

# Developing Effective and Appropriate Student Assessment Systems: Observations from the Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting in Ontario, Canada

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***Assessment –  
To sit beside***

***Evaluation –  
To find the value of***





# Scottish Assessment Summit 11th September 2019



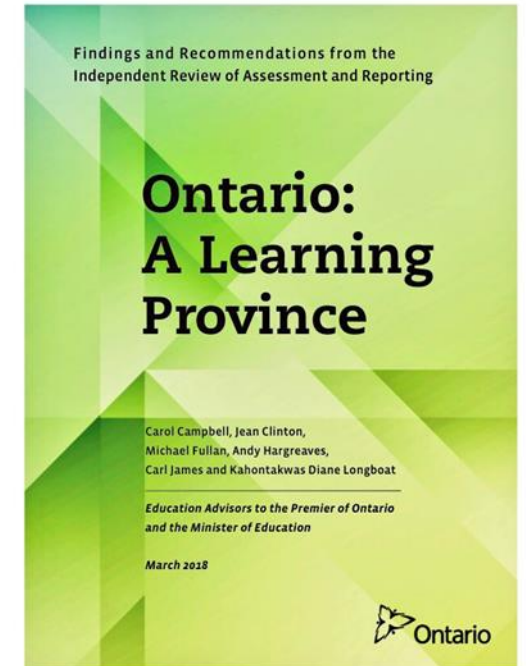
## Teaching and Learning Toolkit

An accessible summary of the international evidence on teaching 5-16 year-olds

Filter Toolkit	Toolkit Strand ^	Cost ▾	Evidence Strength ^	Impact (months)
<p>Filter results by keywords</p> <hr/> <p>£ </p> <p>Cost</p> <p></p> <p>Evidence</p>	<h3>Feedback</h3> <p>High impact for very low cost, based on moderate evidence.</p>			
	<h3>Metacognition and self-regulation</h3> <p>High impact for very low cost, based on extensive evidence.</p>			

# Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting

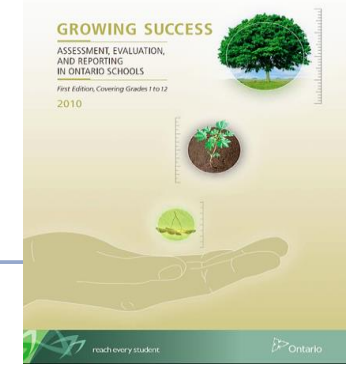
- An evidence-informed review of the current model of the current model of assessment and reporting practices at the student, classroom, school, board and provincial levels and its impact on learning, achievement and well-being. This should include consideration of Indigenous educational assessments at the classroom, school, board and system levels where language, culture and land-based learning are part of well-being.
- A theory of action to support the best roles and uses of assessment and reporting at each level to inform various objectives including student learning.
- Evidence-informed and implementable recommendations for change based on the above.





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### Figure A: *Growing Success* (2010) Fundamental Principles

#### The Seven Fundamental Principles

To ensure that assessment, evaluation, and reporting are valid and reliable, and that they lead to the improvement of learning for all students, teachers use practices and procedures that:

- are fair, transparent, and equitable for all students;
- support all students, including those with special education needs, those who are learning the language of instruction (English or French), and those who are First Nation, Métis, or Inuit;
- are carefully planned to relate to the curriculum expectations and learning goals and, as much as possible, to the interests, learning styles and preferences, needs, and experiences of all students;
- are communicated clearly to students and parents at the beginning of the school year or course and at other appropriate points throughout the school year or course;
- are ongoing, varied in nature, and administered over a period of time to provide multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate the full range of their learning;
- provide ongoing descriptive feedback that is clear, specific, meaningful, and timely to support improved learning and achievement;
- develop students' self-assessment skills to enable them to assess their own learning, set specific goals, and plan next steps for their learning.

## Figure E: Nature of Classroom Assessments

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**Diagnostic assessment:** occurs before instruction begins so teachers can determine students' readiness to learn new knowledge and skills, as well as obtain information about their interests, learning preferences and special needs (e.g. formal and informal observations, use of diagnostic testing instruments, discussions, questions, homework, projects, performances, etc.).

**Formative assessment:** occurs frequently and in an ongoing manner during instruction, while students are still gaining knowledge and practising skills. And can occur also with support, modelling and guidance from the teachers (e.g. quizzes, essays, questions, group tasks, digital portfolios, conversations, journals, performances, etc.).

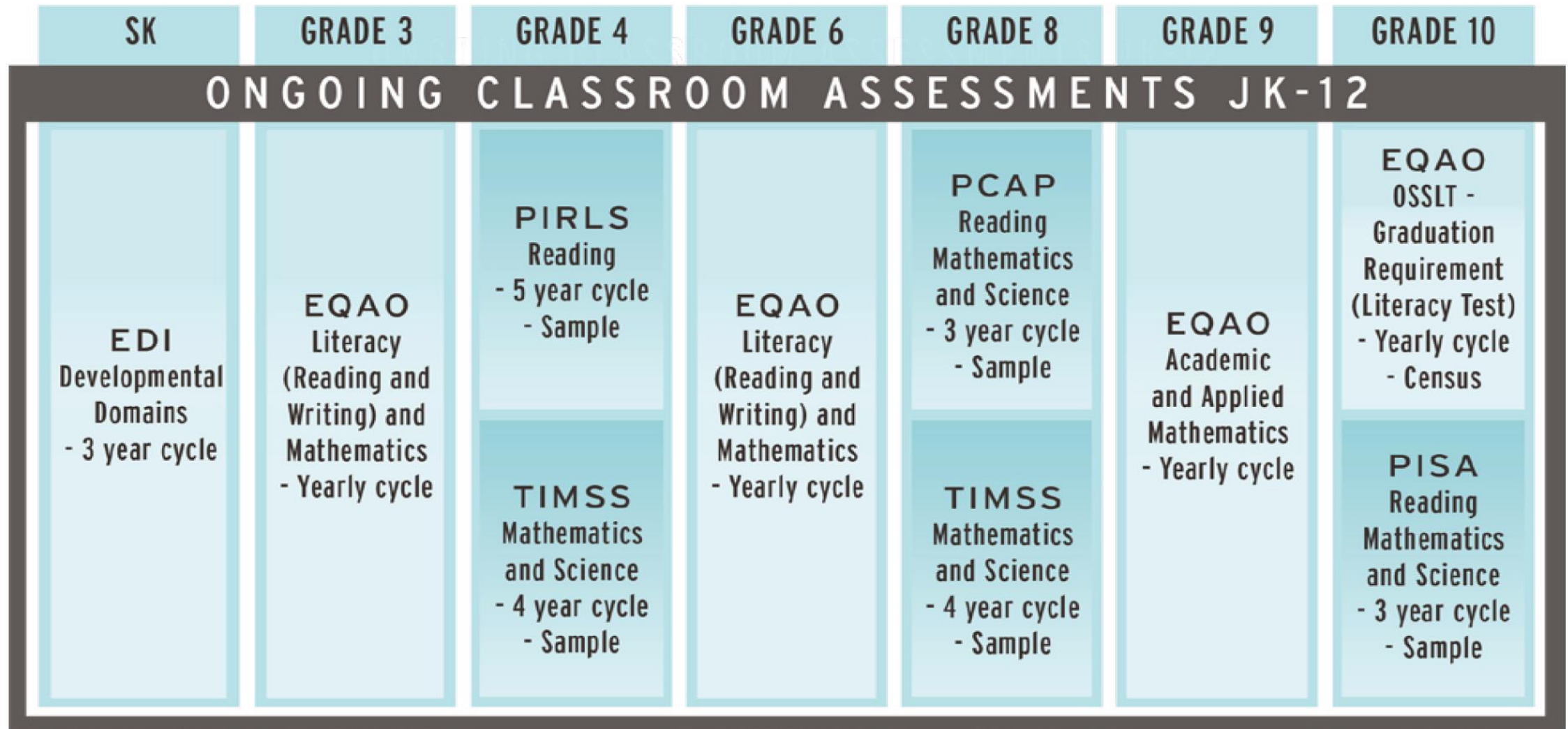
**Summative assessment:** occurs at or near the end of a period of learning, and may be used to inform further instruction and for evaluation and reporting purposes (e.g. tests/exams, assignments, essays, portfolios, projects, student-created films, etc.).



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**Figure B: Current Student Assessment Practices in Ontario**



# Independent Review of Assessment and Reporting

**VISION:** that students' experiences –their needs, learning, progress and well-being – are at the centre of decisions about future assessment design and use.

**GOAL:** to ensure further development of, and improve approaches to, assessment which support all children and young people to learn and develop to their fullest potential from early childhood through to high school graduation and post-secondary destinations.



To guide our review, we established six key purposes for the appropriate design and use of future assessments (see Figure C). We prioritized also the importance of:

- equity, including cultural relevancy, and well-being which should be more intentionally woven into assessment models at all levels;
- the need for assessments that better reflect societal changes, including the importance of technology and transferable skills and competencies.

### **Figure C: Purposes of Assessment**

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Future assessments need to be useful and appropriate if Ontario is to:

- Support students' learning, their well-being, and equitable opportunities and outcomes.
- Support professionals' practices and judgement.
- Inform students and parents/guardians/caregivers/families of learning progress and include meaningful input from them.
- Inform school and system improvement.
- Provide information for public assurance and confidence about the quality and progress of the Ontario education system.
- Advance the achievement of the above goals with positive benefits for the overall goals of Ontario's publicly funded education system.

*(Ontario: A Learning Province, 2017, p. 4).*



# The Case for Change

- ✓ The case for change: changing students in a changing Ontario and world.
- ✓ Time for change: Over 20 years since the Royal Commission on Learning, a curriculum refresh with the Transformation Steering Committee, and a process of modernization was already in process by EQAO.
- ✓ Demand for change: Review participants let us know a strong majority consensus for change.
- ✓ Vision for change: a student-centred K-12 system of assessment.



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**Table 1: Review responses about classroom assessments**

How well or poorly do classroom assessments support each of the following goals	% of Responses Very Well and Well			% of Responses Poorly and Very Poorly		
	Online	Stakeholder	Public	Online	Stakeholder	Public
Improving student learning, knowledge and skills	72	62	68	11	8	18
Ensuring student equity, including the unique, diverse and specific needs of all learners	64	38	54	16	23	21
Recognizing the culture and experiences of each student	56	30	42	19	33	31
Minimizing undesirable indirect effects of assessment practices on students' learning and well-being	59	30	50	18	25	24
Providing evidence to inform educators' professional practice, including instruction and assessment	71	54	67	12	14	17
Enabling educators to use their professional judgement to provide meaningful feedback to students	73	53	67	13	14	16
Providing a useful, effective and manageable way to track the progress of students	72	54	60	13	17	14
Providing parents/caregivers with meaningful information on their child's achievement and progress	66	38	57	17	26	22



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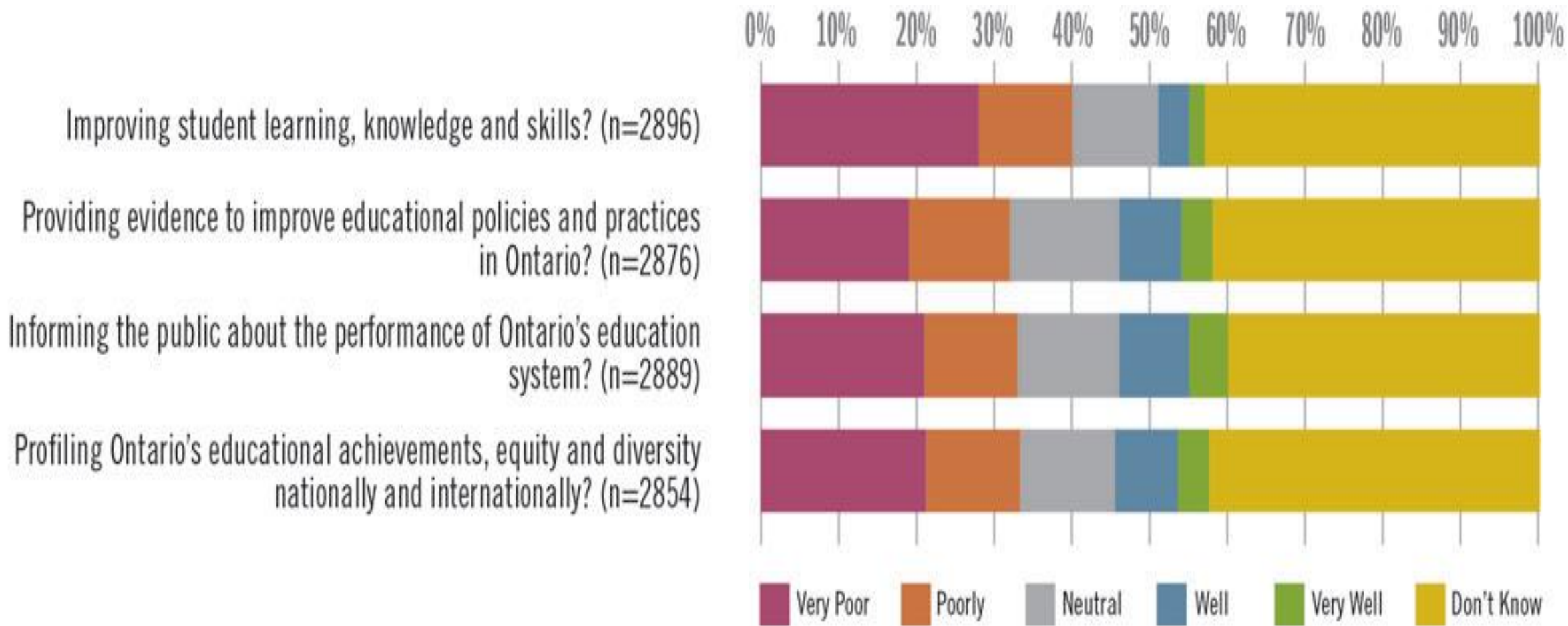
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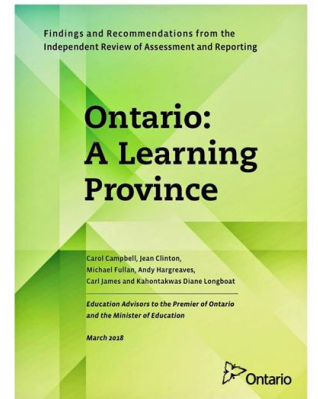
**Table 2: Review respondents' views on EQAO assessments**

How well or poorly do EQAO assessments support each of the following goals	% of Responses Very Well and Well			% of Responses Poorly and Very Poorly		
	Online	Stakeholder	Public	Online	Stakeholder	Public
Improving student learning, knowledge and skills	8	26	15	76	42	73
Ensuring student equity, including the unique, diverse and specific needs of all learners	6	8	6	84	70	74
Recognizing the culture and experiences of each student	5	4	2	83	73	78
Minimizing undesirable indirect effects of assessment practices on students' learning and well-being	6	4	7	83	68	80
Providing evidence to inform educators' professional practice, including instruction and assessment	14	46	22	65	20	59
Providing a useful, effective and manageable way to track the progress of students	13	36	12	75	32	69
Providing evidence to inform policies and priority actions by schools, school boards and the government to support improvements for all students and for students requiring additional support	13	46	16	70	21	65
Providing independent scrutiny and accountability to report to the public on the performance and quality of schools, school boards and the overall Ontario publicly funded education system	12	32	20	73	46	61



# International Assessments





# Recommendations: K-12 System of Assessment

- ✓ 13 Areas for Improvement;
- ✓ 18 Recommendations.

“We began the Review with our vision that students’ experiences – their needs, learning, progress and well-being – are at the centre of decisions about future assessment design and use. We have held firm to that vision to guide our decisions. It is our unanimous view and conclusion that it is time to make the continuous improvement of effective classroom assessments and feedback for students with educators and parents/guardians the central feature of assessment in Ontario.”

(Campbell et al., 2018, p. 72).

# K-12 Assessment System Transformation Benefits

Enhanced student choice in assessments to meet their needs and interests



Prioritized focus on communication and learning among students, educators and parents/guardians

Improved student engagement in assessments which reflect their diverse cultures, contexts and experiences

Minimized time and anxiety for test preparation

Assessments more closely reflect students' day-to-day learning, including use of technology

Enriched, timely descriptive feedback to provide guidance to students to improve learning

Assess refreshed essential knowledge and transferable skills to equip students to succeed

Support all students to demonstrate their learning through appropriate modifications and accommodations

“No system of assessment is perfect. Any given system will have weaknesses and unintended consequences. The goal is to establish a system that is well understood, maximizes benefits, minimizes limitations and evolves through continuous innovation and improvement.”

(Campbell et al., 2018, p. 34).



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**Professional judgement and practice:  
teaching, leadership and parent/family engagement**

**Pedagogy, curriculum,  
assessment & technology**

**Students'  
development,  
learning,  
attainment well-  
being & equity**



# *Assess – To sit beside*



# Thank you!

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OntarioLearningProvince2018.pdf](https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/preview/lhae/UserFiles/File/OntarioLearningProvince2018.pdf)**