Body of Evidence Guidance Document

**Definition:** A combination of data sources that provides the best possible estimate of a student’s knowledge and skills.

**Why do I want a body of evidence?**
You want a trustworthy estimate of how much your students are learning.

**Why is one data source not enough?**
1. **Data is not “fact.”** No assessment is a perfect measure. Every assessment (test, task, performance, observation, etc.) contains measurement error.
2. **Single assessments provide a snapshot of a specific day and time that might be influenced by other factors** (e.g., student had a bad day, was hungry, was teased on the playground, etc.). Think of each assessment as one picture in a photo album. An album gives us better insight into what mastery looks like over time while a photo is only a moment in time.
3. **Assessments do not measure everything.** Only when you combine information from multiple assessments do you get a full picture of what a student knows.

**How can I get better data? How do I better use my data?**

- **Alignment:** the more the purpose and content of the assessment line up with your purpose and what you’ve taught, the more you can trust it.

  *Questions to ask to judge alignment*
  - **Content of assessment:** Does the assessment measure the standards that I have been teaching or just something related to what I have been teaching? Does it measure the appropriate level of rigor? How much of my learning objective(s) does this task specifically assess?
  - **Purpose of the assessment:** Was the assessment designed for the same purpose for which I’m using it? If not, how might the purpose of the assessment have affected the way it was written? Example: The Fall Interim is designed to measure what students learned in the first month of school but is often misused as a pretest.

- **Consistency:** the more evidence you have (items, tasks, observations, assessments), the more you can trust the evidence.

  *Questions to ask to judge consistency*
  - If two different people assess the same student using an assessment, do they come up with the same estimate of student proficiency?
  - Is this estimate from this assessment consistent with...
    - ...the estimates from other trusted assessments?
    - ...with observations of the student’s proficiency on similar tasks? (classroom observations, exit tickets, homework, etc.)
  - Is there enough student work to get a stable estimate? (How many items are on the test? Do you have a rich task?) The more items, the more likely you’ll get an accurate picture of student learning.

**How do I combine my data for the best estimate?**
When evidence doesn’t consistently point to the same conclusion, we have to determine which conclusion is most heavily supported as there is no exact formula.

- Weigh stronger data more.

- Ask three questions of each piece of evidence to determine its strength:
  1. How aligned is this piece of evidence?
  2. How consistent is this piece of evidence?
  3. Is this data more recent? (More recent data might be more accurate because it might have captured the student’s most recent learning.)

- Adjust your level of confidence in your estimate of student learning based on answers to the above questions. If the answers are, “Not very,” you are less sure about this evidence.
Body of Evidence Examples

**General Examples** of data sources for all subjects and grade levels (Note: many of these are typically used for formative purposes. If formative assessments/tasks fulfill the criteria of high-quality data outlined above, then they can certainly be used in a body of evidence).

- State and third-party assessments (e.g., CMAS, MAP, ACCESS, STAR, etc.)
- District assessments (e.g., interims/course assessments, SCAN, ANet)
- Unit tests
- Team-selected tests/tasks/projects
- Teacher-selected tests/tasks/activities/projects (e.g., classroom tasks, homework assignments, long-term projects, performance tasks, running records, systematic observations)

**Specific Examples**

**Literacy**
Julia administered the DRA2 to all of her first grade students. She now has their current reading text levels, oral reading fluency, and comprehension scores, but she knows that one assessment is not an accurate estimate of her students’ skills. She examines the item analysis of their recent reading and writing literacy interim in SchoolNet. This assessment measures what has been taught in the first few months of school, but Julia recognizes that she did not teach standard RL.3, which was heavily tested. She will now access standardized assessment reports on Renaissance’s website for STAR Early Literacy to gain a deeper understanding of her students’ reading skills. This information should confirm Julia’s observations from classroom activities, particularly in guided reading groups. Her instruction will continue to be informed through progress monitoring, district scope and sequence, and continued assessments throughout the year. For her ELL students, she will also use ACCESS scores to collect information about their language development.

Julia can also use other standardized assessments (ACCESS, W-APT, SCAN, MAP), running records, formal and informal formative assessments (Unit Tests, LDC Units), anecdotal notes, and other data points to help build a stronger body of evidence for her students. Lastly, she paid close attention to the alignment and consistency of each assessment to appropriately use the data.

**Math**
Diego is a sixth grade math teacher. He knows that using multiple measures is the most accurate way to estimate how prepared students are as well as to determine how much a student is growing. He will use multiple data points for his baseline for Student Learning Objectives, to inform daily instruction, and to backwards plan throughout the year.

As part of his baseline data, he looked at last year’s TCAP/CMAS math scores, the end of year district interim, and his curriculum’s pre-test, which was administered in the second week of school. Throughout the school year, he put together a Body of Evidence using a spreadsheet that tracked his students’ growth in math standards. He decided to include more formal assessments such as unit tests, and the midyear and end-of-year ANet interims. He also looked to classroom assessments such as performance tasks, observation notes, homework tasks, and exit slips. Diego had his students individually chart their mastery of standards using the aforementioned assessments by examining percent correct, number of questions per standard, and difficulty of each question. He built a strong body of evidence for his students through examining multiple data points, weighing stronger data more, looking at consistently measured standards, and involving student participation.

**Visual Arts**
Jennifer is the only High School Visual Arts Ceramics teacher in her building. As part of her baseline data for SLOs, she examined the ABCC assessment for Ceramics which includes an initial portfolio piece that students create. She also included an in-class performance task that involved students creating a model that was scored on a rubric she developed with other teachers in her department. Finally, she used an exit ticket which asked questions about understanding of introductory ceramic techniques.

To build a body of evidence that provides the best estimate of her students’ knowledge and skills, Jennifer is primarily using four projects students completed throughout the year. Each project focused on a fundamental skill within Ceramics and was scored on a collaboratively-created department rubric. She used weekly prompts to assess students’ understanding of artistic concepts, such as expressive features and characteristics of art, theme, mood, etc. Finally, she used the district ABCC post-test as a standardized district-wide measure.