



Kentucky
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C O U N C I L

Kentucky United We Learn Spring Convening

Thursday, April 25

 Kentucky Department of
EDUCATION

WIFI Information:

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Welcome and Connection

Robin Kinney, Interim Education Commissioner

Agenda Review and Voting

Karen Dodd
Kentucky Department of Education (KDE)

Day 1 Agenda – April 25

Time	Activities	Lead
9	Welcome and Connection	Robin Kinney, Interim Education Commissioner
9:15	Agenda Review Vote on Charter and Vice Chair	Karen Dodd, KDE
9:30	Introduce Community Voice Project and Innovative Learning Network Posters	Gretchen Morgan, C!E
9:45	Deeper Learning Practice: Get familiar with Defenses of Learning and System of Systems Design Principles	Sarah Snipes, KDE Gretchen Morgan, C!E
10:25	Break (15 minutes)	
10:40	Stories of Defenses Design Principles	Sarah Snipes, KDE Andre Rupp, CfA District Representatives

Day 1 Agenda (continued) – April 25

Time	Activities	Lead
11:50	Share out on March 6 Meeting	Sarah Snipes, KDE Andre Rupp, CfA Travis Hamby and Holly Elmore
12:10	Gallery Walk	Gretchen Morgan, C!E
12:15	Lunch - 5th Floor (45 Minutes)	
1:00	Introduce Workgroups	Karen Dodd, KDE
1:30	Transition into Workgroups	
3:00	Transition to Whole Group and Break (15 minutes)	
3:15	Workgroup Share outs	Workgroup Spokespeople
3:45	Reflections and Adjourn	Karen Dodd, KDE

Vote on Charter

Vote on Vice Chair

Introduce Community Voice Project and Innovative Learning Network Posters

Gretchen Morgan, C!E

Get ready to watch...

[Click here for Kentucky Student Voices Video Link](#)

The video is voice clips of students throughout Kentucky with captions.

Making Connections

Design Principles and Student Defenses of Learning:

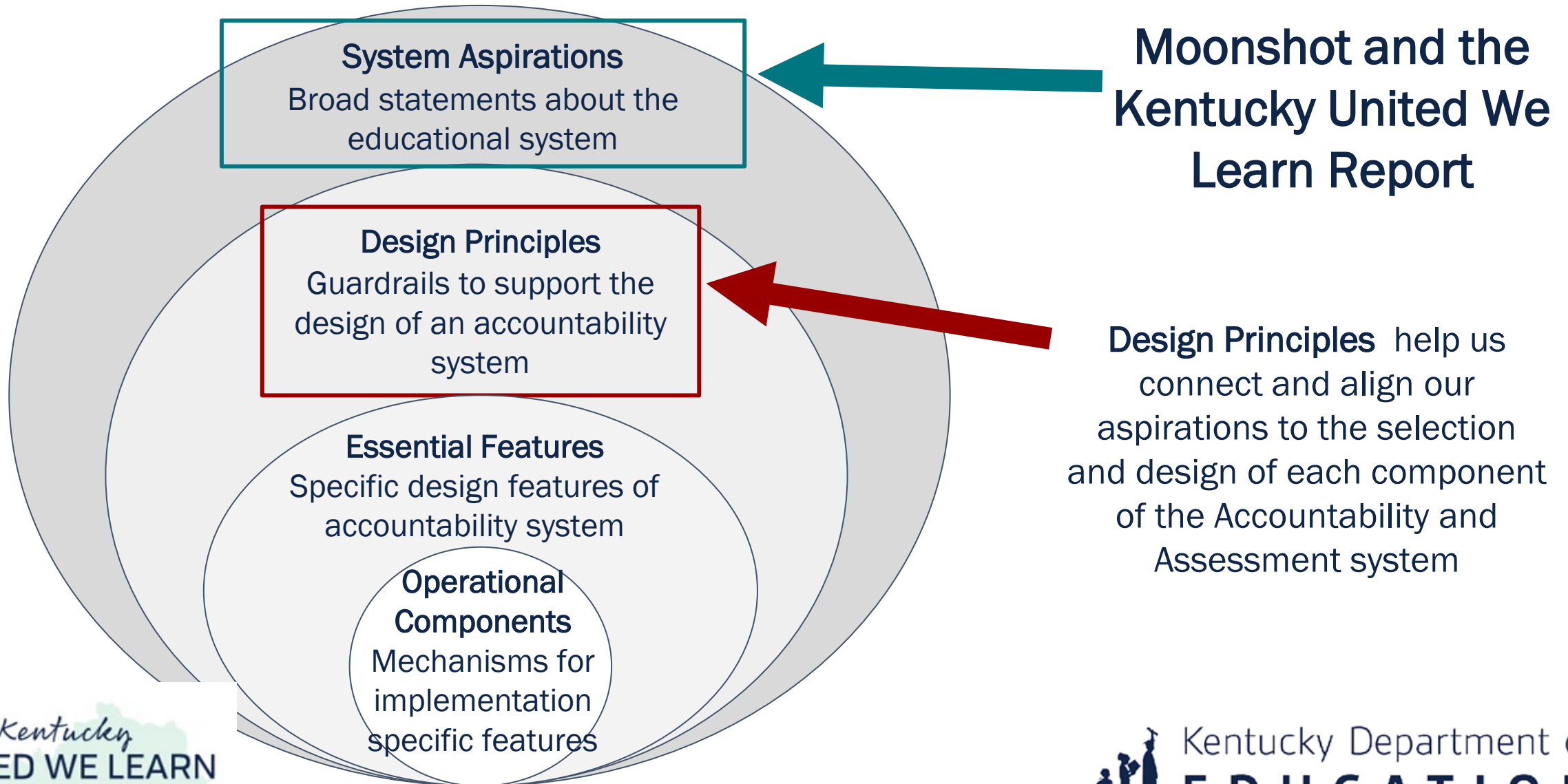
Principled Ways of Assessing Knowledge, Skills and
Dispositions for a Portrait of a Learner

Sarah Snipes, KDE
Gretchen Morgan, C!E

Moonshot

To build a prosperous Kentucky, we will launch an accountability system that is meaningful and useful to all our learners.

Design Principles in Context



Design Principles

Design Principles for System Redesign (1)

In March 2023, the Accelerating Innovation Committee identified 12 design principles around three themes that reflect:

- Research into local, national and global assessment and accountability systems.
- Collective experiences and expertise of committee members.
- Aspirations from the United We Learn report.

Design Principles for System Redesign (2)

Purpose and Use

- Help us reflect on design decisions as we create prototypes
- Help us talk to stakeholders about the intention behind the prototypes
- Help us evaluate and refine prototypes
- Help us connect local design principles to state principles

Themes to Organize Design Principles

1. **Prioritize Student Experiences and Outcomes**
2. Value Local Contexts and Expertise
3. Continuously Improve Within State Policy Context

For this activity, we'll take a deeper dive into theme 1.

Theme 1:

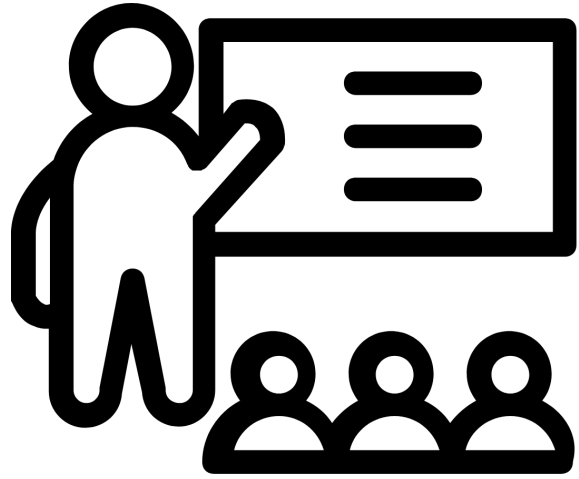
Prioritize Student Experiences and Outcomes

Designing with these principles in mind means...

- **Principle 1: Design to Support Vibrant Learning Experiences**
 - Developing high-quality instructional practices in support of vibrant learning experiences and designing an assessment and accountability system whose implementation contributes to the enhancement of these practices.
- **Principle 2: Design with Marginalized Students at the Center**
 - Putting an intentional focus on foundational literacy skills and the needs of marginalized students as the central concern in developing a more equitable and inclusive assessment and accountability system.
- **Principle 3: Design to Empower Students as Agents of Their Own Learning**
 - Taking an asset-based perspective on learning, assessment and accountability and providing learners in particular with multiple opportunities for choice in the co-design of their learning experiences and ways of demonstrating learning.

Defenses of Learning

What is a Defense of Learning?



“A defense of learning is a way for a student to share a portfolio or a specific product and reflect on how they achieved the intended learning outcomes. A committee of peers, teachers, family, and/or community members provide feedback and determine if the student met learning outcomes. This experience mimics real-life situations like work presentations and provides an authentic deadline and audience, leading to higher-quality work.”

- [Learner Centered Collaborative](#)

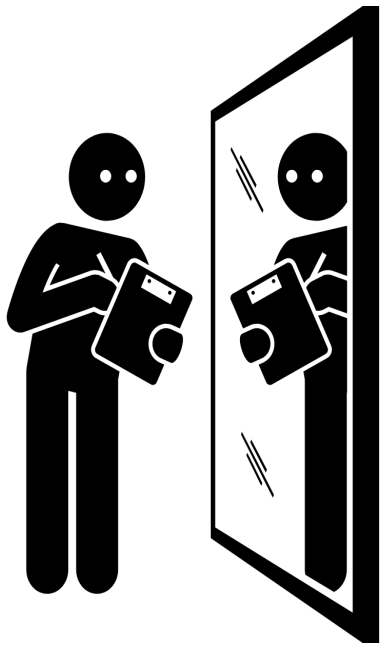
Part of A Balanced System of Assessment

- Local districts have a variety of assessment tools they use to provide a balanced view of student learning.
- Defenses cannot carry the full burden of assessment - no one assessment can - but they can play an important role.
- Defenses can be designed and implemented to align with many of the design principles for an assessment and accountability system that we have said we care about

Let's Self-assess our Current Knowledge:

How familiar are you with **Defenses of Learning** as a method of assessment?

Choose the option that best describes you.



New explorer - I'm just starting to hear about defenses of learning.

Curious learner - I know a bit but want to learn more.

Informed observer - I understand the basics and am interested in more details.

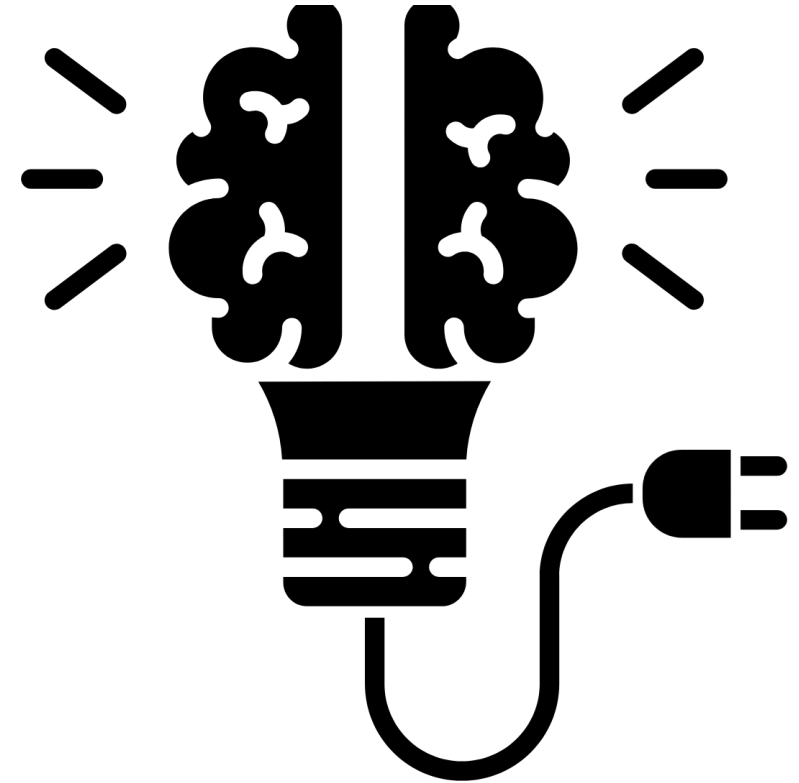
Engaged participant - I'm quite familiar and have some experience or insights.

Knowledgeable guide - I have a deep understanding and could explain it to others.

Illustrative Example

Let's explore and learn together:

1. Guided viewing of student defenses of learning
2. Small group discussion
3. Insights sharing

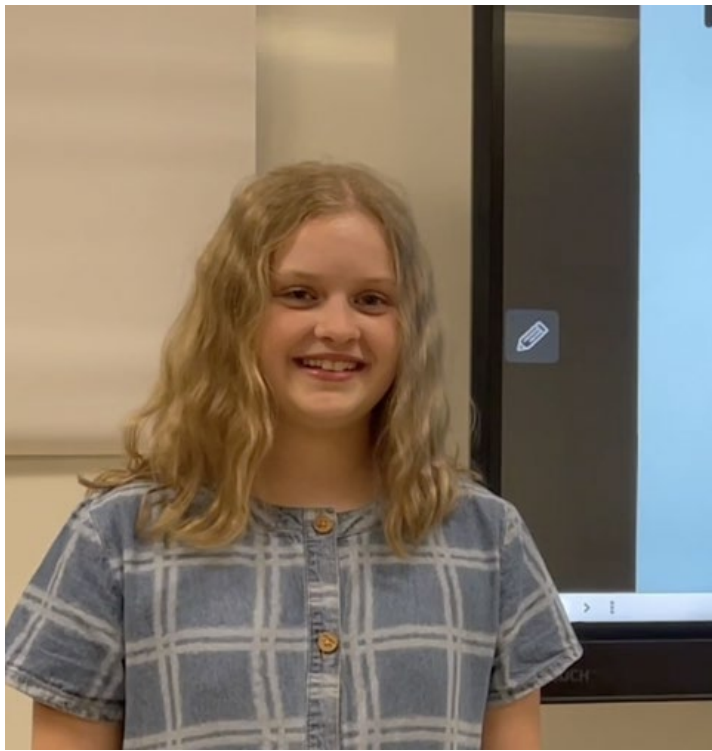


Get ready to watch...

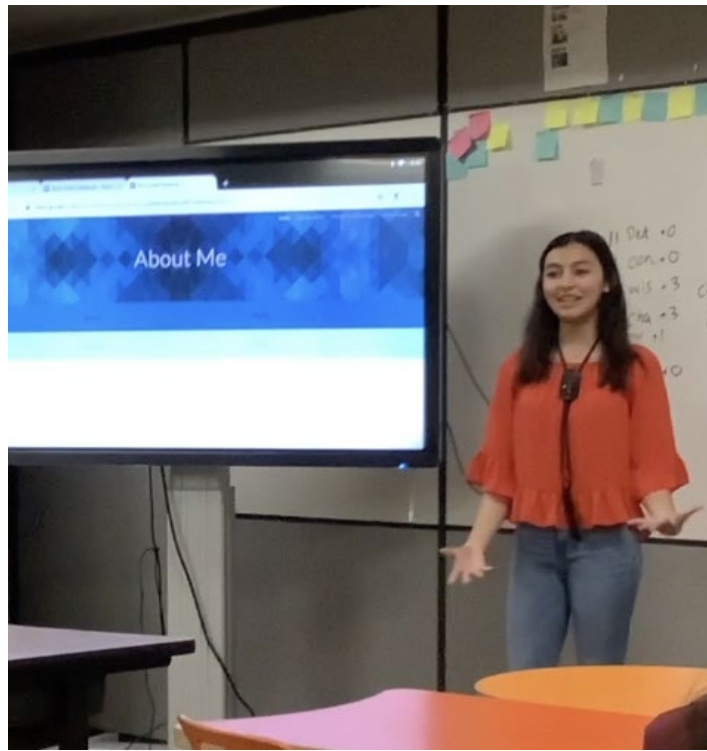
TASK:

Use the **Defense of Learning Observation Guide** to capture observations, questions and insights connecting the defense of learning practice to the theme of “prioritizing student experiences and outcomes.”

- Read through the prompts.
- Which defense(s) and prompt(s) are you most interested in?
- Share your interest with the others at your table!
- Take notes as we watch the defenses so you can bring detailed observations to your group discussion.



5th Grade
Wright
Elementary School



8th Grade
Marnel C. Moorman
Middle School



12th Grade
Shelby County
High School



Student Defense Examples

Shelby County Public Schools



Student Defense video

[Click here for Student Defenses Video Link](#)

The video is of three students from Shelby County with captions.



Shelby County Public Schools
Shelby Inspired

Learning. Leading. Living.

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Thank you!

For sharing your
defenses of learning with the
Kentucky United We Learn Council!

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Table Talk

Each person select two specific things you want to share

- Go around, with each person sharing one of the two they selected
- Go around again and share your second selection
- Is there a highlight or question you want to share with the full group?

Share Out and Gather Questions

- Let's hear from a few tables
- Anyone want to share a question now?
- Everyone post questions on parking lots as we break



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15 Minute Break

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Behind the Scenes: Structures, Systems and Experiences That Make Defenses of Learning Possible

Sarah Snipes, KDE

Andre Rupp, CfA

District Representatives

Defenses as a Trend Across Contexts

Many districts are developing defense of learning assessment systems.

Each community might engage in the same practice with a different approach based on local context.

Example -
Frankfort Independent Schools' 11th and 12th grade defenses focus primarily on internship experiences.



Reminder about the connections we are exploring

Local Balanced System of Assessment

- Formative Assessments
- Curriculum based Assessments
- **Defenses of Learning**
- Etc.

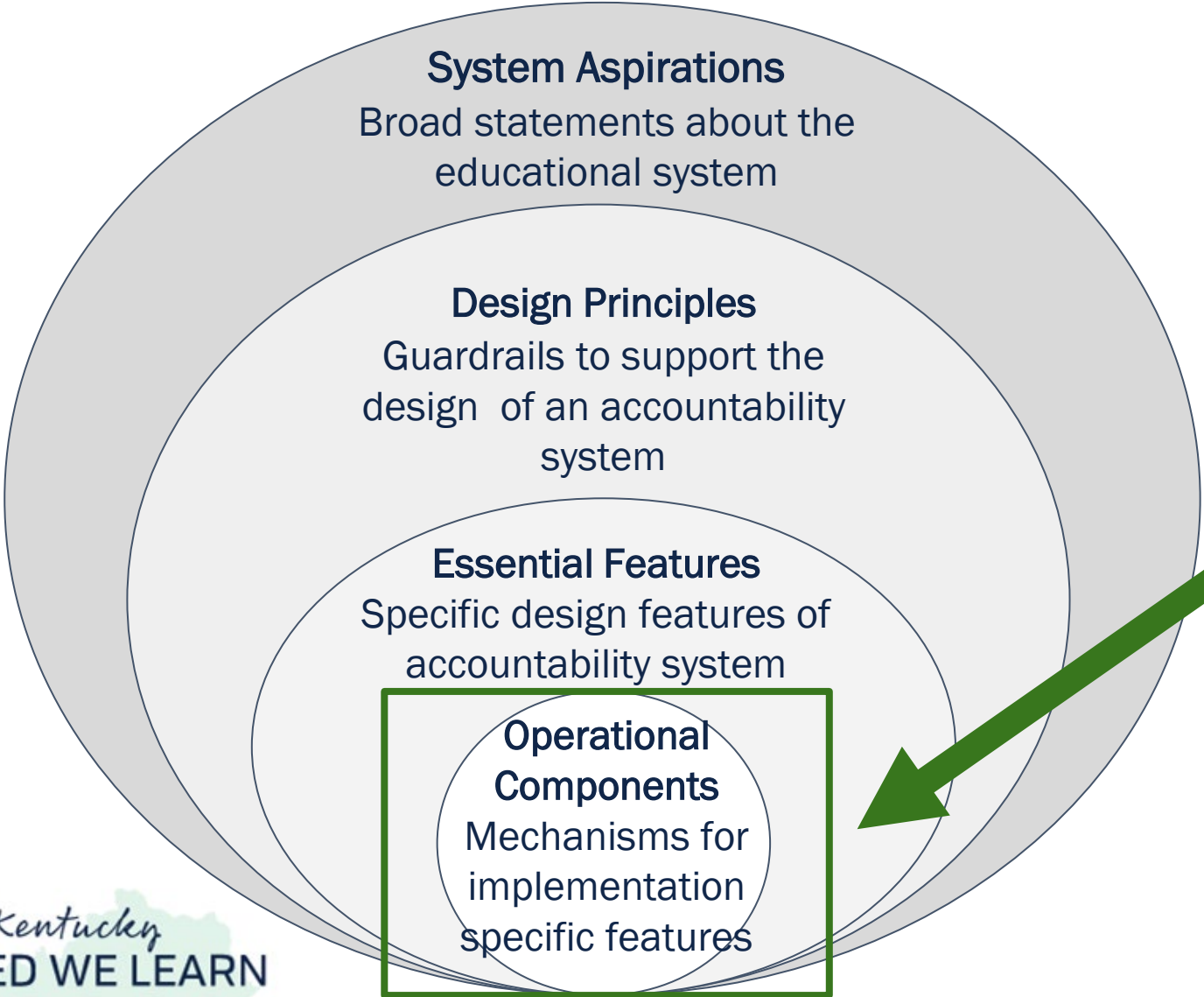
Design Principles

- Shared Values
- Technical issues related to state use

State System of Assessment and Accountability

- Standardized tests
- Graduation rates
- Etc.
- Some synthesized information gleaned from **Defenses of Learning**

Reminder about the connections we are exploring



Defenses of Learning, etc. help us connect and align our aspirations to the selection and design of each component of the Accountability and Assessment system

We need to get behind the scenes

Looking behind the curtain of Shelby County helps us do the following:

- See how one district made **design choices around defenses** given the **view of vibrant learning** they are trying to promote.

Seeing this helps us better consider the systems question:

- How can the state allow local communities to **design defenses and/or other aspects of balanced assessment systems** in the way that works best for them while allowing the state to **learn something important about school and district performance?**

Guests from Shelby County



Panel Discussion:

Adam Hicks, Chief Academic Officer

Julie Webb, Shelby County High School

Artavia Acklin, West Middle School

JJ Black, Heritage Elementary School

Principles of Design in Practice

Table Discussions

- How did Shelby County **design** their defenses of learning to align with their view of vibrant learning?
- What information is Shelby County **“lifting up” / sharing with the broader public** from their defenses of learning? **How are they doing that?**
- What does this information **convey about how students are developing core competencies** from the local portrait of a learner?

Sharing Out

- Table Discussion Highlights
- Shelby County Response
- Connections to the Design Principles for State Accountability System



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Gallery Walk

Gretchen Morgan, C!E

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Lunch

- 5th Floor - Visit the Community Voice Capture Tutorial Table
- Return to Main Room

Table Talk – Gallery Walk

- What's one voice you heard?
- Why is that the voice you want to share?



Reflections from the L3 Community of Practice

Travis Hamby and Holly Elmore



Collective Insights from L3s on Theme 1:

We've seen significant benefits of performance-based assessments:

- Diverse and immediate feedback for student learning
- Honors different learning styles
- Fosters a growth mindset
- Emphasizes the integration of academic standards with real-world competencies
- A more holistic approach
- Prepares students academically and equips them with the necessary skills to thrive in today's complex society

L3 Trend:

One performance assessment used in many L3s is a Defense of Learning.

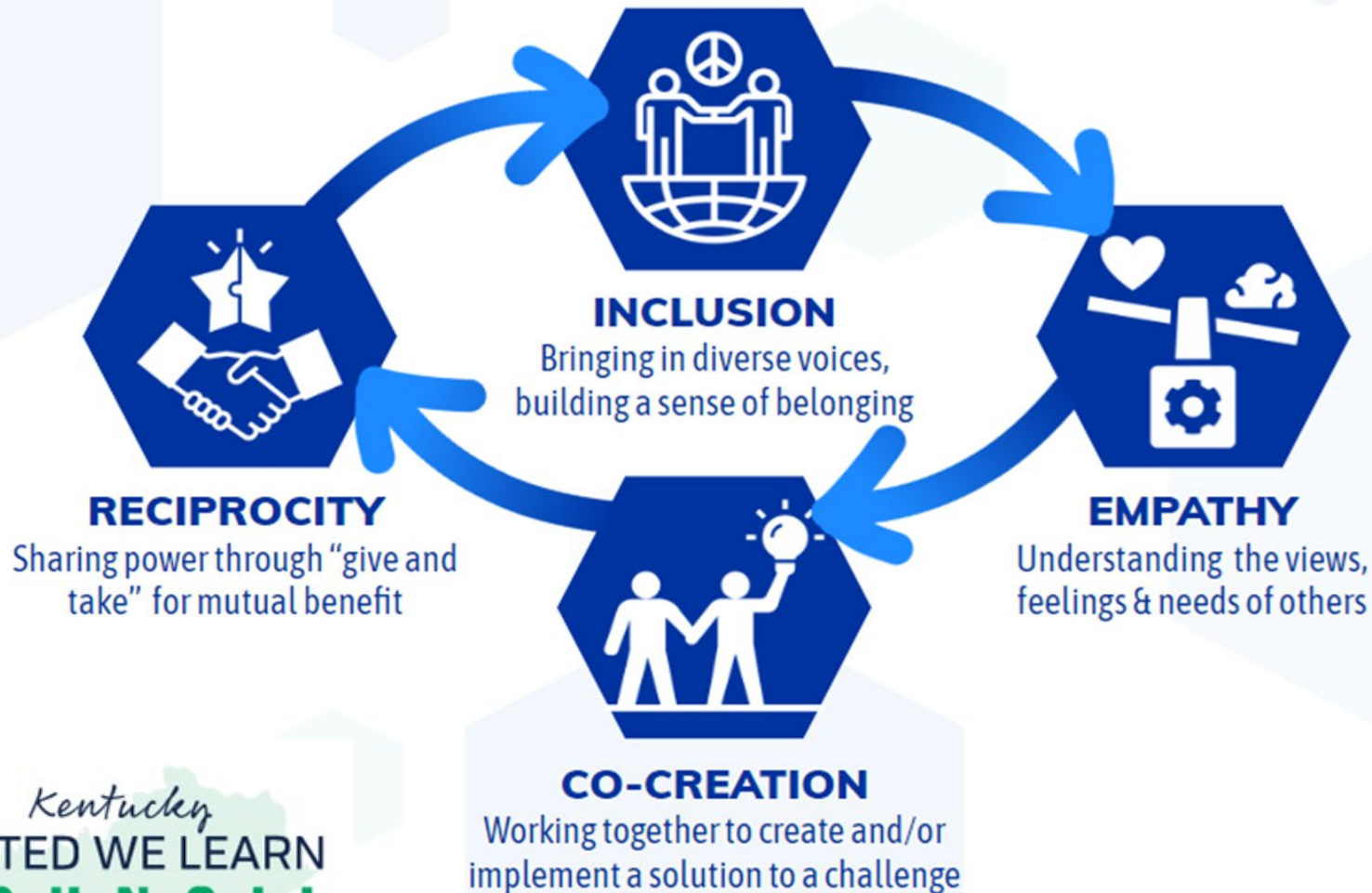
L3 Research Project: Allen County Case Study

- Purpose: To understand how Allen County Schools’ use of “inclusive design” (i.e., processes based on habits of *inclusion*, *empathy*, *co-creation* and *reciprocity*) with diverse community stakeholders (including students, families, educators and community and business members) impacts stakeholders’ understanding, ownership and engagement in new assessment and accountability models.
- Project:
 - 18-months (April 2024 - October 2025)
 - Mixed-methods (such as surveys, interviews, youth participatory action research and story capture)
 - Funded by the EduDream K-12 Research Hub
- Partners:
 - Allen County Schools: Travis Hamby, Chasity Shipley and a “Design Crew” of Allen County stakeholders
 - University of Kentucky: Daniela DiGiacomo and Karen Perry
 - Center for Innovation in Education: Jennifer Poon and Rita Harvey



The Habits of Co-Creation and the Big Idea

The Habits of Co-Creation



The Big Idea:

If school districts engage stakeholders such as students, educators, families and community members in co-creating new systems of assessment and accountability, then

- (1) the resulting systems will be more relevant to local needs, and
- (2) stakeholders will have better understanding and ownership of those systems, leading to greater student and community outcomes.

Theme 2: Value Local Contexts and Expertise

Principle 12:

Design to Minimize Opportunities for System Corruption

Designing with this principle in mind requires designers and decision-makers to carefully think through the implementation of any new accountability system to minimize incentives for stakeholders to game the system or opportunities for the system implementation to inadvertently corrupt the best practices it is designed to lift up.

Early Learning from L3 Districts About Theme 2:

- Don't put “weight” on the prototypes too early
- Layer on quality control systems as they are needed locally, provide state guidance and guardrails carefully
- Use transparency and public learning to build trust

Introduce Roadmap and Workgroups

Karen Dodd, KDE

Workgroups

Menu of Options

“I am curious about how the state might design an accountability system that values local practices like defenses of learning?”

District Supports for Quality

“I am curious about how local defenses of learning can be systematically designed, implemented, and evaluated as part of well-balanced assessment and accountability systems”

Engaging and Communicating with Communities

“I am curious about how students, families, teachers and community members feel about defenses of learning”

Learning with Local Districts

“I am curious about how to make defenses of learning work well in terms of local priorities”

Which question is most intriguing to you?

While workgroups will consider more than demonstrations of learning...

HOW they would each consider defenses illustrates the kind of thinking each group will do.

Transition into Workgroups

Engaging and Communicating with Communities
Menu of Options
District Supports for Quality
Learning with Local Districts



Workgroup Share out

Workgroup Spokespeople



Reflections and Adjourn

Karen Dodd, KDE





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Agenda Review

Karen Dodd, KDE

Day 2 Agenda – April 26

Time	Activities	Lead
9:00	Agenda Review	Karen Dodd, KDE
9:05	Transition into Workgroups	
11:00	Transition and Break (15 minutes)	
11:15	Workgroup Share out	Workgroup Spokespeople
11:45	Reflections	Karen Dodd, KDE
12:00	Lunch - Training Room	
12 - 4	Optional Work or Network Time	

Transition into Workgroups

Engaging and Communicating with Communities
Menu of Options/System of Systems
District Supports for Quality
Learning with Local Districts



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Workgroup Share out

Workgroup Spokespeople

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Menu of Options / System of Systems

Used the design principles to inform a conversation about what we would like the whole accountability system to look like.

Key ideas include:

- Focus on what we value as professionals for our students.
- Meet the criteria of federal requirements - aligning that with state requirements.
- Balance of student growth on screening assessments with authentic performance-based assessments that drive strong instructional practices.
- A local system that values other subjects beyond those that are required by the federal/state system.
- Accreditation-like feedback on district quality based on a collection of evidence assembled by the district.
- Space for local districts to design and test accountability systems.
- Transparency but elimination of labels/ability to rank/public shaming
- Real-time feedback on leading indicators to course-correct and improve lagging indicators.
- Deeper learning indicators are the focal point of the accountability system.

Engaging and Communicating with Communities

Key insights &/or questions

- Learned how to do voice recordings
- Discussed elements of a communication plan
- Discussed how to message keeping pace with roadmap
- Started setting goals

What did you learn about the design principles?

Our group understands that at some point we will be able to package materials for testing and sharing prototypes with a variety of stakeholders

What is the recommendation or next steps?

Collect voices - how hard or easy is it to reach certain groups

What questions do you still have regarding the design principles?

Need to find a way to coordinate with other groups to ensure we are in the loop as the work progresses

District Support for Quality

Key Insights &/or Questions

- How can we stay in a reciprocal, responsive relationship between ourselves and districts (L3 and beyond)?
- How do we ensure a level of quality that inspires trust and confidence in the system (internally and external to your community)?

What did you learn about the design principles?

We discussed approaches for making principled design visible at the local level

Recommendation/Next Steps?

- Finalize our proposed work plan
 - Query the field for what resources are needed
 - Study the innovative districts who have shareworthy resources
 - Landscape analysis of existing resources and identify the gaps

What questions do you still have regarding the design principles?

- How do districts iterate on their models?
- How can we avoid making this a force-fit for students at the margins?

Driving Questions

- What is the theory of action that drives decisions about system design?
- How to ensure teachers are making accurate calls about what students know and can do?
- How do school leaders make accurate determinations about how teachers are impacting students?
- How do districts and KDE make accurate calls about which schools are impacting students?
- How do we convey to all stakeholders that these new systems are trustworthy?

Deliverables:

Resources

- Guide for technical quality
- Case studies highlighting the technical aspects of local accountability (PoL, defenses, dashboards, etc.)
- Sections of a pitch deck for stakeholders focused on how we are making trustworthy decisions

Proposed Processes

- Process for systematically learning from innovative districts and those who are reticent to adopt new assessment and accountability models
- Process for creating a learning community between districts to build capacity

Learning with Local Districts

We are working on a tool to support districts while they consider designing their local assessment and accountability systems for key practices being explored in the menu of options to prime and connect districts with each other.

Key insights &/or questions

- Need a mock-up to share with districts to get input and feedback.
- How do we balance agency guidance and district models.
- We need a tool that compliments top down and ground up

What is the recommendation or next steps?

We are planning an in-person work day to finalize the mock-up and discuss a sharing/testing plan.



Reflections

Karen Dodd, KDE

Lunch

- Training Room



Optional Work or Network Time

Noon – 4 p.m.

