

DRAFT OUSD Measure N Implementation Participatory Action Research Evaluation Methodology Design

Outline:

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PURPOSE

The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) High School Linked Learning Office (HSLLO) is proposing this evaluation study of the district's College and Career Readiness For All Initiative, funded for ten years (2015-2025) through a local property tax approved by Oakland voters as Measure N. This evaluation will constitute a study to deepen the understanding, and thus the quality, of the design, implementation, outcomes, and impact of the College and Career Readiness For All Initiative. We intend to engage in both formative and summative evaluations, using a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative analyses.

The general purpose of the evaluation is to provide information, findings and analyses, and recommendations for supporting sustained school and student level academic improvement and acceleration through the implementation of linked learning college and career pathways. Using both formative and summative assessments of progress and outcomes will help us to facilitate an ongoing results-based inquiry process for the district, the results of which will be presented to OUSD administrative leadership as well as to the OUSD Board of Education, the Measure N Citizens' Commission, and other stakeholders, through periodic reflection and review convenings and reports. The study will also provide a comprehensive structure, process, and protocols for OUSD and key stakeholders to continue to conduct longitudinal research on, learning from, and improvement of the college and career pathway initiative.

Fundamentally, the purpose of the evaluation is to facilitate a highly participatory, ongoing, results-based inquiry process involving the Commission and OUSD district leadership, school site leaders, pathway leaders, teachers, students, and community partners, thus investing in long term capacity for ongoing reflection, learning, growth, and improvement of all stakeholders.

The evaluation study will address the following research areas:

1. School and pathway functioning, quality, and improvement
2. Student and school-level academic performance
3. Academic rigor (student work)
4. Quality of teaching and instruction (teacher practice)
5. Quality of school leadership and systems supporting implementation
6. Family and community engagement and satisfaction
7. Aligned district systems that directly support school and pathway design, functioning, quality, and improvement (implementation), and support student and school academic performance (outcomes and impact).

The stated Purpose of The College and Career Readiness for All - Measure N - fund:

The Oakland College & Career Readiness for All Fund is established to pay for the implementation of a comprehensive approach to high school education in Oakland that integrates challenging academics with career-based learning and real-world work experiences. This comprehensive approach creates small learning communities of career-oriented pathways, and offers intensive, individualized support to create the conditions for all students to graduate high school prepared to succeed in college and career.

The Measure N Goals:

- Decrease the high school dropout rate
- Increase the high school graduation rate
- Increase high school students' readiness to succeed in college and career
- Increase middle school students' successful transition to high school
- Reduce disparities in student achievement and student access to career pathways based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English Learner status, special needs and residency

The full text of Measure N can be found [here](#).

Context: OUSD Pathway to Excellence Strategic Plan

In addition to the Measure N Goals, the OUSD Pathway to Excellence states these goals:

- Provide every student with access to a high-quality school
- Ensure each student is prepared for college, career and community success
- Staff every school with talented individuals committed to working in service of children
- Create a school district that holds itself and its partners accountable for superior outcomes
- Guarantees rigorous instruction in every classroom, every day

Audiences and Stakeholders

The immediate audiences and major stakeholders for this evaluation include:

- The Measure N Citizens' Commission;
- The OUSD Superintendent and executive leadership team;

- The Board of Education;
- The High School Linked Learning Office;
- OUSD schools, teachers & staff, students, and families;
- Community-based partners; and,
- Oakland residents and taxpayers.

GENERAL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Conceptual Framework (based on revised [Pathway Development Logic Model](#))

Research Questions

Methods

1. Samples
2. Instrumentation
3. Analysis
4. Report writing

Overarching Conceptual Framework. Our design is guided by a participatory, capacity building, and empowering approach. Three different terms¹ capture the essence of our design:

¹ One possible definition of Action Research appropriate for our proposal is: "...an ongoing inquiry by people into their own work, through questioning, conscious actions, observation and reflection on those actions, data collection, analysis, and new questioning, designed specifically to improve that work toward some increased correspondence with the intended purpose of that work" (Watkins, 1995).

Other useful framing from the additional below cited sources includes these three terms:

- 1) From Piggot-Irvine, Rowe, & Ferkins (2015: 548): "[**Action Research**] is a collaborative transformative approach with joint focus on rigorous data collection, knowledge generation, reflection and distinctive action/change elements that pursue practical solutions. Put another way, we defined AR as having core elements of systemic research in a collaborative inquiry process that is associated with evidence-based decision-making both before and after change. We noted that [**Participatory AR**], with its stronger community change orientation, would still fall within this AR definition given its equal emphasis on co-learning, emancipation, participation and organizational transformation (Greenwood, Whyte, and Harkavy 1993)."
- 2) Various sources, summarized in [Wikipedia: Participatory action research \(PAR\)](#) is an approach to research in communities that emphasizes participation and action. It seeks to understand the world by trying to change it, collaboratively and following reflection. PAR emphasizes collective inquiry and experimentation grounded in experience and social history. Within a PAR process, "communities of inquiry and action evolve and address questions and issues that are significant for those who participate as co-researchers".^[1] PAR contrasts with many research methods, which emphasize disinterested researchers and [reproducibility](#) of findings. PAR practitioners make a concerted effort to integrate three basic aspects of their work: participation (life in society and democracy), action (engagement with experience and history), and research (soundness in thought and the growth of knowledge).^[2] "Action unites, organically, with research" and collective processes of self-investigation.^[3] The way each component is actually understood and the relative emphasis it receives varies nonetheless from one PAR theory and practice to another. This means that PAR is not a monolithic body of ideas and methods but rather a pluralistic orientation to knowledge making and social change.^{[4][5][6]}
- 3) Various sources, summarized in [Wikipedia: Empowerment evaluation \(EE\)](#) is an [evaluation](#) approach designed to help communities monitor and evaluate their own performance. It is used in comprehensive community initiatives as well as small-scale settings and is designed to help groups accomplish their goals. According to David Fetterman, "Empowerment evaluation is the use of evaluation concepts, techniques, and findings to foster improvement and [self-determination](#)".^[1] An expanded definition is: "**Empowerment evaluation is an evaluation approach that aims to increase the likelihood that programs will achieve results by increasing the capacity of program [stakeholders](#) to plan, implement, and evaluate their own programs.**"^[2]

Rationale for a PAR/EE approach:

In their article, Conceptualizing indicator domains for evaluating action research, Piggot-Irvine, Rowe, & Ferkins (2015: 545) state, "Action research (AR) has become recognized as a valuable form of research and a model/program for change across multiple domains... (Adelman 1993; Elliott 2005; Kemmis and McTaggart 1988)."

They go on to quote Kemmis (2015: 545):

Action Research combines inquiry and action. **Participatory Methods** emphasize collective inquiry and community change, enlarging the realm and focus of actions. **Empowerment Evaluation** adds an explicit focus on increasing the capacity of stakeholders within organizations to improve their own practice.

Working from these perspectives, we would value the potential “catalytic validity” (Lather, 1986) of participatory action research to transform those engaging in it, investing in long term capacity for ongoing reflection, learning, growth, and improvement. Because of that, we can nest the evaluation design in work already in process with many of our pathway teams and school sites; the nature of the work that we want teams to be doing together as communities of practice already has an inquiry lens and process to it, to a certain degree (e.g., the instructional design and revision cycle, the pathway cycle of continuous improvement, the school site CIG cycles of inquiry, etc.). Coaches, who are already supporting our sites to do this work, become action research facilitators, similar to what is already underway at Castlemont. In the Linked Learning High School Office, we have also begun steps to reframe our collective work as inquiry, so there is some prepared ground there as well.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BASED ON LOGIC MODEL

1) [Logic Model](#):

We are building out both the conceptual framework and timeline for this design from a Logic Model (program theory of action model). It will be used to guide the focus (and loci) and rigor or logic/ theory of action concerning the overall design. The Logic Model focuses choices concerning appropriate assessment methods and protocols for each level of action research:

a) Design Evaluation

- i) Initiative Inputs (e.g., Linked Learning Pathway Design Criteria, Measure N Purpose and Goals, other Community Partners’ contributions; students; Pathway teams; site leadership; Measure N funds; other resources from other grant sources; external partner organization contributions)

b) Implementation Evaluation

- i) Initiative Activities, including (see [this diagram](#) of nested cycles of inquiry):
 - (1) the work of the Pathway teacher team (cycle of instructional design & revision),
 - (2) the development & quality of the Pathway itself (Pathway continuous improvement cycle),
 - (3) the work of content area PLC’s,
 - (4) the work of the site leadership team(s) ([Principal Cycles of Inquiry Template](#) process, SPSA, school level cycle of inquiry),
 - (5) the work of the LLHSO and Teaching & Learning (cycles of inquiry focus on how we are supporting the site and Pathway implementation), and,

“In my view, the principal justification for action research is that it makes a direct contribution to transformative action and to *changing history*’ (Kemmis 2010: 425; original emphasis).”

- (6) the overall district systems' capacity and alignment/coherence in support of implementation.²
- ii) Initiative Outputs
 - (1) Structural changes in pathways and school sites
 - (2) Changes in the experience of major stakeholders
 - (a) students
 - (b) teachers
 - (c) site leadership (principals, pathway leads, ILT, etc., and site personnel, e.g., counselors, etc.)
 - (d) district personnel
 - (e) industry & community partners
- c) Outcomes Evaluation, per Measure N Purpose and Goals
 - i) Decrease the high school dropout rate
 - ii) Increase the high school graduation rate
 - iii) Increase high school students' readiness to succeed in college and career (per OUSD Graduate Profile)
 - iv) Increase middle school students' successful transition to high school
 - v) Reduce disparities in student achievement and student access to career pathways based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English Learner status, special needs and residency
- d) Additional Interim Indicators (from the logic model)
 - i) Increase College Acceptance & Persistence
 - ii) Increase Career- Relevant Certificates
 - iii) Increase Pathway Persistence
 - iv) Increase A-G Completion Rate
 - v) Increase A-G On Track
 - vi) Decrease Disciplinary Actions
 - vii) Increase Attendance
- e) Impacts Evaluation, per Measure N Purpose and Goals
 - i) "College, Career, & Community Success"

RESEARCH QUESTIONS DERIVED FROM LOGIC MODEL

1. Design - Inputs
***What Pathway Designs are emerging from Measure N Planning?
 How well do those Designs align with key Linked Learning Initiative Design Elements (Essential Elements, initiative parameters)?***
2. Implementation
In general, how well are sites/pathways implementing their designs? How well are various district offices supporting that implementation?
 - a. Activities:
 - i. Design Team forms & meets (Col): ***What is the nature of the site Design Team? What work has it done? In what form(s) does that work continue to oversee Measure N implementation at the site?***
 - ii) The work of the Pathway teacher team community of practice, (cycle of instructional design & revision): ***What is the nature of the pathway***

² See this [coherence framework](#) derived from the work of Fullan, Elmore, Mehta, & Wenger.

community of practice? What is its schedule of meetings? What kinds of work does it focus on? What changes in teacher practice and student performance?

- iii) The development & quality of the Pathway itself (Pathway continuous improvement cycle): **What is the baseline assessment of the pathway? What changes are being planned? What is the ongoing work? How well does the plan implementation address key assessment rubrics?**
- iv) The work of content area PLC's: **What is the current status of the content area PLC's? What is the focus of their work? How does that work support pathway/content area quality of the instructional core?**
- v) The work of the site leadership team(s) ([Principal Cycles of Inquiry Template](#) process, SPSA, school level cycle of inquiry): **What site based inquiry have leaders undertaken in the implementation of Measure N/ Pathway Development? What process are they using? How is implementation going? What collective inquiry at the site and in Principal CoP is occurring? How well are plans being implemented?**
- vi) Coaches, CCRS's, WBLL's, etc: **What role are these people playing in implementation? How well is their work going? How are they perceived by site personnel?**
- vii) Professional Learning Op's for Pathway Leads & Teams: **What professional learning is being offered in support of implementation? How well is it meeting the needs of implementing teams & leads?**
- viii) Professional Learning for Principals: **What professional learning is being offered in support of implementation? How well is it meeting the needs of implementing Principals & Admin teams?**
- ix) The work of the HSLLO and Teaching & Learning (cycles of inquiry focus on how we are supporting the site and Pathway implementation): **What support is the HSLLO providing for implementation? How well is it meeting the needs of implementers? What kinds of inquiry is the HSLLO engaging in? How is it supporting their action, reflection, & learning?**
- x) New Options & pathway recruitment process (incl. better branding & messaging): **How is the Options process being redesigned to increase equity and access to quality pathways for ALL Oakland students and families? How well is that working?**
- xi) The overall district systems' capacity and alignment in support of implementation: **In what ways are overall district systems being redesigned to develop the capacity to support coherence in implementation? How well is that working?**

b. Structural Changes:

i. Master Schedule Supports:

How are the following structural supports being put in place across the district? What impediments are there? How are those being addressed? What effect are these structures having on pathway development?

1. Pathway cohort scheduling, students
2. Pathway cohort scheduling, teachers (collaboration time)

3. WBL continuum of experiences, including internships
 4. Dual enrollment op's.
 5. Integrated project-based curriculum x-content areas in pathways
 6. Common formative assessments & rubrics
- ii. Graduate Capstone – performance based common culminating assessments; backward mapped performance based assessment system, 9-12: ***How is this work developing? How is it influencing pathway development & pathway communities of practice? How is it influencing content area PLC's?***
 - iii. Pathway Student Learning Outcomes, Program of Study, CTE courses, & Dual Enrollment Options, aligned to support Industry- sector theme: ***How is this work developing? How is it influencing pathway development & pathway communities of practice? How is it influencing content area PLC's?***
 - iv. Equitable Options & Pathway recruitment system: ***How is the Options process being redesigned to increase equity and access to quality pathways for ALL Oakland students and families? How well is that working? How are sites designing & implementing equitable pathway outreach, recruitment, & assignment policies & practices? What are the impediments & how are they being addressed?***
- c. Outputs:
- i. Changes in the experience of major stakeholders
 1. Students' Experience: ***What positive changes are occurring in the experience of students in the following areas? What challenges to enacting these changes?***
 - a. Personalization
 - b. Engagement
 - c. Real world meaningful learning
 - d. High expectations/ challenging common core aligned curriculum
 - e. Equitable pathway demographics (access, persistence)
 - f. SEL & RJ integrated into all experiences
 - g. Collaboration
 - h. Work based learning experiences (community partnerships) tied to academic learning
 2. Adult Experience (sites): ***What positive changes are occurring in the experience of adults in the following areas? What challenges to enacting these changes?***
 - a. Teachers & Site leadership (principals, pathway leads, ILT, etc., and site personnel, e.g., counselors, etc.):
 - b. Pathway Community of Practice engages in Pathway Continuous Improvement Cycle (long cycle) & Instructional Design & Revision Cycle (short cycle) (data-based inquiry & professional learning)
 - c. Teachers experience various initiatives as integrated into pathway work (CCSS, NGSS, TGDS, CTE)

- d. Focus on quality & performance in instructional core integrates initiatives
 - 3. District personnel: ***What positive changes are occurring in the experience of adults in the district offices? What challenges to enacting these changes?***
 - 4. Industry & community partners: ***What positive changes are occurring in the experience of adults who are industry & community partners? What challenges to enacting these changes?***
3. Outcomes, per Measure N Purpose and Goals:
 General Research Questions for each data point below:
What are current data and trends across all OUSD High Schools? (disaggregated by school, pathway, LCAP special populations, etc.)
What are annual data and emerging trends?
- a. Decrease the high school dropout rate
 - b. Increase the high school graduation rate
 - c. Increase high school students' readiness to succeed in college and career (per OUSD Graduate Profile; per A-G completion rate & GPA)
 - d. Increase middle school students' successful transition to high school (per OUSD Indicators of High School Readiness)
 - e. Reduce disparities in student achievement and student access to career pathways based on race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English Learner status, special needs and residency (disaggregated data by LCAP Special Populations per OUSD student achievement measures, e.g., SBAC, SRI, etc; demographic data disaggregated by school and pathway, LCAP Special Populations)
4. Additional Interim Indicators (from the logic model):
 General Research Questions for each data point below:
What are current data and trends (annually during the ten years of the initiative) across all OUSD High Schools? (disaggregated by school, pathway, LCAP special populations, etc.)
What are annual data and emerging trends?
- a. Increase College Acceptance & Persistence
 - b. Increase Career- Relevant Certificates
 - c. Increase Pathway Persistence (trends over time)
 - d. Increase A-G Completion Rate
 - e. Increase A-G On Track
 - f. Decrease Disciplinary Actions
 - g. Increase Attendance
5. Impacts
What are current data and trends (annually during the ten years of the initiative) across all OUSD High Schools (disaggregated by school, pathway, LCAP special populations, etc.) for All Students being "College, Career, & Community Successful?"

METHODS DERIVED FROM RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Methods are aligned with Research Questions in the Logic Model.

1. Samples:
 - a. Students:
 - i. All for quantitative data
 - ii. All for survey data
 - iii. Strategic Sampling for focus groups, interviews, & observations
 - b. Teachers:
 - i. All for quantitative data
 - ii. All for survey data
 - iii. Strategic Sampling for focus groups, interviews, & observations
 - c. Principals:
 - i. All for survey data
 - ii. Strategic Sampling for focus groups, interviews, & observations
 - d. District Personnel:
 - i. All for survey data
 - ii. Strategic Sampling for focus groups, interviews, & observations
2. Instrumentation:
 - a. Students:
 - i. Action Research Projects (partnership in the PARE through ACC, Civic Engagement, & Graduate Capstone projects)
 - ii. Quantitative Data on Interim Indicators, Outcomes & Impacts (RAD provides real time data on all students disaggregated by any category of concern)
 - iii. Survey Data (a variety of existing and new surveys)
 - iv. Focus Groups
 - v. Interviews
 - vi. Observations
 - vii. Document analysis (student work samples)
 - b. Teachers:
 - i. Action Research Projects (as a normal part of their practice, facilitated by Pathway Coaches)
 - ii. Survey Data (a variety of existing and new surveys)
 - iii. Focus Groups
 - iv. Interviews
 - v. Observations
 - vi. Document analysis (CoP & PLC work samples)
 - c. Principals:
 - i. Action Research Projects (as a normal part of their practice, facilitated by Network Partners; Principal CoP)
 - ii. Survey Data (a variety of existing and new surveys)
 - iii. Focus Groups
 - iv. Interviews

- v. Observations
- vi. Document analysis (CoP work samples; site plans; Cycle of Inquiry Template)
- d. District Personnel (including HSLLO):
 - i. Action Research Projects (as a normal part of their practice, facilitated by ARE Team/ HSLLO Directors)
 - ii. Survey Data (a variety of existing and new surveys)
 - iii. Focus Groups
 - iv. Interviews
 - v. Observations
 - vi. Document analysis (HSLLO work samples; work plans; Cycle of Inquiry documentation)
- 3. (Mechanisms of PAR/EE) -TBD, but see Flowchart for basic structure & Nested Cycles of Inquiry for basic process, below.
- 4. Analysis - TBD -
- 5. Report writing - TBD

TIMELINE ([Gantt Chart](#); [Draft Timeline](#))

(also see [Roles & Scope of Work for Key Players](#))

[Flowchart of Action Research Processes](#) (diagram)

[Nested Cycles of Inquiry](#) (diagram)