, the major content shifts with the CCSS are at the secondary level. However, implementing the eight mathematical practices of the CCSS from kindergarten through 12th grade is profound. Among the new expectations, students will persevere with difficult problems, attend to precision, look for and make use of structure. The emphasis is on both the process of coming to a solution, as well as the solution itself. The CCSS for Math expect that students will learn through performance tasks that include problem solving with multiple steps. *Although instructional materials may already exist, there is a need for professional development to fully implement the CCSS for Math.*

In both ELA and Math, there is a decided expectation that students will establish a position, and

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Implementing Common Core and Preparing for Next Generation Assessments (cont.)

construct a viable argument which is justified by evidence. No longer will kindergarten students be asked to write about a visit to the zoo. Now they will reference the trip to the zoo, identify their favorite animal, and provide reasons why it is their favorite animal. Even in the primary grades, students will be asked to cite evidence from a text they have read to justify a position that is taken. In Math, there is an expectation that students will go beyond the answer. That is, students will be expected to justify how they arrived at the answer. This is an overall change in what we have expected from our students. In essence, we are now expecting that they have a voice - with their own opinion based on a reasonable rationale that they can articulate. No longer can students be passive learners. *This is a change in mindset for many adults in education, as well as for students.*

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges with the CCSS is the expectation for digital teaching and learning. Although educators have enjoyed the benefits of technology for some, this is the first time that digital literacy is expected in every classroom. There are media and technology expectations integrated throughout the CCSS. No longer is digital literacy considered exceptional, and no longer is there an “opt out” for teaching and learning with media and technology.

There is a need to ensure that we have adequate hardware and software, as well as professional development for our teachers. There is a steep learning curve for those folks who have not yet gotten their feet wet in this arena.

The expectation for learning will be different, as the CCSS expect that knowledge will be learned deeply so it can be applied in cognitively demanding tasks. This contrasts with simple recall and reproduction that has been common for many years in education (*i.e., Jeopardy*). Students will now be expected to learn new content so that it can be applied in more demanding ways, such as an analysis or a critique. *There may be a need for new instructional materials with sufficient instructional rigor, and there is a need for professional development to support teaching with this rigor.*

The new SBAC assessment system will assess student learning in new ways, utilizing computer adaptive technology. We expect this to replace STAR in Spring 2015; however we do not yet know if SBAC interim assessments will be available in California. As we prepare for the technology requirements of SBAC (no small task), we are “on hold” regarding making local decisions about our interim (*i.e., benchmark*) assessments.

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On the Ground



Implementing Common Core and Preparing for Next Generation Assessments (cont.)

There is a need to prepare for the summative SBAC, and have flexibility regarding our local interim assessments until the state decisions have been made.

The expected outcomes for CCSS, the deliverables if you will, are also changing. No longer is it “my way – college – or the highway”. The options for students now include both college and career. This is a very welcome change, as it is known that people can have productive and fulfilling lives as contributing members of our world without going to a 4-year college. There is a renewed appreciation for career technical education and apprenticeships. The CCSS include the K-12 College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards which address such skills as self-management, goal setting and persistence. *There is a need for professional development to become familiar with and teach the CCR standards.*

Thus, primary challenges include securing instructional materials and technology, and supporting the changes required in pedagogical practices and mindsets through professional development. Whereas the former requires money, the latter requires primarily time – both of which are limited in any school district. Aside from the money, it is important to note the challenges in securing instructional materials to support the CCSS. There are very few options that have been built from the ground up from the CCSS (*i.e., most are “realigned”*).

Despite the many challenges, I am confident we will successfully implement the CCSS in 2013-14, and be ready for SBAC in 2014-15. Preparing for this has been a major focus for my district all year. We have the will, and we are carving out the way.

END

Common Core Assessment



Tool for Mastering Technology-enhanced Items Developed

We all know that Common Core Standards are here, but what about assessing how well students are learning based on these new standards?

That is one of the tasks for the **Smarter Balanced Consortium**, but what tools are out there might help us transition from our current reality to the work Smarter Balanced is doing? This is a question that many assessment coordinators and directors across the state are asking themselves.

As a part of a strategic planning committee at the San Diego County Office of Education, *Shannon Coulter* from assessment services began developing an instructional tool that would help prepare students to take the new tests. “The new tests are entirely on computers,” Shannon said, noting, “Districts need to be sure that their students have the skills to interact with the math and English content digitally.”

Shannon realized he needed web designers and curriculum experts, on top of all the other Common Core preparation underway, to help SDCOE support districts around testing. A team was formed with curriculum experts *Debbie Beldock, Jameson Rienick, Mindy Shacklet, Jennifer Currie, Sally Bennett-Schmidt* and *Educational Technology staff Todd Langager, Andrea Casas and Alex Wu*. This team created an online pilot assessment test tool called **Common Core Assessment Simulator**. The simulator contains technology-enhanced items that allow students to practice the skills they need to interact with the content digitally and for teachers, as a formative tool, to help students master these skills.

The new website launched in February this year. Currently it contains 50 sample test questions with typical computer skills students need to complete a task, including “drag and drop,”

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Below are words that all have the same literal meaning, but each word has a different connotation. Put the words in order by placing them on the scale from the word with the most negative connotation to the most positive connotation.

aggressive	domineering	assertive	dynamic	forceful
Most Negative		Most Positive		

Common Core



Tool for Mastering Technology-enhanced Items Developed (cont.)

highlight words or phrases, or draw a figure on a grid using a mouse. Several districts are working with the site and giving the team feedback. “The response has been positive,” stated Shannon. “They are requesting more items for students in higher grade levels.”

The tool currently works in a limited set of browsers and best operates in Google Chrome. The intent of the tool was not to recreate a Smarter Balanced Assessment, but focus on developing students’ skills to take these assessments.

“We are pleased to have the opportunity to partner with assessment and bring our instructional design expertise to the table,” shared Langager.

“The test will be ‘real’ in Spring of 2015 and we are excited to be a part of preparing San Diego County Students.”

“Common Core can be a positive change for education,” agreed Casas. “It will be rewarding to see our students succeed, to be 21st Century ready, and to know that we were a part of that.”

Anyone can access the site by going to ccas.sdcoe.net. Use the **passphrase WOPR** and check out some of the technology-enhanced items SDCOE is developing in order to prepare students for these next generation assessments.

Group the triangles according to whether the pairs are congruent or not. If there is not enough information to decide, place the triangles in the “Not Enough Information” box.

Congruent	Not Congruent	Not Enough Information

Stay Motivated in a Doctoral Program

Joel Garcia



As I look forward to my commencement ceremony this summer, I cannot help but reflect on the last three and a half years. Tending to my family, grad school and professional commitments has certainly not been easy; I have struggled along just like other members of my doctoral cohort. But, as we near the end of this arduous journey, I elicited their recommendations for achieving success while tending to many responsibilities.

Use your support system. I was fortunate enough to have a support system embedded into my doctoral program with twelve other cohort members. In this group, we shared our strengths and fears, resources, proposal and dissertation drafts, project timelines, and pushed each other's scholarly work. If you do not have this network of support, create it. Reach out to colleagues, friends, mentors who can back you in this endeavor.

Put in the work. Do something related to your dissertation every day—even for just 15 minutes. In this manner, your topic stays on the “front burner” and you continuously think about your work. Other helpful strategies include focusing on the smaller steps rather than the longer journey, and setting realistic timelines and sharing them with them with those who will keep you accountable.

Tend to your personal commitments. Whether it's spending time with your loved ones or enjoying alone-time exercising or indulging in a massage, it is critical to take care of yourself. Having said all of this, there is no one way to achieve success. I recommend trying out some of these strategies and see what works best for you. Before you know it, you will be getting ready for your own graduation. Best of luck!



Resources & Reviews

Don Dixon



Five Uneasy Pieces

Herein are five 'uneasy pieces' – thumbnail reviews and comments on disparate educational writings that have caught our eye recently. There isn't a theme here; rather, simply a conviction that, even amidst the deluge of memos, articles, books, and webcasts, these writings are worth the time required to find and read them.

See if you agree – and feel free (obligated even) to make your own recommendations or comments.

**Paul Tough: *How Children Succeed*,
Houghton Mifflin, Harcourt, 2012.**

Subtitled in one review as “resilience has returned,” Tough’s important and absorbing book will influence and partially structure the ongoing debate on the direction and importance of cognitive assessment. It presents a robust attack on the belief, fiercely championed by much of the psychometric community, “that success today depends primarily on cognitive skills.” Instead, Tough offers the notion that school and life success are based on noncognitive skills, such as persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness, grit and self-confidence, and that these are more crucial to achieving success than cognitive skills.

Given changes in federal and state accountability requirements, Tough’s critique is especially relevant. Common Core/Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium assessments are designed, and indeed lauded, to be much more cognitively demanding than the current standards-based multiple choice assessments that are currently

used in most states. A recent Rand study, for example, found that the current assessment instruments focused almost entirely on recall and recognition memory, while new SBAC items are indexed on Webb’s Depth of Knowledge taxonomy, based on the items’ cognitive demand. In short, the new accountability system under development will rely even more heavily than the old upon cognitive assessment.

In Tough’s contrary view, the past few decades of psychological and neurological research can be summed up in a sentence: character and success are created by encountering and overcoming failure, something that requires the buffering provided by a nurturing connection to parents and families, both in childhood and early adolescence.

Given the complete lack of attention by both current educational and assessment systems, these ideas, if adopted, would promise a radical sea change in how we evaluate both student and school performance – one which appears unlikely for a variety of reasons. Much of the

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Five Uneasy Pieces (Cont.)

focus on cognitive measurement in educational testing is one of convenience. While the predictive importance of personality factors and attachment representations are well documented in the literature, the educational testing establishment largely ignores large scale noncognitive testing programs in favor of the relative convenience and acceptance of cognitive testing.

In addition, the politics of non-cognitive testing is often contentious; many conservative school board members and many parents cringe at the notion of any sort of individual measurement of noncognitive traits.

Thus, while there are compelling scientific reasons to measure noncognitive abilities that are predictive of school success, the sunken capital invested in the current system, valid psychometric issues -- for example reliable measurement of psychological traits in non-English Speakers -- and the lack of political will make it unlikely that we will see such a testing program anytime in the near future.

Nevertheless, as the Kirkus Review opined in its May 2012 review, the book is "essential reading for anyone who cares about childhood in America."

Diane Ravitch: *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education*, Basic Books, 2010.

Unless budget cuts have removed all communication from your school's testing office, we're sure you have at least heard of Ravitch's devastating attack on the failures of both NCLB type testing and school choice. The hope here is that we can encourage you to take the time to find a copy and read the book.

Ravitch, who served as Deputy of Education under Lamar Alexander in the HW Bush administration, was once an advocate of both the school choice and standardized testing she now condemns.

Educational testing, Ravitch shows, is at best inexact, and far from increasing the accountability of schools, it instead produced massive cynicism among teachers, parents and the public, meanwhile leaving the "disastrously" poor education received by many -- typically poor -- students unaffected. It also produced more than a few pockets of rampant dishonesty among school administrators and testing officials; Atlanta, Chicago and El Paso possibly being only the small tips of a much larger iceberg.

School Choice, the other shibboleth of the right, Ravitch finds to have disastrously underper-

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Five Uneasy Pieces (Cont.)

formed on its promises, failing to lift performance, and radically undermining many of the benefits of community and continuity offered by neighborhood schools.

While Ravitch doesn't dwell extensively on this, her critique points out a crucial, but often under-reported fact, related to controversies over American education. Over the past 30 years virtually every public service – health, social services, even corrections and the military – have been privatized. Law enforcement and education represent the largest remaining “pot” of public money available for conversion into a private-sector model. In this view, the ideology that drives much of the “reform” she describes may have more to do with a potential profit motive and fitting schools into a “market model” than with actual school improvement.

Google books terms this a “must-read for any stakeholder in the future of American schooling.” We agree!

Kevin Kumashiro: *When Billionaires Become Educational Experts: “Venture philanthropists” push for the privatization of public education.*

Adapted from his book *Bad Teacher! How Blaming Teachers Distorts the Bigger Picture*, this AAUP Academe article (May-June 2012) expands on

many of Ravitch's observations. Focusing upon the historical and growing contemporary role of private philanthropies in attempting to shape public education, both the book and article provide a wealth of evidence addressing two key points: regardless of the donor, there is rarely such a thing as free money, and ultimately, all donor-school relationships follow “The Golden Rule” – those who have the gold, make the rules.

If your time is limited, Kumashiro's article provides a quick but powerful summary of the donor impact from the 1890s to the present, and looks unblinkingly at the effect of organizations such as the Business Round Table, Gates' Foundation, Broad Foundation, the Walton Family (WalMart), and DeVos (Amway) foundations, Richardson Foundation, Scaife Family Foundation, and more recently, the Charles Koch Foundation.

“Gifts” from these sources have both directly shaped educational policy – most specifically school choice and testing – and have gone to a range of typically conservative think tanks and universities, including voucher organizations such as the Alliance for School Choice, the American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, and the Hoover Institute, and Christian conservative groups such as Focus on the Family.

Kumashiro, formerly chair of educational policy studies at the University of Illinois, is President

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of the National Association for Multicultural Education. His article is available on the web. <http://www.aaup.org/article/when-billionaires-become-educational-experts>.

Paul Warren, California's Changing K-12 Accountability Program,
Public Policy Institute of California, January 2013.

Warren, a former California Deputy Superintendent for Accountability, Chief Consultant to the Assembly Education Committee, and more recently Senior Policy Analyst, K-12 Education in the Legislative Analyst's Office, is now affiliated with the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

Those positions have provided a unique vantage point for examining California developments, and those searching for a concise summary of forthcoming changes in how we measure school and student progress should consult his recently published *California's Changing K-12 Accountability Program*. The report provides a brief overview of four areas of particular interest to those concerned with testing and accountability: a review of current state and federal programs, an assessment of teacher readiness to implement new federal standards, discussion of implications of a shift to measurement of individual student gains, and a reassessment of high school CSTs.

Given the situation statewide and nationally, there

are few answers here; but Warren – as he has in other PPIC reports he has co-authored recently – lays out many of the key questions and uncertainties. His experience as a budget analyst, for example, is evident in a related PPIC report *California Education: Planning for a Better Future*, which he co-authored with Laura Hill and Margaret Weston.

These are both worth reading, if for no other reason than the importance of PPIC's reports in the shaping of the political dialogue on educational issues in California.

http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_quick.asp?i=1043

Lee Mitgang, *Districts Matter: Cultivating the Principals Urban Schools Need*
Wallace Foundation, February 2013

Taken together, the many publications produced since 2007 by the Wallace Foundation have provided important empirical linkage between school leadership, school reform, and student achievement. Involving such institutional collaborators such as Rand Corporation, Stanford University, the National Council of State Legislators, and the Education Trust, these reports have ranged from a 254 page compendium summarizing existing research, to short, practical frameworks for development of school leadership.

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Five Uneasy Pieces (Cont.)

Of particular interest to us was a recent Wallace Foundation report, authored by Lee Mitgang, entitled *Districts Matter: Cultivating the Principals Urban Schools Need*.

Wallace Foundation, February 2013.

The role of the district in cultivating effective principals has only rarely been addressed, either in the research or practitioner literature. While this

report is oriented squarely towards the practitioner, covering such topics as effective utilization of data, development of selective hiring procedures, and discussion of ways to provide mentoring to novice leaders, it is firmly rooted in earlier (and freely available) Wallace funded research. Included as well is a concluding discussion on the need to balance autonomy and accountability.

<http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-policy-and-practice/Pages/Districts-Matter-Cultivating-the-Principals-Urban-Schools-Need.aspx>

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