# CENTER *for* LAW *and* EDUCATION

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# Educational Quality Bill of Rights

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# EDUCATIONAL QUALITY BILL OF RIGHTS

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## EDUCATIONAL QUALITY BILL OF RIGHTS

### Preamble and Cover Note

Every child [in _____] has a right to a high-quality education that will properly prepare him or her to graduate from high school well-qualified for productive and meaningful work at a living income, higher education, and active participation in family, community, and civic life. This must be equally available to all children, not just to the most advantaged in the state.

To secure every child's right to a high-quality education, all students and educators must be able to count on: (a) an educational system that provides schools adequate resources, structures, and processes; (b) schools that transform adequate, equitable, and timely resources into high-quality education for every child; (c) democratic accountability mechanisms; and (d) an educated and engaged local citizenry who press for quality, work in partnership with the schools, and hold the overall system accountable.

Students, parents and members of the community at large are entitled to know what they can expect the [_____] system of public education to provide for every child (and to make sure that "no child is left behind") in accord with these fundamental principles. These abstract rights must be understood as giving to every student in any public elementary or secondary school [in _____] a right to the elements of a quality education needed to enable him/her to achieve. These elements form the basis for an Educational Quality Bill of Rights (EQBR).

The elements of the EQBR are designed to respond to a basic series of parent-oriented questions (printed on the next page). These questions are relevant across a wide span of contexts – from instances when parents interact with (or even just wonder about) a school concerning the effectiveness of their own child's program; to dealing more broadly, in concert with others, with quality of the school's program for all students; all the way to changing the state accountability system. (As the focus of attention shifts from securing a good education for your own child to dealing with the systemic issues, the terms of these questions can be shifted from "my child" to "all our children" and from "my" to "our" – an important shift for a school and community perspective. At the same time however, the focus on the individual child must remain front and center, as is inherent in a rights-based strategy, so that the accountability system is judged by its capacity to answer each of the key questions affirmatively for each child and parent – here's what you personally can and have a right to expect.)

| *Key Question* | *Topic Areas for EQBR Elements* |
|---|---|
| • "What should my child be learning?" (This is the framing question for all the others:) | I. Standards, school-level learning goals for authentic achievement |
| • "Is that what the school is teaching my child?" | II. Curriculum, across all student grouping |
| • "Is the school teaching it well?" | III. Effective instructional methods, well-qualified teachers, and strong professional development. |
| • "What about my child's particular needs in learning it?" | IV. Individual attention and special needs |
| • "Is my child learning it?" | V. Assessment, and its use for improvement and accountability |
| • "How are important decisions made about my child?" | VI. High-stakes decisions |
| • "What's my role in making all this happen (and in getting an effective response when it is not)?" | VII. Democratic governance and involvement rights, school as learning community |

The school's ability to address each of these questions – with clear, affirmative, specific answers – is central to making sure that schools, and school reforms, actually work to ensure that every child receives a high-quality education.   Thus the EQBR is organized as a set of answers to these basic questions.  As such, it provides a clear statement to families of what they can and should expect to be able to count on, in the way of a quality education, when they send their child to a school (and how the school will respond if the reality falls short).

In addition, by articulating the elements of quality that a school must provide, the EQBR is a tool for helping schools, districts, and states deliver on the promise of high-quality education:

• As the framework for developing, implementing, and monitoring school level policy and practice.

• As the school-level qualities around which all state level policy and practice should be designed –  so that the state can ensure both that schools deliver on the statewide obligation to provide a high-quality education and that schools have the capacity to do so.

• As the template for the school-level data that should be part of the statewide accountability system.

What follows are *two forms of the EQBR*.  The first is a *one-page version*, with a very brief single sentence identification of a key element of quality education in response to each of the key questions about the school (covering standards/learning goals, curriculum, instruction, etc.).  The second is a *much fuller version* that attempts to supply the content for each of those key elements.

Obviously, the subject of what's good education, and what are its markers,  is one that is open-ended and properly resistant to a single fixed answer.  Thus, while we have selected school elements that we believe – based on research, experience, and logic – are central, and in many cases are requirements of law, we nevertheless urge you to think about this area critically, discuss it with others (both within your community and across sites), and revise and expand the criteria, beyond the minimum requirements of law, in ways that most make sense to you.

At the same time, the expectation for our collaborative work with sites is that revisions at the site level are not made in a vacuum but come from careful deliberation, including sharing, discussion, and analysis with other  sites and with us, for several reasons.  First, new ideas generated by one site may be relevant to others.   Second, the quality of each site's work will benefit from the reactions, perspective, and analysis of others.  Third, alongside the value placed on sites' ability to define their own vision, there is also a value in finding as much common ground across sites as possible – to facilitate collaboration, to contribute to a common core that can help move forward a statewide or nationwide quest for educational adequacy, to help move toward a common core for purposes of collaboration, and to support overall effectiveness of our work (including an effective structure for use of limited technical assistance resources).  On this last point, our  ongoing development of useful materials supporting the elements of the EQBR argues for at least a common structure for key topics, built around the core questions, whatever differences emerge in the way different locales answer those questions.

Note

In the long version, each section first states one of the general rights contained in the one-page version and then provides a more detailed statement of that element.  These details are introduced by the phrase "In our school, this right includes the following elements:".   That method of introducing the specifics may be best used where the EQBR is adopted by a school. When operating at a district, state, or national level, the "In our school," portion of the phrase could be deleted, thereby introducing the more  specific language with "This right includes the following elements:".

**Educational Quality Bill of Rights – Single-Page Version**

A.   Every Child Has the Right to:

1.       A school that has a schoolwide commitment to a clear, specific set of challenging learning goals for all students, consistent with state and district academic standards for all children, and designed to prepare all children to use their minds well so as to be able to participate in activities characteristic of authentic adult achievement.

2.       An enriched and accelerated curriculum that is aligned with the school's learning goals.

3.       Effective instructional methods that enable all children to achieve the learning goals, provided by instructional staff who are highly qualified to enable all their students to achieve those goals, and who in turn regularly participate in ongoing, intensive professional development that improve their capacity to do so.

4.       The individual attention needed to fully achieve the learning goals, including effective methods for addressing the child's particular learning needs and timely and effective intervention whenever the child is experiencing difficulty in mastering any of the learning goals.

5.       Regular, ongoing, accurate assessment of the extent of the child's mastery of the learning goals, that: uses multiple methods for allowing students to fully demonstrate what they know and can do; is an integral part of the classroom instruction; is shared with the student, his/her parents, and appropriate school staff; and is used to improve the instruction and achievement of the child.

6.       Valid, reliable, and fair decisions concerning program placement, promotion, graduation and other actions that may affect the child's access to post-school options, including valid use of assessment information consistent with #5 and full and adequate opportunity to learning any skills and knowledge being assessed, consistent with #s 1-4.

7.       The resources and materials needed to fully avail himself/herself of #s 1-6, provided in a safe and healthy school learning environment conducive to achievement of the learning goals.

B.   Every family – each child and his/her parents (or persons acting as parent) – has a right to:

1.       Full participation as partners in school decision-making which affects the provision of high-quality education to the child under #A, including both school-wide planning and individual decision-making.

2.       The information, training, and assistance needed for full and informed participation under #B1, and for understanding relevant laws and policies, this bill of rights and how it is implemented in their school, processes for participation, the school's programs and practices, school outcome data, and their own child's achievement.

3.       Effective means of redress whenever any of the rights in A or B are not being fully implemented.

4.       Provision of all rights under A and B free from all discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, income, disability, limited English proficiency, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family status, or prior achievement.

**EDUCATIONAL QUALITY BILL OF RIGHTS – Long Version**

**I.     School Learning Goals and Standards**

(Responds to key question: "What should my child be learning?")

> *Every child has the right to a school that has a schoolwide commitment to a clear, specific set of challenging learning goals for all students, consistent with state and district academic standards for all children, and designed to prepare all children to use their minds well so as to be able to participate in activities characteristic of authentic adult achievement.*

In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.     The school has a vision of what all students should learn, that has been set out in a statement of learning goals or standards that are applicable to all students in the school.

B.     *Content* – the school's learning goals:

1.     Focus on authentic achievement -- The skills and knowledge are defined in ways that involve students' ability to (a) construct knowledge; (b) through disciplined inquiry, using the knowledge base and established tools of inquiry of the various academic disciplines; (c) in addressing real-world matters.

2.     Are challenging and rigorous – They call for a high level of those skills and knowledge, appropriate to children's age.

3.     Have enough breadth and depth – They include the full range of skills and knowledge the school community believes is central to being an educated and capable human being.

4.     Emphasize, within and across each subject area, both subject knowledge and the skills needed to apply and expand on that knowledge.

5.     Incorporate the state's content and achievement standards – In terms of both the content and the rigor of the school's learning goals, any student who is proficient in terms of the school's learning goals or standards can thereby also count on being proficient on the state standards.

6.     Are specific enough – They (a) have a distinct meaning, (b) are specific enough to be assessed, and (c) are specific enough to sustain a coherent program focus.

7.     Are flexible enough – They are flexible enough to allow and encourage (a) innovative teaching and (b) further development of the school's mission through debate, discussion, and experimentation within the framework.

8.     Are expressed in clear language – They are understandable by parents and the public in general.

9.     Are non-discriminatory -- They are not defined too narrowly in ways that

inadvertently discriminate (for example on the basis of disability) against alternate ways of developing and utilizing the underlying skills and knowledge.

C. *Adoption, dissemination, and use*

1. Overarching criterion: The school's learning goals for all students are understood and embraced by the entire school community, including the full range of: (a) teachers and other school staff, (b) students, and (c) parents.

2. Development

   a. The school's learning goals have been developed with the full involvement of:

      i. The teachers – fully involved in terms of:

         (I)   the range of teachers involved;
         (II)  their formal role in decision-making (sufficient numbers, critical mass and balance, representativeness, actual influence, etc.);
         (III) their role at each stage of the process (e.g., initial conceptualization and planning, first drafts, final revisions);
         (IV)  communication among themselves (e.g., between active representatives and other teachers); and
         (V)   information and training (e.g., about the process and about the state standards and standards from academic discipline groups);

      ii. The parents – fully involved in terms of:

         (I)   the range of parents involved;
         (II)  their formal role in decision-making (sufficient numbers, critical mass and balance, representativeness, actual influence, etc.);
         (III) their role at each stage of the process;
         (IV)  communication among themselves (e.g., between active representatives and other parents);
         (V)   information and training (e.g., about the process and about the state standards and standards from academic discipline groups); effective steps to include, inform, and assist parents with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities; and overall accessibility of the process (e.g. in terms if meeting times, places, etc.);

      iii. The students – the full range of students, in developmentally appropriate ways (for example in dialogues with staff and parents about the purpose of school, what they think they need to learn to become successful adults, how learning goals need to be described in order for students to understand them, etc.).

   b. The process involved sufficient research and deliberation, including:

      i. Informed review of challenging standards from elsewhere --

including academic discipline groups, selected other localities and states, and other bodies and experts.

ii. Consultation with relevant others within and beyond the community -- e.g., adults with notable achievements in their fields involving some academic skills (this criterion is related to the focus on authentic achievement).

iii. Thoughtful, extended discussion of overall goals – e.g., what all students should emerge from school knowing and being able to do, for broad notion of meaningful adult lives in a democracy.

3. Dissemination – The methods for sharing the learning goals with (i) administrators, (ii) teachers, (iii) students, (iv) parents, (v) the wider community – are effective in terms of:

a. Reaching all members of each of these groups;

b. Affirmative information and assistance for each in understanding:

i. The significance of the school learning goals and the state standards;
ii. Their specific content;
iii. How they should be used *and* how they should *not* be used;

c. Effective attention to overcoming barriers in understanding – for those who have limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or a disability;

d. Ongoing dissemination – e.g., to new staff, parents, and students, as well as annually for parents and students in terms of the learning goals /standards applicable to their current grade;

4. Understanding, commitment, and use – School-community-wide understanding and embracing of the school's learning goals, and the state standards, is evident across the range of school components and activities – for example:

a. Students, parents, and teachers can articulate or identify them, and they know whether the quality and content of student work is in accord with them;

b. Shared understanding of the learning goals/standards, and responsibility for helping all students reach them, is evident in the core of school activities – e.g., in (i) curriculum; (ii) teaching methods; (iii) student assignments, and the way student work is assessed and discussed; (iv) development of programs for students with particular learning needs (including the IEPs of students with disabilities and the programs for addressing needs of LEP students); (v) in-service staff development;

c. The community vision of the school's learning goals/standards is self-sustaining -- if one or more people heavily involved in the creation and implementation of the learning goals/standards leaves or is unavailable, the vision of standards still exists.

## II.     Curriculum

[Responds to the key question: "Is that (i.e., the things in the school learning goals) what the school is teaching?]

*Every child has the right to an enriched and accelerated curriculum that is aligned with the school's learning goals.*

In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.      The curriculum is well-aligned with the schools' learning goals (and state standards) for what all children should learn – not through mechanical, one-to-one correspondence between each goal/standard and a particular curriculum unit, but through rich opportunities to learn the full set of goals/standards in depth.

B.      The curriculum is focused on authentic achievement -- it is designed to engage students in learning tasks that call for creation of knowledge through disciplined inquiry to address real-world matters.

C.      In relation to A. and B., the curriculum:

1.      Is of sufficient breadth, depth, and rigor;

2.      Is enriched and designed to accelerate learning for those students who may be further from achieving the shared learning goals;

3.      Is well-sequenced -- in ways that do not assume that "basic" skills precede authentic learning;

4.      Is developmentally appropriate;

5.      Is culturally relevant and engaging to the students;

6.      Qualifies all students for the full range of post-secondary opportunities;

D.      Any curriculum specialization is consistent with the criteria above (A.-C.).

1.      Any academic grouping, including smaller learning communities within the school,  is consistent with A.-C. above – There are no tracks, programs, or curricula which are not fully aligned with and equally effective in meeting these criteria and enabling students to meet all the learning goals.

2.      Any vocational or career-related curricula:

a.      Meet the criteria in A.-C.;

b.      Integrate vocational and academic learning (and, more broadly, experiential and theoretical learning);

c.      Provide strong understanding and experience in all aspects of an industry (including planning, management, finance, principles of technology,

labor issues, community issues, health/safety/environmental issues, and technical skills) – not simply occupationally-specific training for a particular job.

3.  Curricula specifically designed for particular populations – including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency – are consistent with A-C and are effectively designed to overcome the barriers these students experience to achieving the shared goals.

4.  There is equal and effective access for all students to all curriculum specializations, including any advanced classes (in terms of student selection, pre-requisites and sequencing requirements, and effective access for special populations).

    a.  Admission criteria for any programs are limited to those that are demonstrated to be necessary for successful participation and that cannot be met while the student is participating in the program or with the provision of the individual assistance described in IV.A. (See also VI. on making decisions about student placement.)

        i.  For any criteria that are demonstrated to be necessary in those terms, including pre-requisites, the school:

            (I)  Ensures that there is equal and non-discriminatory access to the means of meeting those criteria; and

            (II)  Seeks to provide all students with the means to meet those criteria.

        ii.  The methods used to assess whether students meet those criteria are valid and reliable for that purpose, consistent with V.

    b.  When a program is not large enough to accommodate all interested students (who are qualified in terms of any necessary admission criteria as defined in a.), the school:

        i.  Selects from among those students who meet the minimum qualifications on a random basis or other basis designed to maximize equal chances for participation among all such students and the diversity of the students participating;

        ii.  Makes every effort to expand the program as quickly as possible to meet the needs and interests of all such students.

    c.  The school regularly examines all of its programs to identify and remove barriers resulting in unequal rates of participation or unequal rates of success in those programs for students by race or national origin, income, disability, limited English proficiency, gender, family status, or prior achievement.

        i.  These reviews are conducted with the full participation of representatives of members of the enumerated populations.

**III.     Instructional Quality**

(Responds to the key question: "Is the school teaching it *well*?")

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*Every child has the right to effective instructional methods that enable all children to achieve the learning goals, provided by instructional staff who are highly qualified to enable all their students to achieve those goals, and who in turn regularly participate in ongoing, intensive professional development that improve their capacity to do so.*

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In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.     *Instructional methods* are effective in terms of:

1.     Authenticity – engaging students in construction of knowledge through disciplined inquiry to address real-world matters;

2.     Differentiation  – to address the range of learning modes, interests, background skills and prior knowledge, in enabling all students to reach the shared learning goals/standards;

3.     Related dimensions of effectiveness, including:

a.     Building on prior knowledge;

b.     Establishing the right level of challenge;

c.     Making appropriate and effective use of practice and homework;

d.     Teaching students strategies for generating and investigating questions and hypotheses;

e.     Teaching students strategies for organizing, summarizing, and integrating new information;

f.     Cooperative learning strategies for enabling students to learn from each other;

g.     Classroom structure and management.

4.     Students' achievement in relation to the learning goals and standards (see V).

B.     *Instructional materials and resources* for all students are adequate and appropriate to achieving the shared learning goals, including:

1.     Texts and other instructional materials and supplies appropriate to the curriculum;

2.     Equipment (e.g., for science and mathematics, and for effective classroom practices), including assistive technology devices;

3. Design and condition of classrooms and other instructional spaces;

4. Computer, internet, and library access and adequacy.

C. *Instructional staff* are well qualified to provide effective instruction to enable the full range of students to achieve the shared learning goals, as demonstrated by both:

1. Credentials – e.g.,

    a. State certification;

    b. Completion of NCATE-accredited programs;

    c. Majors and concentrations;

    d. Performance on assessments;

    e. Meeting professional standards (NBPTS, etc.); and

2. Actual knowledge and skills:

    a. Substantive knowledge and skills – In-depth understanding of the field or discipline which they are teaching (including its content area; its methods of investigation, analysis, and discourse; its relationship to other fields and disciplines; and its practical implications for the lives of their students and their communities);

    b. Knowledge and skills regarding the instructional program -- Understanding and participating in the development and implementation of:

        i. High standards and school learning goals for what all children are expected to know and be able to do;

        ii. Curriculum and teaching methods which best enable students to meet those learning goals, including ways to:

            (I) Engage students in disciplined inquiry to construct knowledge that has value beyond school (authentic pedagogy);

            (II) Combine experiential, hands-on learning with theory, including, at the high-school level, active exploration of all aspects of a broad area of human endeavor (such as art, health care, or transportation);

        iii. Effective intervention and individual assistance when students are having difficulty mastering particular learning goals;

        iv. High-quality assessments of student mastery of those learning goals, including various means of teacher-generated, classroom-based assessment, such as student projects, student performances,

portfolios, as well as examinations and papers (see also V.A-C on student assessment);

v. Effective use of such assessments to improve teaching and learning (see V.E);

vi. Effective ways of working with families to improve the educational program of their children, including families with backgrounds which may be different from the teachers';

c. Knowledge and skills regarding diversity – Ability to work with students with diverse backgrounds and diverse learning needs in order to assist them in achieving at high levels, including:

i. Ways to treat that diversity as an asset both for the student's learning and for the school as a whole;

ii. Overcoming the barriers which various disabilities pose to mastery of the same, challenging skills and knowledge which all children are expected to master, including in the development and implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs) designed to overcome those barriers for each student with disabilities;

iii. Overcoming the language barriers faced by students with limited English proficiency in mastering and demonstrating the same, challenging skills and knowledge expected for all children;

iv. Methods for providing accelerated and enriched curriculum and instruction to enable students currently achieving at low levels to reach the same standards expected for all children;

d. Capacity for growth and improvement – Their capacity as professionals to continue to learn about new developments in their field or discipline and research findings about effective classroom practices and to apply those developments and findings to their classroom.

D. *Staff development and assistance* – The staff development activities are well designed to help teachers strengthen the capacities in C.2 above and more effectively enable all their students to achieve the shared learning goals, in terms of:

1. Methods and qualities –

a. Active, authentic learning methods are used for staff development activities -- e.g.

i. Staff development as program and curriculum development;
ii. Discourse about student work;
iii. Staff defining their own staff development needs – through assessment of their practice (in terms of effective, authentic pedagogy), identification of areas needed for development based on the assessment, and participation in identifying resources and

design of strategies in meeting those needs.

b.      The activities are well focused on the topic areas identified under "knowledge and skills" in staff qualifications, C.2 above.

c.      There is cross-training of "regular" and "special" personnel –

     i.      Training of "regular" teachers on providing effective instruction to students with particular needs in their classrooms;

     ii.      Training of "special" personnel on subject-matter depth and effective teaching methods (including authentic pedagogy).

2.      Scheduling and structure (sufficient time built into the school day and the and the year to afford teachers adequate opportunity for staff development) and its relationship to various types of staff development – including:

a.      Common planning time;
b.      Release time;
c.      Teacher learning networks;
d.      Staff development personnel (including master teachers);
e.      Co-teaching;
f.      Other learning opportunities for staff.

**IV.      Individual Attention**

(Responds to the key question: "What about my child's particular needs in learning it?")

> *Every child has the right to the individual attention needed to fully achieve the shared learning goals, including effective methods for addressing the child's particular learning needs and timely and effective intervention whenever the child is experiencing difficulty in mastering any of the learning goals.*

In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.      There are effective systems in place to help individual students who may experience difficulty in achieving the shared learning goals -- including:

1.      Informal, immediate, and effective interventions by teachers whenever any student is having difficulty mastering a particular learning goal/standard – including:

a.      Timely identification of the student and of the nature of the difficulty – with sufficient particularity to provide the basis for effective intervention;

b.      Effective training for teachers in how to identify and address such needs – e.g., immediately in the classroom or after class.

2.      Systems for providing more intensive, ongoing assistance to any student who has not been achieving the learning goals – including an effective process whereby the student's teacher(s), the student's parent(s), and the student together identify:

a.      What additional instructional assistance, supportive services, or program modifications the school will provide to better enable the student to achieve those goals;

b.      What the parent(s) can do to better help their child to achieve these;

c.      Additional resources within the community that may be able to assist the student.

3.      Systems for addressing learning needs of students with limited English proficiency – in relation to overcoming language barriers to their mastery of the learning goals for all students – including both:

a.      Effective programs to enable the student to become fully proficient in English; and

b.      Effective methods of communication while the student has limited English proficiency which ensure that:

i.      The school staff can understand the student;

ii.      The student can understand the instruction in all subject areas.

4.      Systems for addressing learning needs of students with disabilities – including

effective design of each component of such system around the goal of overcoming the barriers which such disabilities may pose to their mastery of the learning goals for all students, including the methods for:

a.  Identification and assessment – of students who need special education or specialized instruction and related (developmental, supportive or supplemental) services in order to master the shared learning goals, and of the specific nature of those needs;

b.  Development of individualized education programs – which adequately address the barriers their disabilities may pose to mastery of those shared learning goals, and which are not based on explicit or implicit lowered expectations of the student's ability to achieve those goals;

   i.  An exception is made for adopting different goals only in those few instances when a thorough, valid evaluation, conducted by personnel fully qualified to make such determinations for children with the particular disabilities involved, has conclusively determined that the child is not capable, even with the full provision of special education, related services, and accommodations, of fully achieving those learning goals, in which case the individualized education program shall be designed to enable the child to achieve those goals to the greatest extent possible;

c.  Placement in the least restrictive environment with age-appropriate peers without disabilities – including curricular mainstreaming, within the regular curriculum, so that the student with a disability  has effective access to the full curriculum of the school and to the full range of knowledge and skills in the shared learning goals, and so that students with disabilities are not placed in a low track of regular curriculum where the challenging learning goals are not as effectively or intensively taught;

d.  Resolution of disputes concerning identification, evaluation, programs, placement, and provision of services – made consistent with the standards above.

5.  Systems for addressing the needs of Perkins-identified "special populations" (individuals with disabilities, those from economically disadvantaged families, those preparing for fields where their gender is underrepresented, single parents and single pregnant women, displaced homemakers, and individuals with other barriers to educational achievement, including those with limited English proficiency):

a.  Ensuring equal access and protection against discrimination on the basis of special population status;

b.  Assistance in meeting or exceeding proficient levels of the learning goals for all students and in preparing for further education and for high-skill, high-wage careers;

c.  Annual review of programs and of performance of special populations,

and identification and adoption of strategies to overcome barriers resulting in lower rates of access in lower rates of success in the programs for members of special populations.

6.    All such systems for providing individual assistance to all of the students identified above are effective in terms of being:

    a.    Effectively designed, based on research about what works in enabling the students affected to achieve at high levels and overcome barriers to achieving the shared learning goals for all students;

    b.    Fully and effectively implemented, with sufficient resources to carry out the program design; and

    c.    Regularly and effectively evaluated, with redesign of those elements that are revealed to be less than fully effective.

        i.    These evaluations are conducted with the involvement of teachers, parents, students, and those with expertise in the design, implementation, and evaluation of such programs.

        ii.    These evaluations include both performance-based data that is drawn from multiple measures and is valid and reliable for the population of students whose outcomes are being reviewed and programmatic evaluation of the quality and implementation of program elements.

B.    There is full and equal access to all aspects of the school and its educational programs, and the school is free of all discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, income, disability, limited English proficiency, gender, family status, or prior achievement. (See II.D.4 for specific provisions on ensuring equal and affective access to all curriculum specializations.)

C.    The school provides individual attention to the needs of *every* child – so that each child is constantly challenged and supported to master authentic learning tasks of increasing depth and complexity – including those who have already met learning goals and standards.

D.    The school values and taps the culture and diversity of each of members as assets – both:

1.    In the teaching and learning of that individual – and which should be evident in:

    a.    curriculum – see II.;
    b.    instruction – including instructional methods, approaches to staff selection and qualifications, and staff development – see III.;
    c.    assessment – in assessment methods which enable each student to demonstrate fully what s/he knows and can do – see IV; and
    d.    individual assistance and attention – see A. and B. above;

2.    As an asset and learning opportunity for the school as a whole.

    a.    The school is careful to avoid practices which squander those assets – such as grouping practices which turn a diverse student body into a non-

diverse set of smaller units, sub-schools, or tracks.

E.    Time, and time-related resources (staffing), are available and deployed in a way that is sufficient to meet the needs of all students (as set out in this section) for individual attention  – including:

    1.    Teacher-student ratios sufficient for the needed individual attention within the classroom;

    2.    Adequacy of other staffing resources for meeting such needs within the school (counselors, specialized instructional staff, others);

    3.    Scheduling within the school day that takes into account the need to provide that individual attention.

F.    The school functions as a caring, inclusive, and effective learning community – that:

    1.    Addresses each individual's learning needs as above (A and B), and continually reflects on and evaluates whether those needs are being successfully addressed, in relation to the shared learning goals;

    2.    Respects and values each member of the school community as an individual -- his/her views and perspective, needs for both community and individual growth and privacy, contributions, and values –

        a.    In the quality and nature of interactions;

        b.    In protection of, and opportunities for active exercise of rights of free expression (belief, speech, press, petition, association, and freedom from retaliation);

        c.    In resolution of conflicts;

    3.    Establishes and effectively uses compatible systems of order, management, and creation of a safe and secure environment – including:

        a.    fair and nondiscriminatory disciplinary system;

        b.    freedom from harassment and abuse;

    4.    Provides high-quality counseling services:

        a.    For assisting students and families concerning (i) choices within the school, (ii) post-school educational and career opportunities, and (iii) other needs for counseling and advice;

        b.    That maintain the highest professional standards for quality and confidentiality;

    5.    Respects and attends to the range of human needs of individuals as inhabitants of the school  (related to, but extending beyond learning needs) – including:

        a.       Safe, healthful, and pleasant of physical facilities;

        b.       Access to the site and to all facilities within it (instructional, bathrooms, social and recreational);

        c.       Staff capacity to address students' physical and emotional needs that arise in the course of the school day (both regular staff and specialized health staff);

        d.       Facilities, programs, and supplies for various physical needs, including:

            i.       Food;
            ii.      Recreation;
            iii.     Bathrooms and sanitary facilities;

6.      Extra-curricular and interest-based learning activities that enrich or go beyond the areas taught in the regular curriculum.

      (The creation of a schoolwide learning community is further addressed in VII, from the vantage point of governance and partnership, and is also woven throughout the rest of the school vision.)

**V.      Assessment, and Its Uses for Improvement**

(Responds to the key question: "Is my child learning it?")

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*Every child has the right to regular, ongoing, accurate assessment of the extent of the child's mastery of the learning goals, that: uses multiple methods for allowing students to fully demonstrate what they know and can do; is an integral part of the classroom instruction; is shared with the student, his/her parents, and appropriate school staff; and is used to improve the instruction and achievement of the child.*

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In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.      *Classroom-based assessment.*  Authentic assessment of student performance is an integral part of the classroom instruction itself, rather than something that happens after instruction:

1.      The instructional process itself involves students in producing authentic work in which they (a) create knowledge through (b) disciplined inquiry to (c) address real-world matters – as a way of both developing, using, and demonstrating the knowledge and skills in the school's learning goals.  This includes day-to-day classroom work, significant within-class projects, and homework assignments.

2.      The student work – both while being produced and when completed –  is evaluated and discussed by both the teachers and the students themselves in terms of those authentic qualities, and improvements in the quality of the work flow from that experience and evaluation.

B.      *Overall standards for assessments* – applicable to both classroom-based assessments (above) and large-scale assessments (below):

1.      In developing and using assessments, the school first spells out for itself each of the inferences that will be drawn from the assessment and from its use for  a particular purpose, and then examines the evidence that supports each inference, as well as any evidence that may challenge that inference. (This is the general starting point for examining valid and reliable uses of assessments, and includes the points that follow, which are some of the most common inferences about an assessment that need to be examined.)

2.      The assessments are a valid and reliable measure of the extent to which students have mastered the skills and knowledge articulated in the school's learning goals and in the state's standards.

3.      Where a cut-off score or other method is used to determine whether a student is "proficient" or has reached any other discrete level in the assessment scheme (such as "advanced mastery"), the assessments provide a valid and reliable method of determining which students have and have not achieved that level.

4.      Multiple measures – The assessments provide a range of ways for students to demonstrate proficiency, so that inferences drawn about the students' levels of

proficiency are as valid and reliable as possible.

5. The assessments provide useful information concerning areas of strength and weakness, in terms of the expected skills and knowledge, in order to help guide instruction, individual attention, and school improvement.

6. The assessments are designed and used in ways that stimulate, rather than discourage, innovative ways of teaching and learning by teachers and students.

7. The assessment program itself is having any other positive effects on the school and on students and teachers that were intended, and is not having unintended negative consequences.

8. The use of the assessments is valid and reliable (under each of the standards in 1-7 above) for all identifiable populations – including students with limited English proficiency, students with disabilities, different racial/ethnic groups, different socioeconomic groups, and gender.

   a. There is separate examination, for each such population, of the evidence to support each of the inferences being made in using the assessments (in relation to 1-7 above).

   b. Students are provided with accommodations and adaptations in the assessment and assessment process that will ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment results by allowing them to best demonstrate their proficiency in the relevant skills and knowledge.

      i. Students with limited English proficiency are assessed in the language that will allow them to best demonstrate those skills and knowledge.

      ii. Students with disabilities are provided with any modification, accommodations, or adaptations that are needed to overcome the barriers that their disabilities may pose to demonstrating those skills and knowledge.

C. *Additional standards for large-scale assessment of students* – In addition to meeting the standards in B.:

1. All students are included in the assessment process -- including those with disabilities, those with limited English proficiency, and those who have not been promoted with their age cohort.

2. Assessment results can validly be reported by student subgroup (race, sex, disability, limited-English proficiency, poverty) in order to determine whether the school is being equally successful in enabling all students to attain the standards set for all students.

3. Any changes made in the assessments from one year to the next do not undermine the ability to make valid comparisons across years, if such comparisons are a key part of the assessment, improvement, and accountability system.

4.  To the greatest extent possible, the assessments are authentic (calling on students to construct knowledge through disciplined inquiry to address real-world matters) and performance based.

D.  *Sharing of assessment results*

1.  Parents, teachers, and students receive:

    a.  Full, accurate, and understandable information about the nature and purpose of all assessments in advance of their use;

    b.  Regular, timely, specific information about:

        i.  The degree to which their school is enabling children to reach the school's learning goals and state standards, including data about the proportion of all students who have demonstrated proficiency, which:

            (I)  Includes information on the numbers of students who did not participate in the assessment, including those who have dropped out or been left behind in a different grade;

            (II)  Is broken down into relevant student population groups;

        ii.  Specific information about the extent to which their own children are mastering those learning goals and standards:

            (I)  From both ongoing, classroom-based teacher assessments of the child and the child's participation in large-scale assessments;

            (II)  Broken down so they can understand specific accomplishments and specific standards or areas needing more attention;

        iii.  Comparative data regarding other schools in the district and state;

        iv.  Additional data and information about the school that is useful in understanding the assessment results or their implications for improving the school, including assessment of the school's components in relation to the elements of its local vision;

    c.  Assistance that is effective in enabling them to understand and act on the data.

2.  Teachers also receive effective assistance in designing, sharing the results of, and using their own, performance-based assessments for classroom use that:

    i.  Meet the criteria above; and

    ii.  Are part of the instructional process – that is, students learn through being asked, and assisted, to create meaningful work

products and performances that are assessed, and the assessment in turn is used by the students in improving their work.

E.    *Assessment results are used as intended –*

1.    By teachers, parents, and students to improve the learning of individual students – including concrete plans for providing the individual assistance needed for each student to master the shared learning goals for all students, consistent with III;

2.    By teachers and their supervisors to improve overall classroom instruction in relation to the shared learning goals for all students;

3.    By the entire school community to design and implement improvements in the educational program of the school.  The school revises the elements of the school.

a.    The school uses the results to determine where it is, in relationship to its goal of enabling all students to achieve the learning goals for all students.

i.    In determining the proportion of students who have demonstrated proficiency, the school takes into account all students who have not demonstrated proficiency, including those who have been retained in grade, dropped out, or otherwise not participated in the assessments.

b.    The school community also assesses how well its various components match the elements of this vision (in I. through VII.).

c.    The school community develops a plan for how it will close the gaps in b. (between its vision of the school and the current reality) in a manner  that will be sufficient to close the gap in a.( between the current levels of achievement and the goal of all students meeting the shared learning goals).

d.    The plan is revised until it all components of the school community are satisfied that the plan has the elements that will result in closing the gap for all students and enabling them to achieve the shared learning goals for all students.

**VI.     Important Decisions About Students**

(Responds to the key question: "How are important decisions made about my child?")

> *Every child has the right to valid, reliable, and fair decisions concerning program placement, promotion, graduation and other actions that may affect the child's access to post-school options (employment, college admissions, financial aid), including valid use of assessment information consistent with section V. and full and adequate opportunity to learning any skills and knowledge being assessed, consistent with sections I-IV.*

In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.     These standards and processes apply to all such decisions, whether based on tests or other formal assessments specifically adopted for purposes of making such decisions, teacher evaluation of student work (for example, through cumulative report-card grades, teacher-generated tests, and evaluation of student projects, portfolios, and performances), or other factors.

B.     Overall standard – Generally – The validity of *each* of the inferences being made from the information being used about the student and inferences about how the decisions will benefit and advance the educational interests of the student is demonstrated by carefully examining the evidence supporting the inference, and any evidence that does not support it.

C.     The criteria selected as the basis for making such decisions are a valid basis for making those decisions.

   1.     If such decisions are to be based on the presence or absence of certain skills and knowledge, the validity of the reasons for basing the decision on the presence or absence of those skills  – for example, the judgment that students without those skills and knowledge are not ready for/ will not succeed in the next grade (even with additional help), will not benefit from a selective program, will benefit more (in relation to mastery of the standards and learning goals) by placement in a particular program, or is / is not adequately prepared for what they will face after graduation – has been justified by a careful review of the evidence for those judgments.

D.     The methods for determining whether the student has met those valid criteria – including any assessment of the students' skills and knowledge – are valid and reliable for all students:

   1.     In terms of the elements of validity and reliability set out in V.B.:

      a.     The methods used provide valid and reliable measure of the identified skills and knowledge.  (V.B.2)

      b.     The cut-off scores or other decision-making methods validly determine which students meet the criteria and which do not (those who are/are not ready, will/will not succeed in a particular program, etc.).  (V.B.3)

        c.      Multiple measures provide a range of ways to demonstrate and assess the same knowledge and skills – relationship to validity and reliability. (V.B.4) – including authentic methods of demonstrating that knowledge and skills (V.A and V.C.4).

        d.      The measures provide a valid and reliable means of determining the presence or absence of the criteria (skills and knowledge) for all identifiable population groups, including with any accommodations needed to enable certain students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.  (V.B.8)

    2.      The methods of assessment are adequate in these terms after taking into account that:

        a.      The higher the stakes for individuals, the less the room for error and the higher the degree of validity and reliability that is required; and

        b.      At the same time, the standard measure of error for any assessment becomes much greater for the results of individuals than for aggregate results.

E.      All students are provided full and adequate opportunity to learn the skills and knowledge being assessed for those decisions – including promotion and graduation – which are premised on the assumption that the school has taught those knowledge and skills.

    1.      Such opportunity is defined in relation to the elements of quality – and their presence or absence for the particular students being judged – set out in this vision, including the criteria for determining whether:

        a.      The curriculum adequately addressed the requisite skills and knowledge (see II);

        b.      The instruction was adequate to enable students to master those skills and knowledge (see III);

        c.      The individual attention needed to do so, including assistance for students having difficulty, was provided (see IV);

        d.      Students, parents, and teachers have been receiving ongoing, valid assessment information about the student's knowledge and skills (see V).

    2.      As with other aspects of validity, the validity of the premise that the students have been provided adequate opportunity to learn is examined not only in terms of all students but in terms of each identifiable student population.

F.      The decision about each student advances that student's educational  interests.

    1.      Decisions designed to determine the most appropriate placement for a student result in placements which fully enable the students to meet the shared learning goals for all students.  (See II.D.4 on access to curriculum specializations and IV.A. on placement in programs to meet particular needs.)

2.     Decisions which deny a student promotion, graduation, or access to other levels of education or other benefits based upon a lack of requisite knowledge and skills advance that student's educational interests through:

     a.     Placement in a program which results in acquisition of that knowledge and skills;

     b.     Extra resources to meet the student's needs expeditiously in acquiring that knowledge and skills.

3.     The evidence that these benefits are actually occurring is carefully examined.

G.     The implementation of the assessment and decision-making scheme is carefully monitored to determine whether any expected positive consequences of the scheme itself are occurring, and whether unanticipated negative consequences are occurring.

1.     For example, if the decision to link assessments to graduation or promotion requirements was premised on expectations that teachers would focus more effectively on teaching the requisite knowledge and skills to the students most at risk of not graduating or being promoted, and that students would be more responsive to such teaching, is that what occurred?  Or have teachers lowered the quality of education for these students by teaching to the test rather than teaching the broader underlying skills and knowledge in the learning goals/standards and by devoting less attention to the students deemed to have the worst chance of passing; and have more students dropped out because of their perception that they will be unable to pass?

H.     Authenticity – and relationship to authentic instruction and to validity, above.

**VII.     Governance, Involvement, Partnership**  -- Defining the "We"

[Responds to the key question: "What is my role in making all this happen (and in getting an effective response when it is not)?"]

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*Every family – each child and his/her parents – has a right to:*

*1.     Full participation as partners in school decision-making which affects the provision of high-quality education to the child under Sections I-V, including both school-wide planning and individual decision-making.*

*2.     The information, training, and assistance needed for full and informed participation under #1, and for understanding relevant laws and policies, this bill of rights and how it is implemented in their school, processes for participation, the school's programs and practices, school outcome data, and their own child's achievement.*

*3.     Effective means of redress whenever any of the rights in this Bill of Rights are not being fully implemented.*

*4.     Provision of all rights under this Bill of Rights free from all discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, income, disability, limited English proficiency, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family status, or prior achievement.*

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In our school, this right includes the following elements:

A.     The school functions as an effective schoolwide learning community, in terms of:

1.     Goals – The entire school community shares and acts upon common learning goals for all children -- see I.A.

2.     School structure – It organizes all elements of the school around the achievement of those learning goals.

a.     [Content of the elements (including the kind of authentic instruction necessary to achieve the learning goals do so and the other actions necessary to support that instruction) -- see II.-VI.]

b.     [Organizational structure of the school for achieving results -- see VII.B.]

3.     Resources -- The school marshals and organizes all needed and available resources around those learning goals (1.) and the program elements necessary to achieve them (2.), including:

a.     Resources from the State and district (including allocation of federal funds);

        b.        School-based budgeting of resources received -- in relation to elements above;

        c.        School-initiated development of additional resources:

                i.        School-initiated efforts to secure other funds;

                ii.        School development and deployment of non-monetary and in-kind resources within the community.

    4.        Development and implementation of school plan – It develops and implements a plan that describes in detail how each of the specific elements of educational quality in this Bill of Rights (in Sections I-VI) will be implemented, including how the resources (under paragraph 3) will be used for those purposes. (How this plan is developed is described under B. and D.2.a. below.)

    5.        Continuous improvement -- It is engaged in ongoing and effective dialogue, reflection, evaluation, and improvement of practice toward achievement of the learning goals and of the plan in paragraph 4.

B.    Shared decision-making structures create real partnership among all members of the school community – teachers, administrators, other staff, parents, students (and other community members) – in terms of:

    1.        Composition – including:

        a.        Balance – sufficient numbers to provide a critical mass;

        b.        Selection of representatives –

                i.        By their constituency;
                ii.        Of their constituency, in terms of representing the range;

        c.        Real opportunities for all members of the school community, not just selected representatives, to play significant roles;

    2.        Scope of authority – in design, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of the educational program;

    3.        Processes for appealing decisions.

C.    All members of the community have effective access to the information, training, and assistance needed to be active members of the learning community and participate in decision-making structures. This includes:

    1.        Effective dissemination of written information – including laws; state, local, and school policies; information on school programs and practices; research information on good practice; school data (and comparative data from other schools and districts); individual child information and data; processes for participating in, and appealing, decisions;

2. Training – in how to understand and use such information and how to participate effectively;

3. Access to the school, staff, and classrooms;

4. Other assistance in understanding and participating;

5. Effective steps to ensure that the information and opportunities for participation are accessible to and understood by those with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities;

6. Ongoing communication – across and within peer groups (including communication between representatives and their constituency);

7. Effective use of external support organizations.

D. Parent involvement is defined through a parent involvement policy that:

1. Is jointly developed with and agreed upon by the parents of the school;

2. Spells out:

   a. The details of *how* the school will involve the parents of the school, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs, consistent with the shared decision-making structures in B., including the details of:

      i. *How* the educational plan(s) for the school in A.4 (which spells out *how* the school will provide each of the elements of high-quality education in I.-VI.) will be jointly developed with the parents of the school;

      ii. *How* the parents will be involved in the planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy.

   b. The details of *how* parents will be involved in decisions concerning their own children' education, including decisions under section VI.

   c. The details for *how* the information, training, and other assistance needed for effective participation (in C.) will take place;

   d. Other opportunities for parents to be involved in the education of their children and the improvement of the school, including what the school will do, what the parents can do, and how they will communicate for purposes of enabling their children to achieve the shared learning goals for all students;

3. Is effectively disseminated to and understood by all school staff and parents, including parents with limited literacy, limited English proficiency, or disabilities.

E. Secondary school student involvement is defined through a student involvement policy in a manner similar to that for parents under D.

F.    Problems in the implementation of this Bill of Rights and related policies are identified and remedied fully and in a timely manner.

1.    As part of its continuous improvement process (see A.5), there are effective, ongoing, participatory methods for determining the extent of implementation and addressing any problems.

2.    Students, parents, educators, and other members of the school community have full access to timely and effective procedures for raising and fully remedying any lack of implementation of any of the policies, including full information and assistance needed to understand and effectively use the procedures, free from any reprisals for doing so.

3.    The provisions for identifying and resolving implementation problems shall be jointly developed with parents and (in a secondary school) students through the processes established in D and E.

G.    All elements of the right to high-quality education, as set forth under this Bill of Rights, are provided free from any discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, income, disability, limited English proficiency, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family status, or prior achievement.

1.    The participatory processes described in F. for identifying and remedying problems in implementation of this Bill of Rights and related policies are used to ensure this non-discrimination.

2.    Through those participatory processes, any policy or practice that creates disparities on the basis of the categories in G. is identified on a regular basis; the specific rationale for it, and the facts supporting or countering that rationale are carefully gathered and subjected to careful and critical analysis; and if the necessity for the policy or practice in its particular form is not demonstrated, the policy or practice is changed. [(See also specific application of this kind of deliberative approach in II.D.4.c (admissions criteria for certain curricula and programs); IV.A.5.c (addressing barriers resulting in  lower rates of access and success for Perkins-related special populations); and VI (overall criteria and processes for making important decisions about individual students).]