

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

RACE TO THE TOP ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

PUBLIC & EXPERT INPUT MEETINGS

Project and Consortium Management

Washington, D.C.

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22 \* \* \* \* \*

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (10:04 a.m.)

3 MS. WEISS: Hi, everybody, we're about  
4 to start in a couple more minutes, so grab your  
5 last cup of something to drink in the back there  
6 and come get settled. We're just getting our  
7 projector brought back to life. It was  
8 resuscitated recently so we'll be back with you in  
9 a minute.

10 Okay, I think we're ready to get  
11 started. We have -- you guys will get to see all  
12 of our slides behind us. We will get to look down  
13 at our pieces of paper. Our monitor is on the  
14 fritz for the moment.

15 So, good morning. Welcome. Thank you  
16 so much for joining us today. My name's Joanne  
17 Weiss and I'm the director of the Race to the Top  
18 Program at the Department of Ed. And I want to  
19 welcome all of you here this morning for what is  
20 now feeling like old home week as we're on, what  
21 meeting? I think, number eight, of a series of  
22 meetings that many of you have been traipsing

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1 around the country to be with us on and we really  
2 appreciate that.

3           The meetings today and tomorrow cover  
4 some very important management topics that were in  
5 our original notice, but as we were getting  
6 feedback and input from the experts that we had in  
7 our first panels, it became more and more obvious  
8 to us that the way these consortia were organized,  
9 the kinds of things that consortia thought through  
10 at the front end of the process, and the kinds of  
11 the questions that we, in our notice, asked in  
12 order to help facilitate the right kinds of  
13 conversations and allow our reviewers to figure  
14 out which consortia had the highest chance of  
15 really successfully executing against the agenda.  
16 We just needed some focused conversation on that,  
17 so we've adduced meetings today and tomorrow about  
18 procurement because that's -- that and the  
19 consortia management question are quite  
20 intertwined, obviously, but those two questions  
21 are things that we felt we needed additional input  
22 on.

1           So, that's the topic of the meetings  
2           today and tomorrow.

3           For those of you who have not been with  
4           us at other meetings, let me just give you sort of  
5           some quick framing overview of what these meetings  
6           are about and what we're trying to accomplish with  
7           this program.

8           So, as you probably have all gathered,  
9           this is not a meeting about the \$4 billion Race to  
10          the Top program, this is a meeting about the \$350  
11          million Race to the Top assessment program. Mary  
12          Ann Schneider from Rhode Island, who's also a  
13          member of NECAP, was supposed to be here with us  
14          today talking about NECAP's experience, and she is  
15          a \$4 billion Race to the Top casualty. We really  
16          thank her. She made a valiant effort to be here  
17          with us today and at the last minute just said you  
18          know what, you have a deadline next Tuesday, I  
19          can't come. So, we totally get that.

20          But the timing for this particular  
21          notice is that we are hoping to have it out in  
22          March so that consortia have about three months to

1 put together their applications for the program  
2 and grants will be awarded as with all of the  
3 other grants, by the end of September.

4 The assessment program is really  
5 designed to support states in delivering a system  
6 of more effective and instructionally useful  
7 assessments than perhaps we have before us today.  
8 We want to make sure that we provide information  
9 that's a more accurate reflection of what students  
10 really know and are able to do, and that takes  
11 three different forms. First of all, we're  
12 concerned about student achievement against  
13 standards. Second of all, we're concerned about  
14 student growth. And third, we're concerned about  
15 whether students are on track to graduate from  
16 college (inaudible). For those of you who were at  
17 our technology meeting, you know that this is the  
18 same kind of thing we experienced there.

19 Okay, and the third piece of data that's  
20 critical that we produce as a result of these  
21 assessments is whether students are on track to  
22 graduating high school ready for college and

1 careers.

2           The second big goal we have is that  
3 these assessments reflect and support good  
4 instructional practice. And the third kind of  
5 goes without saying except that I think too often  
6 we've made it an afterthought instead of saying it  
7 at the front end, that the assessments have to  
8 serve all students well including English language  
9 learners and students with disabilities. So, in  
10 this competition we're particularly concerned  
11 about what the issues are that need to be included  
12 up front, what kind of expertise we need up front,  
13 so that we design the assessments from the  
14 beginning with all of these students in mind  
15 rather than trying to tack on at the back end  
16 accommodations for different populations.

17           The purposes of this assessment,  
18 admittedly we have a little bit of an elephant in  
19 the room with this assessment because we're in a  
20 position with the assessment where it has to  
21 comply with the current ESEA, with the current No  
22 Child Left Behind regulations, and we'll talk in a

1 minute about -- a little more about what that  
2 means, but we also know that during the timeframe  
3 in which this assessment is going to be developed  
4 and then released, there will be a new set of  
5 reauthorized ESEA laws in place and we of course  
6 don't yet know what those look like.

7           So, at the highest level, all that we're  
8 going to be able to give as guidance to consortia  
9 is that these assessments need to be usable to  
10 inform teaching, learning, and program  
11 improvement, to help inform determinations of  
12 school effectiveness, so school accountability, to  
13 help inform determinations of principal and  
14 teacher effectiveness for the purposes of  
15 evaluation and support, and for student and  
16 parents, determinations of individual student  
17 college and career readiness.

18           So, with that, there are, of course,  
19 other requirements that come along with the  
20 current law for us. The first is that we need to  
21 be able to deal at least with reading, language  
22 arts, and mathematics, and at least annually in

1 grades 3 through 8 and once in high school.

2 We are talking here primarily about  
3 summative assessments. That doesn't mean that we  
4 won't have a formative component. That's one of  
5 the design issues that's to be decided and that  
6 we've gotten a lot of input on over the last  
7 couple of months, but by summative assessments, we  
8 have not meant that it was once at the end of the  
9 year, nor have we necessarily meant that it was  
10 only given once during the year, nor have we  
11 necessarily meant there's only one test. So, it  
12 might indeed be a system of assessments that are  
13 given periodically throughout the year and  
14 aggregated to be summative. So, combinations like  
15 that are definitely on the table of the kinds of  
16 things that we're thinking of. We are thinking,  
17 though, that this would replace rather than add to  
18 the current assessments that are in place. And of  
19 course, validity, reliability, fairness are key  
20 concerns that we're probably not going to spend  
21 much time talking about today, but that were big  
22 topics of discussion over the last couple of

1 months.

2                   So a word before we get started about  
3 why we had these meetings at all. The typical  
4 process that the department would use to come up  
5 with a notice like this would be that we would go  
6 away, figure out what our policy goals were, draft  
7 a notice, put it out for a 30-day public comment  
8 period, get the public's input on the notice,  
9 revise it, and put it out. In the process of  
10 starting that process, it became obvious to us  
11 that this was a really different kind of  
12 competition and that in order to even draft the  
13 notice right from the start, we needed a much  
14 broader and deeper set of expertise than we had in  
15 order to make sure that we were doing this right.  
16 So we came up with a different process than is our  
17 traditional process that put the input at the  
18 front end rather than at the back end. So we  
19 crafted a series of what will in the end be 10  
20 meetings around the country. All of these  
21 meetings have been opened to the public, although  
22 the folks sitting at the table are all from

1 states, and we've asked states to be our special  
2 sort of invited guests for reasons that we'll talk  
3 about in a second. But -- so, for reasons that  
4 we'll talk about in a second there's sort of a  
5 special role that states play in these convenings.  
6 But our goal was to get input at the front end  
7 from a variety of experts and from the public that  
8 would help provide input to us in the department  
9 so that we could go off and craft this notice.

10 We then don't have time for a whole  
11 public comment period, because that's a very  
12 time-consuming part of the process. We instead  
13 want to make sure that the consortia have as much  
14 time as possible to get together and put their  
15 applications together so we're going to do this in  
16 lieu of public comment. We'll put the notice out  
17 in March and the consortium will be able to start  
18 putting their applications together.

19 So the goals that we had then were,  
20 first of all, at a high level, to start painting a  
21 different vision of what the next generation of  
22 assessments could and should look like. I think

1 we're also anchored in what we do today that the  
2 first thing we needed to do was make sure that  
3 through the experts we'd invited, we were painting  
4 a different picture of what assessments could do  
5 for us and what the world would look like if we  
6 had assessments that teachers and kids and parents  
7 all found useful and informative and more anxious  
8 to give.

9           The second thing is, though, that we  
10 needed very concrete input and guidance to the  
11 department to help us formulate the notice.

12           And the third goal we had was, again  
13 back to the role of the states, to help prepare  
14 the states and to help provide guidance and input  
15 to states to help them develop the highest quality  
16 proposals that would have the greatest likelihood  
17 of impact.

18           So, those are the high-level reasons  
19 that we convened these meetings. Let me talk for  
20 a minute then about what the agenda for today is  
21 going to look like and I'll tell you then a little  
22 bit more about today's specific questions and

1 we'll get on with it.

2           The meetings today after this sort of  
3 stage setting activity that I'm doing, we're going  
4 to go around the room and have the experts give  
5 presentations in response to the questions that  
6 were in our notice, questions I'll review with you  
7 in a minute. Each expert will have about 20  
8 minutes to present and then we'll have 10 minutes  
9 for follow-up clarifying questions that we'll all  
10 be asking each other up here. And then this  
11 afternoon we'll have a couple more presentations,  
12 and then the bulk of the afternoon will be spent  
13 in a roundtable discussion up here so that we can  
14 really get deeper into some of the questions and  
15 issues.

16           All of you were given index cards when  
17 you came in. You're invited to participate in the  
18 conversation by filling out index cards and  
19 handing them in either at the registration table  
20 out front or any of our folks can grab them from  
21 you and we'll take them up here and put them into  
22 the conversation this afternoon as we go. And

1 then at the very end of the day we'll have an hour  
2 reserved for public comment by people who signed  
3 up ahead of time and presumably all those of you  
4 in the room know who you are.

5 Because we have one fewer expert than we  
6 had planned for today, we will lengthen our  
7 conversations a little bit, but we might start  
8 public comment early so any of you who are signed  
9 up for public comment, don't go away because we  
10 might start you a little bit early.

11 We're doing pretty rigorous timekeeping  
12 up here so you'll see us referring to our yellow  
13 and green and red lights up here, so just so you  
14 know, we want to make sure that everybody's voice  
15 is really heard and so we'll be doing that. We're  
16 asking people please put your cell phones on  
17 vibrate and want to let you know that today's  
18 session, like all our sessions, is being  
19 transcribed and the transcription will be posted  
20 within a few days on our website.

21 We're also still accepting public  
22 written input and here's the address that you can

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1 send that input to. All of this written input is  
2 also put up on our website and read by our team  
3 and considered as part of the input to our  
4 process.

5 So, with that, I want to take a minute  
6 to just thank the states who've traveled here  
7 today and who are on the phone with us. We are  
8 broadcasting this via webinar and there's a bunch  
9 of states who, for obvious reasons, couldn't be  
10 here, but wanted to listen in, so thank you all  
11 for attending. We really appreciate your support  
12 and your attention to this. You realize that  
13 we're in this sort of strange situation where  
14 because you're applicants, we can't have you up  
15 here on stage with us, which might have been our  
16 first choice so that you could really directly ask  
17 questions, but we will try to represent your  
18 interests and make sure that the experts are  
19 paying close attention to that as well.

20 So let me just go around the table  
21 really quickly and ask each of you to introduce  
22 yourselves and let me start with you, Tammy, just

1 quick -- and be sure -- pull up microphones and  
2 talk into them because the webinar folks won't be  
3 able to hear you.

4 MS. BATTAGLINO: Sure. I'm Tammy  
5 Battaglino, a partner at the Parthenon Group and  
6 co-lead in our firm's Education Center of  
7 Excellence. We work with public and private  
8 sector institutions.

9 MR. TUCKER: Marc Tucker, president of  
10 the National Center on Education and the Economy.

11 MR. BOALS: Tim Boals, executive  
12 director of the WIDA Consortium. That's  
13 World-class Instructional Design and Assessment.

14 MR. AUGUSTE: Byron Auguste. I'm a  
15 director at McKinsey & Company. I lead our social  
16 sector globally, which includes our education  
17 practice, and I work quite a bit in education at  
18 the local, state, and federal level.

19 MR. COHEN: I'm Mike Cohen. I'm the  
20 president of Achieve.

21 MS. WEISS: Joanne Weiss, director of  
22 the Race to the Top Fund at the Department of Ed.

1                   MR. MILLER: Tony Miller, Deputy  
2 Secretary, Department of Education.

3                   MS. WURTZEL: Judy Wurtzel, Deputy  
4 Assistant Secretary for Planning, Evaluation, and  
5 Policy Development.

6                   MS. WEISS: Thank you. Okay, so let me  
7 just quickly go through what the questions are.  
8 They fill up a couple slides here. You don't need  
9 to memorize them because our experts are going to  
10 be talking about them for the next couple of hours  
11 to you, but the first set of questions were really  
12 around organization of a consortium to achieve  
13 success. And the big picture questions there were  
14 around governance, around the decision making  
15 process, and then around how you might  
16 differentiate and think about different roles,  
17 responsibilities and workloads, roles for third  
18 parties, so just the sort of big picture,  
19 management and organization questions.

20                   The second question was: What are the  
21 characteristics that members of the consortium  
22 should have in common in order for the consortium

1 to be successful in a project like this?

2 The third set of questions were: How  
3 would we ask consortia to demonstrate that they  
4 have the capacity and the structure and the  
5 potential to really implement the proposed plan?  
6 So, what's the evidence, what are the questions,  
7 what's the evidence that we should ask consortia  
8 for?

9 And the last thing is, a lot of the  
10 people up here have run consortia and have a lot  
11 of lessons learned, and we want to really make  
12 sure in the end that we're benefitting deeply from  
13 those. So, what could go wrong? What are the  
14 unintended consequences? And how can we think  
15 about mitigating those problems?

16 So, with that, I'm going to turn it over  
17 to our first speaker, who is Mike Cohen from  
18 Achieve.

19 MR. COHEN: Thank you, Joanne. Can  
20 people hear me? Good.

21 What I'm going to talk to you about is  
22 what we have learned through our work at the

1 American Diploma Project Assessment Consortia,  
2 which for those of you who don't know about it,  
3 it's a group of states that work together with us  
4 in the context of the American Diploma Project to  
5 develop initially and in the course examine  
6 Algebra II and we've subsequently developed on in  
7 Algebra I as well. And I thought the best way to  
8 capture what we learned from that that would be  
9 useful both to the Department and to states that  
10 are thinking about the next consortia they want to  
11 be part of, is to start by just giving you a basic  
12 overview of what we did and how we did it in this  
13 consortia, and then try to draw lessons from that  
14 that are tied to the three big questions that the  
15 department has asked around organization and  
16 governance about essentially what are the  
17 characteristics of a consortia that could -- that  
18 the Department ought to look for as you're making  
19 funding decisions.

20 And as I interpreted the last question,  
21 which was sort of what could go wrong, which could  
22 be a long discussion, but I thought about, really,

1       what have we seen as this has played out over a  
2       number of years that you ought to be keeping --  
3       you know, paying attention to in the early stages  
4       so that you increase the odds of success over  
5       time? So that's what I'm going to try to walk  
6       through with you.

7               I'll also say that you should view the  
8       lessons and the information that I share as the  
9       sort of chapter headings for issues you may want  
10      to pursue in the discussion stage. So I'm not  
11      going to get into anything in a whole lot of  
12      detail, but I do think that there's -- that we'll  
13      set up issues that may be of interest to some of  
14      you that we can pursue.

15             So, for a very quick background on the  
16      consortia, and a couple points that are important  
17      here -- I won't read through everything in the  
18      slide. In fact, I won't read through it at all,  
19      but let me tell you what's important here is this  
20      assessment consortia was an outgrowth of a network  
21      of states that was formed for a particular set of  
22      policy actions that were focused around changing

1 the expectations for students at the end of high  
2 school so they were prepared for college and  
3 career. And in the context of that shared policy  
4 agenda, we were encouraging states to increase the  
5 course taking requirements they set for high  
6 school graduation or at least encouraging students  
7 to take more rigorous courses, including Algebra  
8 II.

9           And there were a group of chief state  
10 school officers in the network at our very first  
11 meeting in 2005 who essentially said, sure, we're  
12 going to encourage or require students to take  
13 Algebra II. We're pretty sure that if that's all  
14 we'll do, at the end of the day, Algebra II will  
15 look suspiciously like Algebra I in many of the  
16 high schools in our state. We're pretty sure that  
17 an end of course exam would be one of the tools we  
18 could use to ensure a greater level of consistency  
19 among high school courses within our states. And  
20 none of us thinks we need our own Algebra II test.  
21 In fact, we don't want our Algebra II test. Could  
22 you help us develop a common one?

1           That was the origin of this effort, and  
2 what's important was that it was rooted in a  
3 policy agenda that states shared, it was not just  
4 about a test. We did agree on the purposes of the  
5 test.

6           And the other thing that was important  
7 from this is at that very first discussion, as  
8 people were exploring the idea of developing a  
9 common assessment, somebody asked, well, if we  
10 develop a common test, who will set the cut  
11 scores? And I have to confess, I, at that point  
12 in time, could still remember my experience in the  
13 department around national standards and national  
14 testing issues, still felt the pain from it. And  
15 the first words out of my mouth were, well, you're  
16 each sovereign states. We wouldn't dream of --  
17 and I didn't get the sentence out before a chorus  
18 of state officials said, oh, please don't make us  
19 set the cut score ourselves. All the pressures  
20 would drive it down. Would Achieve do it?

21           So, foolishly, I said yes, but that  
22 turned out to be a very critical decision and it

1 was emblematic of several things. One is the  
2 pressures that individual states were under, but,  
3 secondly, their willingness to come together  
4 around something as critical as a cut score on the  
5 theory that if they didn't do it alone, but did it  
6 together, that it would be easier to maintain  
7 rigor and defend in their states. So, that turned  
8 out to be a pretty important part of this.

9 This just shows you who the original  
10 states were and the ones that were subsequently  
11 added. We designed this so that more states could  
12 join if they wanted to, when they wanted to. We  
13 have a lead state in this that I'll come to in a  
14 minute, Ohio, that basically led the procurement  
15 process. We awarded our contract competitively to  
16 Pearson in 2007 and the fact that this was a  
17 competitive procurement was essential as we did  
18 this work and moved forward.

19 Organization in governance. Think about  
20 the following components here. We had the member  
21 states. We had Ohio as a lead state in the  
22 procurement. We had a coordination and direction

1 team which essentially had one vote -- maybe  
2 several people, but one vote per state -- that was  
3 essentially providing formal oversight over the  
4 contract with Pearson. Had Achieve playing a  
5 number of roles, which I'll get to. We relied  
6 heavily on the Center for Assessment as a  
7 technical advisor, and Pearson became a partner  
8 once they were selected competitively.

9 Let me also tell you that we figured  
10 this out as we went along. It's not like I could  
11 have written these bullets at the beginning of the  
12 project. One of the things I'm hoping is that  
13 people will learn from what we did and from what  
14 others did so they can actually lay this out at  
15 the front end, but we basically invented this as  
16 we went along.

17 New states that want to join, again, we  
18 can take them any time they want. We want them to  
19 be part of the ADP network because we think the  
20 shared policy agenda is an important foundation  
21 for working on a shared test, and the new states  
22 basically have to agree to the same things that

1 the other states agree to. There is a formal  
2 partnership agreement, there is a formal  
3 memorandum of understanding that defines who does  
4 what, how decisions get made, et cetera. They've  
5 got to agree to the contract that's been signed  
6 already. They don't get to mess with that. In  
7 fact, they don't get to open up any decisions that  
8 have been made already, but they participate in  
9 the decisions going forward. And they've got to  
10 make some commitments of basically time and money,  
11 both, to us, but also to the contractor that  
12 they're actually going to buy the test at some  
13 point as this goes forward.

14 By the way, that's important because --  
15 we structured it this way because of the decisions  
16 we made about intellectual property. Pearson owns  
17 the test; Achieve doesn't and the states don't.  
18 That was a formal decision we made. And,  
19 therefore, that had an effect on the nature of the  
20 contract that we wrote in which Pearson is  
21 assuming the development costs and are recouping  
22 it when they sell the test, which is why at some

1 point you want to know if the states joining the  
2 consortia really are going to buy the test. All  
3 these things are quite highly interrelated.

4 Okay, I'm ready to go onto the next  
5 slide. So, Ohio was the lead state and they did  
6 that --

7 They volunteered to be the lead  
8 procurement state for one very simple reason.  
9 State law in Ohio would have prohibited them from  
10 participating in this unless they were the lead.  
11 If they didn't have legislative authority to do  
12 this, then they could have used some other  
13 contracting mechanism and so they said, we'll step  
14 up and do that. That was a carefully thought  
15 through decision on the part of the consortia.

16 By the way, they were the only state  
17 that volunteered to step up and they were selected  
18 by unanimous acclaim. People were thrilled at  
19 that.

20 Turns out the procurement officer under  
21 those circumstances was not the Ohio Department of  
22 Education and their procurement people, but the

1 equivalent of the Ohio Office of General Services,  
2 which meant there was a whole other player that we  
3 introduced into the process midway through, which  
4 created some complications along the way.

5           They conducted the procurement. We and  
6 a legal advisor that we had -- and I think you'll  
7 hear from them tomorrow -- provided a lot of  
8 support in figuring out the procurement issues.  
9 Again, this will come up tomorrow, but a  
10 multistate procurement is not simple to figure  
11 out, so we had a lot of work and a lot of help on  
12 that. But Ohio -- it's an Ohio procurement. The  
13 other states participated as reviewers in it.  
14 Ohio provides the formal contractual guidance to  
15 the coordination and direction team made up of  
16 people from all of the participating states and  
17 they administer the contract. All of that burden  
18 falls on Ohio. It is otherwise as much of a joint  
19 effort as state procurement and contracting laws  
20 will permit.

21           The coordination and direction team is  
22 basically made up of the assessment directors or

1 other folks from each of the member states. They  
2 are serving, if you will -- if this were a single  
3 state test, they are serving as though they were  
4 the state testing director or state testing office  
5 providing much of the oversight to test  
6 development: Reviewing items, reviewing every  
7 issue that comes up along the way in the contract.  
8 They are the formal oversight and decision making  
9 body and they are doing two things: Basically,  
10 making sure that legal and policy needs in their  
11 own state is met, but, secondly, and equally  
12 importantly, making sure that this enterprise as a  
13 whole is successful. And as you'll see later,  
14 this requires careful balancing for each person in  
15 each state of their own individual state needs  
16 with a will -- a very sort of common willingness  
17 at times to step up and say, look, that's not how  
18 we would do it for our state. But for the good of  
19 the order, we're willing to go along with that.  
20 And that norm of collegiality and compromise has  
21 been extremely important in this.

22 Continuing on this, the coordination and

1 direction team, and there may be multiple players  
2 from the state involved that allows them to bring  
3 different perspectives. It also means sometimes  
4 people are coming in and out, which can be a bit  
5 of a challenge. But they only get one vote. On  
6 any contractual issue -- and there are lots, as  
7 you know if you're a state testing director --  
8 lots of important details written into the  
9 contract. Anything that's going to change in the  
10 contract has to be done by unanimous consent.  
11 Everybody -- you know, each state has to agree to  
12 a contract change because it will affect all  
13 states, and that has forced a lot of discussion, a  
14 lot of compromise, and a lot of  
15 consensus-building, which in the most part has  
16 been good. It has, again, forced the states to  
17 keep thinking about what is it going to take to  
18 make this enterprise work for all of us, and  
19 limits the ability of any state to just go off and  
20 insist on what it needs for itself, in part  
21 because what we've all discovered is that there  
22 will be times when Arkansas needs something that

1 is absolutely critical to their success, and on  
2 some other issue Kentucky will need something  
3 that's absolutely critical for its success. And  
4 they can each imagine being in the other person's  
5 shoes, and that has helped, again, this spirit of  
6 compromise and consensus building that is so  
7 essential for the smooth operation of the  
8 consortium overall.

9 Achieve's role. We've played a number  
10 of roles here. We've been -- we were the original  
11 convener of the states in the ADP network and have  
12 been the convener of the states in this  
13 partnership. I want to underscore that part of  
14 our role has been bringing lots of people from the  
15 states together. This is not just the chiefs,  
16 it's not just the testing directors. The  
17 governors were involved early on and we keep them  
18 posted. Higher education is critical to this.  
19 The Algebra II test is intended to be an indicator  
20 of college readiness, that students who do well on  
21 the test can actually place into credit bearing  
22 courses and so what that means is higher ed has

1 got to be at the table all the way through in the  
2 design and development of the test.

3 We are essentially the consortium  
4 manager. We're keeping the whole thing moving and  
5 we're keeping communications with the states  
6 throughout. We are also the project manager of  
7 the test development along with the CDT. In fact,  
8 because this is a consortia, no one in any state  
9 has enough time to devote to this -- to overseeing  
10 the contract singly, so we have essentially been  
11 playing a fairly substantial role in that as well.  
12 We have assembled other expertise when needed:  
13 Legal expertise, technical expertise, and the  
14 like. We bring some content expertise to this as  
15 well. The original ADP benchmark standards, we  
16 created the model course description that was the  
17 starting point for deciding what the content of  
18 the test would be. We do alignment studies  
19 periodically along the way and quality reviews of  
20 the test as it's being developed. So, we provide  
21 that kind of expertise.

22 Also, as I said, we have -- because this

1 is a college-ready test and because higher ed from  
2 each state is part of the network to begin with,  
3 we have been playing a very active role in  
4 promoting post-secondary involvement in test  
5 design and test development from the end -- at the  
6 faculty level in states, at the system level in  
7 states, with national higher ed organizations, and  
8 in the way in which we conducted the validation  
9 studies for these tests.

10 We've also essentially been taking the  
11 lead in conceptually and operationally defining  
12 college readiness and in setting the cut scores,  
13 as I indicated before. So that's a fairly wide  
14 range of activities that we have been involved in  
15 in supporting the work of states.

16 Okay, key lessons here. First set for  
17 states. Participating in a consortium takes time.  
18 Early on when we began working with the states, we  
19 actually, you know, created a little white paper  
20 to help think about the consortium. One of the  
21 things we said was, if you think you're going to  
22 save money on test development here -- we think

1       you might, but you might pay for it with the extra  
2       time that your staff is going to spend. So, at  
3       the outset it wasn't clear that this was a money  
4       saving proposition. I think it has turned out to  
5       be that, but it's also turned out to involve an  
6       awful lot of staff time.

7                 We spent the first six months of this  
8       discussion with the chiefs at their advice before  
9       we even brought the state testing directors to the  
10      table. And the reason for that was we wanted to  
11      make sure that there really was leadership  
12      commitment to this before the people who had to  
13      deliver came together because once you get down to  
14      the operational level of this, it is very easy to  
15      find reasons why this won't work. And so we  
16      wanted the state testing directors, quite frankly,  
17      sent with instructions to make sure this will work  
18      because there were previous experiences when that  
19      didn't happen and they didn't get the test they  
20      wanted.

21                The importance of the leadership is,  
22      again, I can't overstate that, but keeping your

1 engagement over time is not simple. Everybody  
2 gets busy. That's also true of the state testing  
3 directors, so keeping the communication, keeping  
4 the engagement going over time, and keeping the  
5 communication within states among the various  
6 actors is not an insignificant effort. And what  
7 we're discovering is that if we don't play some  
8 role in making that happen, it doesn't happen  
9 naturally. Assuming that everyone in the state  
10 when they've been at a meeting or a discussion  
11 will go back and talk to everyone else turns out  
12 to not be a good assumption to make.

13           The other thing we have found, governors  
14 are important from the outset and we insist on  
15 their involvement in the ADP network to start.  
16 You can't underestimate the importance of state  
17 legislatures either. At the end of the day, they  
18 provide the money and in many cases they actually  
19 vote on what the tests are going to be. So,  
20 attention to legislatures, appropriately, but  
21 early and often, I think is important. So, those  
22 are some of the lessons we've learned about time

1 and communication basically.

2           Second big point is it's not just about  
3 the test. We were quite focused in our efforts  
4 early on to create an Algebra II test. We had  
5 discussions from time to time about what else  
6 needs to be created. But, quite frankly, those  
7 always receded to the background partly because it  
8 seemed like if we didn't focus on a test, we  
9 wouldn't get a test. We could get sidetracked  
10 onto other things and not produce much of  
11 anything. So we really were quite highly focused.  
12 But I think we all learned from this process that  
13 the test is not enough, that, in fact, a much more  
14 comprehensive view of the tools that need to be  
15 developed is really important -- formative and  
16 interim assessments, curriculum instruction  
17 materials, that's what's going to drive  
18 instructional improvement.

19           Of course, that makes it a much more  
20 ambitious effort. It's hard enough, right, to  
21 develop common summative assessments. Developing  
22 a broader set of tools is more work, it's more

1 decisions, it requires more consensus and  
2 compromise on more things. So, I know this is  
3 where a lot of the discussion is now. It's the  
4 right place to be focused. It's -- I would just  
5 not underestimate the complexity of it all.

6 Other big lesson is a shared vision is  
7 absolutely critical and you've got to start with  
8 that. We had the advantage of starting with  
9 states that were committed to common standards,  
10 that had common policy objectives, that sort of  
11 had a common view of the uses and purposes of the  
12 assessments at a very high level, but not  
13 necessarily at an operational level and again, had  
14 a clear consensus about what the design of -- we  
15 weren't trying to build an assessment system, we  
16 were trying to build an assessment. It was easy  
17 to get consensus on what that assessment ought to  
18 look like going forward, I would expand the scope  
19 of that a bit. But again, the more you expand the  
20 scope of what you're trying to create, the more  
21 important it is to have shared vision across a  
22 larger number of components of an instructional

1 system, and I think the more challenging that can  
2 be, but the more important it is. And in that  
3 context, there's no end to the operational issues  
4 in particular on which compromise needs to be  
5 made. And I can tell you, having sat through days  
6 and days of meetings with state testing directors  
7 on the operational components of the Algebra II  
8 design, the issue alone of what the testing window  
9 would be, right, across a dozen or so states at  
10 the time, which start at and end at school at  
11 various points in time -- and, in fact, in Indiana  
12 alone they covered about a 45-day period of when  
13 schools start.

14 The question of when will the test be  
15 given and how does that relate to test security  
16 concerns, and what does that mean about the stakes  
17 that could or could not be attached -- very, very  
18 complicated issues to work through. It's easy to  
19 see why midway through people would say this can't  
20 be done, but, again, a conviction that we're going  
21 to do it and a willingness to compromise and work  
22 through those issues is really quite critical.

1           We've been asked to comment on -- given  
2 all this, Joanne, what should you be looking for  
3 in proposals that demonstrate a high likelihood of  
4 success? So, here are some of the lessons that  
5 we've extracted from our experience that might be  
6 worth your consideration. Okay, and some of this  
7 is repetition of what I've already said just  
8 turned around through another lens, but clearly a  
9 high degree of consensus around the policy  
10 objectives, including the theory of action around  
11 instructional improvement, is really important and  
12 what role in that the assessment system plays. If  
13 that's not there, it's going to be hard to get  
14 anything developed that will be useful to or  
15 usable by anybody.

16           Leadership capacity in the state is  
17 critical as well. Again, I'm repeating what I  
18 said before. The governor is critical. This is  
19 ultimately going to be something that state  
20 agencies deliver on. The chief is critical, the  
21 state testing director is critical, but the higher  
22 ed leaders are critical as well. If anyone's

1 going to make claims about college readiness, to  
2 do that without anyone who runs a higher ed system  
3 involved in defining that and figuring out how  
4 it's going to be used is really a big, big  
5 mistake.

6 Now, it's not simple to get all these  
7 people together and it's even harder to keep them  
8 together, but that's a critical task of making a  
9 consortium work. And again, you can't  
10 underestimate the policy role that state boards of  
11 education, state higher ed boards in many cases,  
12 and legislatures play. That's going to vary from  
13 state to state. Somebody in each state needs to  
14 be attending to that and attending to that well.  
15 You can't just put it off until the sort of back  
16 end when the test is all done and you can say,  
17 here we are, don't you agree? That would be the  
18 last time you want to have that conversation.

19 Other things that consortia should be  
20 asked to demonstrate in their application: One is  
21 do they have the technical capacity to actually  
22 get the work done given their vision of what the

1 work is, and that's going to vary from consortia  
2 to consortia. Can they define a clear governance  
3 and decision making structure up front? Do they  
4 have a procurement strategy figured out? And  
5 there are a lot of issues around that, so that's  
6 got to be thought through and laid out up front.  
7 And are the roles and responsibilities of all the  
8 partners, including the supporting organizations,  
9 are they all well defined and clearly understood?

10 Okay, increasing the odds of success  
11 over time, this is sort of what could go wrong  
12 that you'd like to prevent up front. There's  
13 probably lots of things there, but the things that  
14 we focused on the most have to do with  
15 sustainability and there are two things that  
16 immediately come to mind when you think about  
17 that, one is leadership changes and the other is  
18 cost issues. So, we know there are going to be 30  
19 -- gubernatorial elections in 30-some-odd states  
20 in less than a year. There's going to be turnover  
21 in at least 20 of them. Who's paying attention to  
22 bringing the next governor on board midway through

1 the process?

2           And by the way, there are probably some  
3 unanticipated changes at the gubernatorial level.  
4 We've seen quite a few of those of late, so  
5 they're not always predictable. What's the  
6 mechanism for managing leadership turnover in  
7 states? And chiefs come and go at unpredictable  
8 times. So, again, what's the mechanism for  
9 keeping those leaders involved and on board?

10           Second is this is not just a leadership  
11 issue. These assessments are going to affect  
12 everybody in the state, certainly everybody in the  
13 state education system. What are the strategies  
14 for building and sustaining support among the key  
15 stakeholders, particularly as you anticipate  
16 leadership changes?

17           Thirdly, cost is a big issue. We've  
18 heard that a lot. States are struggling with the  
19 costs of testing now. As states think about the  
20 kinds of assessments they'd like to develop, you  
21 ought to insist that they take at least the best  
22 estimate they can up front as to what's the cost

1 of the assessment system they plan on designing.  
2 What's the annual operating cost of that going to  
3 be? How does that relate to the costs they now  
4 spend, and if there's a gap there, how do they  
5 intend to fill the gap so that this is sustainable  
6 over time? Plus in consortia where there will be  
7 continuous development of assessments because  
8 items are released every year, for a variety of  
9 other reasons, how are they going to cover the  
10 ongoing cost of that?

11 And then finally, on the assumption that  
12 states bring some partners to the table to help  
13 them organize, manage, and do the other work here,  
14 are those partner organizations that might help  
15 them develop the proposal, are they committed to  
16 sticking with this through the end? Because you  
17 don't want to change help midway after you've  
18 spent months working out understandings and  
19 agreements about how this is going to work. You  
20 don't want to have to break in a whole new set of  
21 partners because they're going to walk away. So,  
22 how do you make sure that those are going to be

1 staying at the table?

2 I think that's my last slide. I believe  
3 I have 54 seconds left. I'm sure it's my last  
4 slide.

5 MS. WEISS: So, questions for Mike?

6 MS. WURTZEL: So, Mike, you petitioned  
7 that you've developed a partnership agreement and  
8 an MOU with states. Could you talk a little bit  
9 about regarding the kinds of agreements, decision  
10 making processes, that you've put in place? So,  
11 what's described very specifically in the MOU and  
12 what's general, so that you can have flexibility  
13 to manage this over time?

14 MR. COHEN: Good question. I'm actually  
15 going to send you copies of that because I don't  
16 remember the details of it to tell you the truth.  
17 We negotiated those, it seems like years ago. The  
18 good news is, none of us has had to go back to  
19 that very often, right, to say, well, what are we  
20 allowed to do here, or what are we not allowed to  
21 do here? So, we did figure out a way to keep it  
22 flexible enough so that we could evolve things

1 over time.

2           Mainly as I recall it, and it may be  
3 when there's some opportunity for a public comment  
4 there are a number of people here who signed  
5 those, if they remember any better than I do,  
6 maybe they can help out. But basically what the  
7 agreement did -- and there were two documents, one  
8 of which basically said there's a group of states  
9 and Achieve who are working together here and  
10 defined the roles of states, which was basically  
11 around the development process and decision  
12 making, about purposes of the test, and the like.  
13 And Achieve basically, you know, our role was  
14 defined as being the glue to hold this together.  
15 And I'm pretty sure we had an "other duties as  
16 needed" provision in there because we were not  
17 smart enough to figure out everything that needed  
18 to get done. So, we figured out some things, but  
19 left it pretty wide open.

20           The other document really was with Ohio,  
21 as I recall, and was much more focused on the  
22 contractual issues and how decisions would be made

1 around the contract. And that's where -- the most  
2 critical one of which was that in order to change  
3 the contract every participating state had to  
4 agree to it. Otherwise, it was the kinds of  
5 things that you would see in a -- you know, within  
6 a state, and how the sort of program people and  
7 the contractual people relate to each other.

8 MR. MILLER: Mike, you talked a lot  
9 about the importance of the leadership capacity  
10 and the technical capacity. This is almost a two  
11 part question. First part, how predictable is  
12 that on the front end? So, some of that you will  
13 learn over time, but the question is, how would  
14 you -- can you assess it on the front end  
15 accurately?

16 MR. COHEN: Both leadership and  
17 technical?

18 MR. MILLER: Yeah.

19 MR. COHEN: So, from your point of view  
20 if a proposal came in and demonstrated -- and was  
21 asked to demonstrate leadership and technical  
22 capacity, how could you assess it -- is that?

1           MR. MILLER: And would it be accurate?  
2           Oftentimes, you can ask a set of things that you  
3           can come up with a view of it. And so maybe a  
4           better question, looking back, if you were to  
5           assess the leadership and technical capacity on  
6           the front end, based on your actual experience,  
7           would that have been an accurate assessment that  
8           you would have conducted and how do you make sure  
9           that your front end assessment is in fact  
10          accurate?

11          MR. COHEN: Okay, so the best way I know  
12          how to answer that is what did we know at the end  
13          of the process that we didn't know at the  
14          beginning? So, on leadership, I would say we  
15          underestimated how much effort would need to be  
16          involved in keeping the leadership in each state  
17          sufficiently attentive to what was going on in the  
18          test development so that, at a minimum, they  
19          remembered that the test they got was the test  
20          that they signed on for. And that's, by the way,  
21          without leadership turnover. There were a number  
22          of states who said we didn't want this. And well,

1 like, yeah, you signed here. This is what you  
2 asked for.

3           So, the level of effort that's involved  
4 in keeping the leadership in the state engaged we  
5 underestimated. So, you want to see a lot about  
6 how they're going to do that in some detail and  
7 some commitment from the leadership in the state.  
8 So, if they tell you they're going to keep the  
9 chief involved by sending quarterly memos -- I  
10 mean, I'm making this up now -- you want something  
11 that tells you that the chief is likely to look at  
12 those. I'm not sure how you do that, but you've  
13 got to look for reciprocal communication.

14           On the technical side, again it depends  
15 on the design of the assessment. If they are  
16 developing fairly, you know, conventional  
17 on-demand large scale tests, that's going to  
18 require a different kind of capability than if  
19 there are going to be a lot of teacher-developed  
20 performance tests. So, one thing you want to do  
21 is have them tell you clearly what kind of  
22 technical capacity they need given the work that

1 they're doing. Secondly, you want to assume  
2 they're underestimating that because everybody  
3 always underestimates this, so you want to look  
4 very skeptically at it. And thirdly, you want to  
5 know -- I mean, technical capacity is in limited  
6 supply. Where are they getting it from?

7 And I would say that, again, it all  
8 depends on the nature of the assessment, but every  
9 state agency will have some. Are they devoting  
10 what they have internally to this? And are the  
11 states that have the strongest capacity in a  
12 consortia devoting the lions' share of that? But  
13 secondly, where outside the consortia are they  
14 going to get technical capacity?

15 MS. WEISS: It sounds like what would  
16 give you confidence is, in fact, the level of  
17 specificity. So not just a here's what we're  
18 going to do, but more -- very, very specifically,  
19 here's exactly how we plan on doing that. And  
20 that would give you more confidence that it would  
21 be accurate.

22 MR. COHEN: It would give me more

1 confidence. Here's the hard part in this. If we  
2 were very specific at the front end, we would have  
3 been specifically wrong in a number of ways  
4 because we hadn't figured it out. Right? So the  
5 challenge that you've got is figuring out how to  
6 push applicants to be specific without winding up  
7 reading works of fiction and how do they tell you  
8 that this is our best guess now, but it might  
9 change in ways that sounds like something other  
10 than the boilerplate that anyone could write at  
11 any time in the process? And I don't know -- I  
12 mean, that's the challenge, Bob. I don't know off  
13 the top of my head how to solve it.

14 MS. WEISS: That sounds like a good one  
15 to come back to this afternoon.

16 MR. AUGUSTE: I had a question, Mike.  
17 So, how many people are actually working on this?  
18 I mean, in terms of the capacity to operationalize  
19 it?

20 MR. COHEN: So, let's see. In each  
21 state there is, I would say, a portion of a state  
22 testing director or state testing staff devoted to

1 this. Their involvement tends to rise or fall  
2 cyclically depending on the needs. So, we're  
3 doing item reviews as more of their time.  
4 Otherwise, they're on conference calls of, as I  
5 recall, declining frequency. So, that's a limited  
6 effort. More up front, less in an ongoing way.

7 Achieve's devoted a fair amount of  
8 resources to this. For much of the development  
9 phase of the project we had two full-time testing  
10 people on it. In the early stages we had a  
11 significant amount of achieved leadership time to  
12 launching this. That was my time in particular  
13 for a while. I suspect this was about a half-time  
14 task for me. Laura Slover, who's our vice  
15 president for content and policy, spent an equal  
16 amount of time up front on this and continues to  
17 devote a significant amount of time to it.

18 And when it comes to communicating with  
19 state leadership overall, much of that is embedded  
20 in our overall communication with the states in  
21 the ADP leadership network, so it's not broken out  
22 just for this. That's a good thing in a sense

1 that it keeps the communication with the  
2 governor's office, with the chief, et cetera, on  
3 the broader agenda, not just on the test. But  
4 when you add that up, that is a substantial amount  
5 of time that fairly senior people at Achieve spend  
6 in trying to make this work from the technical  
7 level to the kind of small "p" political level.

8 MS. WEISS: Any other questions?

9 MR. MILLER: Yeah.

10 MS. WEISS: You've got another one?

11 MR. MILLER: Sure.

12 MS. WEISS: Go for it.

13 MR. MILLER: I guess maybe building on  
14 that, it's the notion -- let me call it the  
15 convener role that Achieve played. As an entity,  
16 could that have been done equally as effectively  
17 as a start up entity?

18 MR. COHEN: If we were a brand new  
19 organization?

20 MR. MILLER: Yes. Is that a relevant  
21 factor in thinking about -- because you leveraged  
22 existing communications and outreach mechanism.

1 Was that relevant or not relevant?

2 MR. COHEN: I think it was very relevant  
3 in a couple of this is an idiosyncratic answer.  
4 If I were at a start up organization I'd probably  
5 have a different take on it, but -- no, no,  
6 seriously.

7 MS. WEISS: No, that's true.

8 MR. COHEN: So, I think one of the  
9 things that made this possible from the outset is,  
10 first of all, we had a voluntary network of states  
11 brought together around a policy agenda.  
12 Secondly, a number of those states had, even  
13 before we formed the network, come to rely heavily  
14 on Achieve on a variety of technical issues. We  
15 were the ones who reviewed and gave feedback to  
16 them on their standards, oftentimes we had done  
17 reviews on how well their assessments were aligned  
18 to the standards. The point is, there was a level  
19 of confidence in our technical capability that I  
20 think made it possible for the handful of chiefs  
21 that said at our first meeting, we need a common  
22 test. I don't think if we had -- if we didn't

1 have that background I'm not sure that they would  
2 have raised that topic in this -- you know, in our  
3 venue, so the fact that we were both a going  
4 concern and one that had a track record with a  
5 significant number of states around these issues,  
6 I think, turned out to be critical.

7 A start-up would have to come at it in a  
8 different way.

9 MS. BATTAGLINO: I have a questions.  
10 You mentioned the unanimous decisions for all  
11 contract issues.

12 MR. COHEN: Yeah.

13 MS. BATTAGLINO: Could you talk a bit  
14 about the decisions that are majority rule or how  
15 other decisions --

16 MS. WEISS: Actually, you know what, I  
17 wrote that down as a question for this afternoon  
18 and we're out of time, so I'd like to move us on  
19 if that's okay and if you could pass the baton  
20 down there to Byron.

21 But that is a good question, Tammy, and  
22 we should come back to it because I would like to

1 learn more about that.

2 MR. AUGUSTE: Do I need to do something  
3 to change it?

4 MS. WEISS: Just hit next. Again.

5 MR. AUGUSTE: Great. Well, Joanne,  
6 thanks for the opportunity. Can everyone hear me?  
7 Okay, great. Thanks for the opportunity to share  
8 some perspectives on this assessments initiative.

9 I recognize that I'm among practitioners  
10 of multi state collaborations and I listened with  
11 great interest to Mike Cohen's description of the  
12 American Diploma Project and the common assessment  
13 there. Interestingly, I'm coming at it from a  
14 very different perspective, but reaching, I would  
15 say, a lot of the same conclusions that you just  
16 heard from Mike.

17 The perspective I'm taking is first from  
18 research that McKinsey and Company's Alliance  
19 Practice has done that looked at about 150  
20 multiparty networks and consortia in the  
21 commercial and the public and the nonprofit arena  
22 as well as public-private partnerships. So, look

1 at public-private partnerships in the world of  
2 global development and health which is a field in  
3 which these are used quite a lot and looking at  
4 what's been successful and what has failed there,  
5 as well as then a knowledge of the goals of the  
6 assessment program.

7 And so I'm going to -- to get to these  
8 questions on governance, I'll address each of  
9 them, probably not with the same degree of  
10 granularity as some of the folks who have been  
11 actually working specifically on assessment  
12 issues, but I'd like to really convey in the  
13 course of this discussion four overall messages  
14 that, as I said, I think are quite consistent with  
15 Mike's message.

16 The first is that good governance of  
17 consortia absolutely begins with focus, clarity,  
18 and specificity in design. If you -- if a  
19 consortia starts without clarity around a limited  
20 number of specified deliverables, that are  
21 defined, as I think Mike alluded to, to a level of  
22 operational milestones, it almost certainly will

1 fail.

2 Another factor here is that end user  
3 considerations, what is the value added for the  
4 actual users, in this case the educators, not just  
5 the states, is essential. And if you don't have  
6 this clarity up front, our experience with  
7 consortia is that far too many elements will be  
8 unanchored and will be the subject of perpetual  
9 negotiation and will just bog down the effort. So  
10 that's the first thing.

11 The second, in terms of the governance  
12 choices themselves, decision rules and rights  
13 within consortia have to be also clearly  
14 predefined and tiered. They need to be tiered  
15 according to the nature of the decision, so  
16 political decisions versus technical decisions,  
17 policy decisions versus operational decisions,  
18 common core decisions versus operational elements.  
19 These need to be defined, and in order to make  
20 decisions at the pace that's required for success,  
21 it's particularly critical to bring operational  
22 and technical decisions down to an operating and

1 implementation unit rather than at the policy and  
2 political decision making level. So that's my  
3 second big point.

4 The third big point is that effective  
5 consortia invests significantly in the  
6 institutional capacity to implement their goals,  
7 both to implement their goals, to manage partner  
8 relationships for performance, and to innovate  
9 fairly rapidly. So, as you think about the  
10 resource and time allocation, the best consortia  
11 are relatively governance- light and relatively  
12 implementation-heavy. We can talk more about what  
13 that means.

14 And then the fourth point is that having  
15 the incentives aligned to end user value creation  
16 is really, really important. So, in some cases,  
17 in the private sector, in commercial consortia,  
18 some have been much better than others at really  
19 connecting to what is the value to their  
20 customers. In the case of public or nonprofit,  
21 creating proxies for that value to the end user is  
22 absolutely essential and not so simple. And so in

1 this case -- so, the fourth big message is that in  
2 this case the Department of Education's framework  
3 has to serve a big as this market proxy. It's got  
4 to align incentives of the multistate consortia  
5 with value creation for the ultimate end users --  
6 for school systems, for educators, for students,  
7 for parents. Most obviously it needs to do that  
8 in the selection phase, but it also needs to do  
9 that in the ongoing implementation phase.

10 So, next I want to describe to  
11 illustrate the success factors, to give two  
12 examples of what have been highly successful  
13 consortia on their terms. So, the first is the  
14 Star Alliance, which is a commercial airline  
15 alliance that was founded in 1997 by 5 airlines  
16 and has grown to 26 airlines around the world and  
17 it's still growing. It now has about 28 percent  
18 global market share. As you think about those  
19 four points of design, governance, capacity, and  
20 aligned incentive, the Star Alliance started with  
21 some pretty specific objectives of trying to  
22 improve the customer experience and then to

1 integrate systems where there was value in  
2 integration, so, ticketing, ground and baggage  
3 handling, airport lounges, crisis management,  
4 things that you would actually want coordination  
5 on, and worked to do those. They got those  
6 aligned among the first five and have gradually  
7 brought others in.

8           Second, on governance choices, there is  
9 a tiering. So, there is a CEO board that sets the  
10 overall direction of the alliance and improves  
11 sort of high-level budgets, processes, and clearly  
12 has the sign-off on big strategic direction  
13 decisions. But there is then a managing partner  
14 of the alliance, so effectively a CEO or an  
15 executive director for the alliance, who develops  
16 all the operational plans, operating policies,  
17 budgets, and manages implantation. And by the  
18 way, in this case there's 45 people working that  
19 alliance management company, which is pretty small  
20 compared to the total size of the institutions  
21 they're working with, but it's enough to allow  
22 them to align with the operating leadership of

1 each of the partners and actually to implement.

2           And then finally on the incentives,  
3 there's just very clear metrics around how it  
4 affects customer demand, cross bookings,  
5 incremental profits, and so forth. So there  
6 they've got the benefit of the market signal.

7           The second example is the GAVI alliance,  
8 so the Global Alliance for Vaccines and  
9 Immunization, which is a public health initiative.  
10 It is now a \$4 billion institution that is focused  
11 on getting vaccines to the poorest countries and  
12 on bringing together a set of partners, including  
13 some funding partners, some policy partners, some  
14 implementation on the ground. So, this is one  
15 where there's actually a very diverse set of  
16 partners, each that plays a somewhat different  
17 role, but there was a pretty clear specifying of  
18 what each brought from the beginning. And then an  
19 important part of the design is that all of the  
20 plans are country-led, so GAVI doesn't just sort  
21 of take action in a country without that country  
22 having sort of initiated and integrated that plan.

1           So, on the governance side you see a  
2 very clear tiering. There is a board that sets  
3 strategy policies and approves budgets. There's  
4 an independent review committee which actually  
5 evaluates the grants and then tracks the  
6 performance of those grants and approves them.  
7 And then there's a secretariat that is operational  
8 and, again, at the program execution level.  
9 That's a rather large secretariat, it's 110  
10 people, but it's got the capacity to implement.  
11 And there, the alignment of incentives is a little  
12 less clear, but what they try to do is to proxy  
13 country demands through these country-led plans,  
14 and also performance metrics on end user delivery.

15           So, across these 140 or 150 sort of  
16 efforts we saw some critical lessons. Winning  
17 consortia, those that succeed, are focused and  
18 clear in their goals, they're biased towards  
19 operational effectiveness in their governance and  
20 decision making processes, and they're very  
21 focused in their metrics as well. And they  
22 typically will have metrics around value created

1 to each member and then to the ultimate end users  
2 and they track them and they take them quite  
3 seriously.

4           Unsuccessful consortia tend to be  
5 governance-heavy. They take on too many goals and  
6 initiatives and they take them on without driving  
7 their definition down to specific end user value  
8 and measurable value, I would add. And then on  
9 governance they tend to adopt a one-size-fits-all  
10 decision making processes so they'll think about  
11 the most contentious policy decision you might  
12 have to make and sort of think how would you make  
13 that decision. And then they try to make all  
14 decisions that way rather than tiering them, so  
15 that there are sort of very clear distinctions and  
16 that overemphasizes consensus. So I think Tammy's  
17 question that we'll talk about later, about what  
18 needs to be consensus versus what can be in fact  
19 much more operational, is an extremely important  
20 one because, otherwise, you will bog down decision  
21 making.

22           So, those are the lessons we saw. By

1 the way, there were more failure than there were  
2 successes, but that said, there were a few dozen  
3 successes. I mean, it's not something that hasn't  
4 been done. There are certainly examples of  
5 successful consortium.

6 So, then I tried to think about how some  
7 of these lessons might apply to the Race to the  
8 Top assessment program. And here I'm on less safe  
9 ground, but I thought it would be more helpful to  
10 give some real hypotheses that you can consider.

11 So, first of all, on the design. I  
12 think it's just essential that in terms of the  
13 focused purpose and deliverables and key design  
14 elements, they have -- I would come down on the  
15 side of they have to be decided up front, that  
16 it's actually very important that for the core  
17 objectives at an operational level, say the range  
18 of exams, the frequency, the timeliness, alignment  
19 to college-ready standards -- I mean, a number of  
20 these design issues really have to be decided up  
21 front and how they're going to apply to 100  
22 percent of the students in the consortium states.

1           There also needs to be a credible plan  
2           to deliver those "must haves" immediately in the  
3           short term, but it's also -- it is a good thing to  
4           be able -- for those plans to be able to have  
5           additional elements that they want to build, but  
6           that they're going to do later and thinking about  
7           a roadmap that's not, you know, specific, but  
8           don't force all the "good to haves" in that first  
9           phase. Because the focus is going to be important  
10          or else the thing can collapse under its own  
11          weight.

12           Second, value for end users. So, what  
13          does this mean in that context? If you want to  
14          make sure that this is not just a technical  
15          exercise, its impact depends on its use -- by  
16          school systems, by principals, by educators, by  
17          parents, by students, by researchers -- and the  
18          ultimate way to maintain that focus is to actually  
19          have end products that users use, so -- and to be  
20          measuring by that. So, for example, the question  
21          of for how many educators are student learning  
22          growth results available before the end of the

1 school year? That would be a very meaningful  
2 measure of the usefulness of it for learning  
3 professional development, career path decisions.

4 And then finally making sure that there  
5 are -- that this consortium does think hard about  
6 developing protocols to allow others to use the  
7 data that comes from this, to assess the  
8 effectiveness of not only schools, but  
9 intervention programs, teacher training, and the  
10 like. So, that should be a managed outcome, not  
11 something that happens accidentally, but something  
12 that is in the plan.

13 And then third on the design, I want to  
14 emphasize this economically sustainable model. If  
15 you don't have a sustainable model, and not just  
16 for the consortium itself, but for the ecosystem  
17 around it, this also needs to be a managed  
18 outcome, and specifically in this context. You  
19 can have designs that have significantly higher  
20 development costs per test item because that's a  
21 fixed cost and you've got scale economies in these  
22 consortia, but it is extremely important that the

1 per student cost of test administration not, in  
2 fact, be higher over time. And it's quite a good  
3 thing if there's a path to reduce that per student  
4 test administration cost over time, a roadmap for  
5 that leveraging technology or the like, because  
6 ultimately that is going to be potentially a big  
7 bottleneck in making this work in the field.

8           And then finally, this notion of  
9 creating interfaces by which third party services,  
10 whether formative assessments, professional, and  
11 the like, can happen. You know, it's a good -- if  
12 you want to keep the consortium itself focused on  
13 summative assessments, but yet you want to have  
14 the impact on instructional outcomes, then  
15 figuring out ways to allow others to easily create  
16 aligned formative assessments, for example, is a  
17 big deal.

18           On the governance choices then, you  
19 know, to borrow from Einstein, governance should  
20 be as simple as possible and no simpler. So one  
21 way to simplify governance right up front, and  
22 we've talked about this a bit, is again to be

1 aligned right at the beginning on the critical  
2 decisions, to have those embedded in the MOUs, and  
3 to make sure that end user outcomes are  
4 specifically part of the metrics, the  
5 constitution, if you will, so that when decisions  
6 are being made, those outcomes are what are  
7 ultimately being referenced.

8           Then this distinction between sort of  
9 policy, technical, and operational decisions needs  
10 to be there both at the structural level and at  
11 the level of decision rights. So structurally, if  
12 there's a steering committee at a very senior  
13 level, say the state chief's needs to make a small  
14 set of major policy decisions and sign off, then  
15 you need a strong operational executive to create  
16 the plans, the budgets, and lead the  
17 implementation and manage the partners, which I'll  
18 talk more about in a second, and then technical  
19 working teams that can crack some of the technical  
20 guidelines and so forth, and those should be very  
21 different. And very importantly, I think, the  
22 subcontractors should be managed by an executive,

1       like a delivery unit.

2                   And then on the decision rights, that  
3       should parallel that structure, so there needs to  
4       be a clear delineation between policy, which is  
5       the domain of the steering committee, and then the  
6       operational decisions.

7                   There needs to be clearly a set of  
8       decisions that require uniformity versus those  
9       that can vary and those need to be managed  
10      differently. And then there is a -- then there  
11      needs to be a process for innovation or expansion.  
12      I listened with interest to the ADP, sort of very  
13      clear cut. It's very easy to join as long as you  
14      accept, you know, what's been done before, but  
15      those sorts of processes clearly defined on how  
16      you're going to expand, because so much is going  
17      to change in the course of the life of these  
18      consortia.

19                  Third, the capacity investments that are  
20      required. If governance should be lighter than  
21      our instincts might lead us to in this field, the  
22      operational capacity, I believe, should be

1 greater. So, the ability to plan implementation  
2 and really to execute those goals, I believe,  
3 requires a pretty strong executive leadership in a  
4 project of this complexity. So, an administrator  
5 or CEO or whatever you want to call it, but  
6 someone who actually can make most operational  
7 decisions and manage the relationships and the  
8 consensus-building that Mike described so  
9 eloquently. And then with the delivery unit, it  
10 doesn't have to be a large -- when I say capable,  
11 it doesn't need to be large because much of the  
12 actual work will be done by either subcontractors  
13 or by the states, sort of people in the state  
14 staff, but there needs to be enough so that this  
15 can be driven on an ongoing basis.

16 So, then I want to emphasize the  
17 capacity to manage the network of partnerships, so  
18 you need the executive and delivery unit to be  
19 able to manage these partnerships for performance.  
20 So, I think it is not something that you can just  
21 hand over to a vendor to delivery even once you've  
22 defined a number of things up front, although the

1 vendor -- the core vendors will be very important,  
2 but need to be managed for performance against  
3 milestones, user objectives, the fidelity of the  
4 design criteria, and that's true whether that's  
5 for-profit or nonprofit partners.

6 Then there's a big role in making sure  
7 that the state education departments, obviously in  
8 testing, but in other areas as well, are aligned  
9 functionally to work with that delivery unit. And  
10 then finally, this thought again on how to make  
11 sure that there are interfaces and protocols for  
12 third parties to develop valuable end user  
13 services. That's another partnership function.

14 And then the capacity to expand and  
15 increase the network value over time. So many  
16 aspects of the environment will change: ESEA will  
17 change, technology will change. And most  
18 importantly, with these consortia we'll learn much  
19 more about what is working, and so the ability to  
20 innovate is important.

21 A mindset that says -- sort of almost a  
22 product release mindset where there is a

1 continuous improvement that's coming in in batches  
2 each year and they're sort of locked in and  
3 there's a roadmap is the right way to think about  
4 it. The alternatives to that sort of product  
5 release mindset are either continuous tinkering,  
6 which is quite difficult operationally in any  
7 environment and certainly in a multi-stakeholder  
8 environment, will be very difficult, or stasis,  
9 right, where you decide you've got it and jam  
10 everything you can in the first time and you're  
11 not going to get anything more, and that just  
12 won't work in this environment. So, that sort of  
13 product release kind of mindset is important.

14 And then the outreach capacity to  
15 demonstrate the methods and impact to other  
16 states. If the policy objective is that as these  
17 consortia work, these common assessments work,  
18 that we actually have more states included. There  
19 needs to be a clear sort of process and real  
20 resources devoted to allowing that to happen. And  
21 then I think I've probably said enough about these  
22 interfaces for third parties.

1                   And then finally on aligned incentives.  
2           And here I think I want to emphasize the roll of  
3           the Department of Education because there are  
4           issues of incentive alignment within the consortia  
5           and the way it's designed, things like, you know,  
6           what are the opt-outs versus the opt-ins? Is  
7           there bias in the governance design towards kind  
8           of higher sort of efforts? Mike, you talked about  
9           the question about cut scores and all of that.  
10          But from the department standpoint, I believe  
11          there's a role both obviously in the consortia  
12          design and selection, but also in the ongoing  
13          performance management. So, in the up front, just  
14          very important to award point, if you will, for  
15          alignment that you see around the design choices  
16          in consortium government, so the specificity of  
17          the MOUs, and really translating common philosophy  
18          into operational design, the decision to have  
19          operational leadership capacity with clear  
20          decision authority.

21                   Tony, to the question you asked earlier,  
22          I think the actual decision to invest executive --

1 you know, real authority in an operating executive  
2 would be one of the main signals, I would say, in  
3 terms of the capacity of these consortia. The  
4 alignment and the plan for alignment between the  
5 SEA functions and the consortia operations, as  
6 Mike mentioned, there are so many different  
7 decisions it's going to touch multiple parts of  
8 the state education authority. And then, also, I  
9 think it's important in that context to not  
10 penalize plans that responsibly sequence kind of  
11 good to have elements. So the fact that you don't  
12 have -- if one plan has, you know, everything that  
13 you could possibly want and another plan sort of  
14 takes it in stages, I don't think that second plan  
15 should be penalized for that. I mean, you need to  
16 really drill in to say can that first plan  
17 actually deliver on that.

18 Then also, though, awarding points for  
19 sustainable delivery of value to end users -- so,  
20 credible plans to deliver end user value, the  
21 number of educators covered, parents, the  
22 frequency -- how is this actually being used? I

1 would suggest that the consortia should have real  
2 plans to delivery that end user value that the  
3 states are committed to because that's -- and  
4 that's going to have all sorts of benefits besides  
5 -- because that's where the rubber is going to  
6 really hit the road in terms of alignment for one  
7 thing, but then it also is critical for impact.  
8 And in light of -- and in that, I think the  
9 sustainability -- economic sustainability, is also  
10 important. You should judge, in part, on is there  
11 a real plan to make these assessments, the  
12 administration of assessments, affordable for the  
13 states, because in the current budget environment,  
14 and in the budget environment we're likely to have  
15 for the next few years, if that's not true, this  
16 won't work.

17 Then on the ongoing, I think it is  
18 important to release the funds in stages based  
19 both on operational milestones and on end user  
20 value milestones achieved. I think it would be  
21 terrific to be able to have bonus funds, if you  
22 will, for the expansion of winning consortia to

1 additional states and additional subjects,  
2 consortia that are showing success in the market  
3 by others joining them are actually getting more  
4 money rather than have to share the money they've  
5 got, so to create an incentive for them to grow,  
6 if possible, to preserve significant funding for  
7 the creation of end user applications. And also  
8 then on ESEA itself, just to really ensure that  
9 the accountability and incentives embedded in ESEA  
10 are geared towards, you know, as you say, a Race  
11 to the Top, towards individual student growth,  
12 college readiness, and persistence, rather than to  
13 static proficiency metrics so that we don't  
14 replicate the perverse incentives that we have now  
15 in testing.

16 So, that's it, and I'm looking forward  
17 to your questions.

18 MS. WEISS: Thank you. Questions?

19 MR. MILLER: Ah --

20 MS. WEISS: Time it.

21 MR. MILLER: Should I wait?

22 MS. WEISS: No, no. Go ahead.

1                   MR. MILLER:  What struck me, I guess,  
2                   one by the examples, and, too, I think the dynamic  
3                   we're in -- as you think about effective  
4                   consortiums, how many of them have been, if you  
5                   will, project-based versus ongoing concerns?  
6                   Because what strikes me is that we're catalyzing  
7                   consortiums in this context for a specific  
8                   project, if you will, but reconciling -- you know,  
9                   Mike would say, but that should be in the context  
10                  of an overall assessment system design.  And so it  
11                  could have a much more ongoing concern aspect to  
12                  it that will outlive, if you will, this particular  
13                  program through Race to the Top.  How important is  
14                  that?  Right?  Should it be just around this  
15                  project or should we, in fact, be looking for  
16                  something that has more of an ongoing concern  
17                  characteristic to it?

18                 MR. AUGUSTE:  I guess I think that you  
19                 should probably be looking for more of an ongoing  
20                 concern than a one-time project.  I say that  
21                 partly because I think you can.  I think some of  
22                 the most successful consortia started out with a

1 major specific project, and that's very helpful to  
2 do because it focuses -- you know, it focuses on a  
3 piece of work and makes the sort of success much  
4 clearer. I think of something like SEMTECH, which  
5 is a coalition of the United States semiconductor  
6 industry, to develop process technology that was  
7 quite expensive to develop individually. And that  
8 was sort of a kind of a moon shot crash course  
9 project to start with, but has been very  
10 productive over time.

11           And then I also say that because as you  
12 think about the actual end user value you're  
13 trying to deliver the ongoing reporting, I think  
14 that there will be -- it will be years, right,  
15 before the full value of this can be fully  
16 realized. So, I think you ought to be thinking  
17 about something that would last for years rather  
18 than, you know, a onetime shot.

19           MS. WEISS: Other questions? I have  
20 one.

21           MR. COHEN: If you're going around the  
22 table, then you're next.

1           MS. WEISS: That wasn't exactly my plan,  
2 but okay. So, when you were talking about aligned  
3 incentives, I think this is something that we  
4 should also probably come back to this afternoon  
5 to just get more clarity, more examples, of what  
6 those might look like and how we might think about  
7 them. Because it's not something that we've  
8 really touched on very much so far in any of our  
9 meetings, and it would be helpful, to me anyway,  
10 to get more clarity around that. But one of the  
11 things that you mentioned was organizational  
12 alignment of relevant SEA functions to consortium  
13 operations. Were you talking about that -- say  
14 more about that piece.

15           MR. AUGUSTE: So, Mike briefly  
16 described, you know, the scores of decisions that  
17 need to be made and aligned even in the Algebra II  
18 test. Some of that would be just with the testing  
19 department, but some of that would be more broad  
20 -- would go more broadly. If you think about the  
21 end user value and you're saying that you want the  
22 consortia to actually commit, for example, to say

1 that one of the deliverables of the consortia  
2 should be that -- for in the participating states,  
3 parents, to have within -- you know, before the  
4 end of the summer, say, before their child goes  
5 back to the next school year, a report that really  
6 lays out where their child stands relative to the  
7 trajectory to college readiness and perhaps,  
8 ideally, sort of some things they could do about  
9 it, something that really engaged parents in a  
10 very useful way, in a meaningful way, on where  
11 their child stood and what role they should play.  
12 Then that would -- creating that would have to  
13 align with different parts of the SEA than just  
14 testing. So, I think -- I particularly mention  
15 that because of the desire to have more of an end  
16 user focus on what the deliverables of this  
17 consortium would be.

18 MS. WEISS: So, what you're talking  
19 about is the need to make sure up front that  
20 you've got ways of bringing in whatever the  
21 relevant pieces of the SEA or LEA organizations  
22 might need to be engaged in order to make the work

1       successful. Not just the most obvious people who  
2       are going to, you know, actually probably devote  
3       pieces of FTEs to this project, but how you think  
4       about upfront the way you're going to engage them?

5               MR. AUGUSTE: Absolutely. And also to  
6       be able to have that discussion in the design  
7       side. So, if you're talking about -- if you want  
8       to really understand what is going to be useful  
9       about this to help with teacher evaluations or  
10      career path decisions, for example, what's the  
11      timeliness you need, what's -- I mean, you need to  
12      understand that and I think have an alignment with  
13      wherever that is happening in the state.

14             MS. WEISS: Thanks.

15             MR. COHEN: I want to pick up on a point  
16      that Tony raised about thinking of these consortia  
17      as ongoing concerns rather than time-limited  
18      projects, which makes a lot of sense to me.

19             In the top of your presentation you  
20      talked about two types of successful consortia:  
21      One was private sector and one in public health I  
22      assume was more public sector. So, if you're

1 applying what you've learned to the consortia  
2 under discussion now, would it be the case, number  
3 one, that you'd want to see in the applications  
4 some sense that the applicants were looking at  
5 being an ongoing concern? And secondly, what have  
6 you learned from the public consortia about how  
7 they thought up front about arranging long-term  
8 financing for it? And I assume there were a  
9 finite number of choices for that. One would be  
10 to go back to Joanne and a second would be to look  
11 at state coffers, well, through Joanne.

12 So, how have they thought up front about  
13 the sustained financing they need?

14 MR. AUGUSTE: Right. Well, I think --  
15 in terms of the institutional structure, I think  
16 the key thing is to set up an executive and  
17 deliver unit and a management function that is  
18 able to deliver those. It's not that you need,  
19 you know, state legislatures to commit to be part  
20 of the consortium for the next 30 years. And  
21 that's not -- I mean, you know, you don't need to  
22 do that. But what you need to do -- what you need

1 to avoid doing is just saying, hey, if we just  
2 push through this for two years, we can beg,  
3 borrow, and steal resources from the SEAs and, you  
4 know, con someone and everybody will pitch in and  
5 we'll just get there, because the evidence is that  
6 that doesn't work. It doesn't work really  
7 anywhere and it probably won't work here.

8 So, I think the point of permanence is  
9 not so much a long-time commitment, but sort of  
10 actually building the capacity that can run and  
11 implement and then innovate over time.

12 In terms of the financing, that's a  
13 longer discussion. There have been some very  
14 creative financing mechanisms in the global public  
15 health field that include not only just government  
16 appropriations, but also things like advanced  
17 market commitments where you say, we will commit  
18 to buying this much vaccine if it meets these  
19 characteristics, et cetera, which, frankly, this  
20 very exercise is something -- it's a creative  
21 exercise along those lines. So I think we're  
22 already sort of doing some interesting work here

1 -- the Department is doing some very interesting  
2 work.

3           But I think, ultimately, there's no  
4 substitute on the financing side, in this case,  
5 for actually having a roadmap to no matter how  
6 much you're trying to improve the quality, the  
7 richness, other aspects of the test, you have to  
8 reckon with the constraint of the cost, the unit  
9 cost, of test administration per child. You have  
10 to have a plan that is viable, and I would argue  
11 that viable in this context means it's not more  
12 expensive than today, and you want a plan that  
13 leverages technology or other approaches to lower  
14 that unit cost over time. And I don't think  
15 there's any substitute. I don't think there's  
16 going to be enough additional financing for  
17 testing in the states to overcome that. So, I  
18 would call that a very critical design principle.

19           MS. BATTAGLINO: I was just going to --  
20 to the question of alignment, Byron, I know we  
21 talked a lot about alignment within consortia.  
22 But given the goal even that Joanne had aligned

1 for all of us and we all know exist around  
2 comparability across states, how from your  
3 organizational research and experience you think  
4 about alignment across consortia and what sort of  
5 structures might be in place to facilitate that in  
6 a constructive way? And we might be out of time.

7 MR. AUGUSTE: Well, I'll just say -- it  
8 won't take me much time to answer it because,  
9 frankly, there's not a lot of experience on that  
10 of aligning effectively across multiple consortia  
11 in the private sector standpoint. You don't  
12 align, you compete. And in the -- on the public  
13 sector side, the coordination among the various  
14 global public health institutions, for example,  
15 it's difficult, it's time consuming. That's why  
16 -- it's one of the reasons why GAVI has 100-person  
17 secretariat. I mean, the level of coordination is  
18 just, you know, mind-boggling complex and I think  
19 -- so, I know you're going to say more about this  
20 and I know it's a great topic, Tammy, but I would  
21 just say a set of really clear, measurable points  
22 of comparability across consortia is what you

1 need. And if you try to do more than that, if you  
2 try to actually have coordination among those who  
3 are already trying desperately to coordinate among  
4 themselves, I think it won't work.

5 MS. WEISS: Thanks. Tim, you're up.

6 MR. BOALS: Thank you. I've got that,  
7 but I need -- thank you. Okay, and it looks like  
8 we've just lost the screen.

9 MS. WEISS: Hello, AV, are you there?  
10 Sorry for the webinar folks. Our screens are  
11 down.

12 We're coming back shortly. Tim, do you  
13 want to get started since you can see and then  
14 this will join us in progress in a moment?

15 MR. BOALS: Sure. I'm hesitant to touch  
16 the clicker because I don't know what's going to  
17 happen next. But anyway, okay, sure.

18 MS. WEISS: No, click to your -- you  
19 should be able to sit here --

20 MR. BOALS: I should be able to? It's  
21 not working for me.

22 MS. WEISS: Is the remote connected to

1 the right computer?

2 MR. BOALS: Oh, there we go. All right,  
3 we're in business.

4 Okay, just to give you a real quick idea  
5 of who we are, the WIDA Consortium is, as I said  
6 earlier, stands for World-class Instructional  
7 Design and Assessment. We are located in Madison,  
8 Wisconsin, at the University of Wisconsin, and we  
9 are a group at its core that is about common  
10 standards and assessments for English language  
11 learners. And around that core we do research and  
12 professional development. And we're now beginning  
13 to engage in lots of things like classroom  
14 assessments and stuff that I probably don't have a  
15 lot of time to tell you about today, but anyway,  
16 at our core, that is what got us going.

17 In this presentation I'm going to take a  
18 similar route that Mike took in kind of outlining  
19 the principles, I think, that flow out of the  
20 questions that were asked. So, let's move on.

21 And this gives you a little clearer idea  
22 of who we are today. We now have 22 states in or

1 consortium, is I guess you could say we're an  
2 example of a successful consortium, particularly  
3 when you consider that in 2003, when we applied  
4 for an enhanced assessment grant, we started out  
5 with three states in our group, so we have grown.  
6 Sometimes the growth has been almost overwhelming,  
7 but we have grown very rapidly.

8 We started out at the Wisconsin  
9 Department of Public Instruction with, as I said,  
10 an enhanced assessment grant. As I go through the  
11 principles, it occurs to me that some of those we  
12 articulated very clearly in our initial proposal  
13 and some of them we probably didn't do, frankly, a  
14 very good job of thinking through. So, in some  
15 cases it might be do as I say, not as we did.  
16 Because I'm guessing that if the Department had  
17 been dingling us on really looking beyond the  
18 development phase and seeing that we had our act  
19 together in terms of how we were going to  
20 implement this afterwards, we actually didn't have  
21 a lot of that on paper.

22 The good news is that once we got the

1 grant, I started thinking about that right away  
2 and certainly it's, I think, more important to  
3 have it in the grant and have it up front. And we  
4 have learned some lessons the hard way, but we're  
5 still here and we're still, I would say, thriving  
6 at this time. So, it's worked for us, anyway.

7           So principle number one that I think we  
8 had from day one when we sat down to write our  
9 proposal, and that is the idea of having a clear  
10 mission. And our mission was to promote  
11 educational equity and academic achievement for  
12 linguistically and culturally diverse students  
13 through the development and dissemination of  
14 curricular instructional, assessment products, and  
15 resources. Some of you in the audience may be  
16 familiar with the ACCESS for ELL's test that is  
17 our flagship, large-scale, English language  
18 proficiency assessment.

19           So, the second principle, which I  
20 already mentioned, the idea of having a clear  
21 vision of what your products and services are. We  
22 started out with this idea that English language

1 learners would profit from having a common set of  
2 research-based English language proficiency  
3 standards that would be aligned to state academic  
4 content standards. And out of that set of  
5 standards, which we began to develop in 2003 when  
6 we first got the grant and launched in 2004, we  
7 then began working on the large-scale assessment  
8 that is required under No Child Left Behind. So,  
9 the common assessments, the common standards, and  
10 then the vision, of course, long term to do  
11 research and professional development around that.

12 We also built in the notions of  
13 continuous improvement pretty early in the game  
14 and I think that was right there in the grant,  
15 initial grant, that we said we did not want a  
16 static test, although at that time most of the  
17 English proficiency tests that were on the market  
18 were static and some of them had been in existence  
19 for 15, 20 years with very little changes. But we  
20 said we don't want that. We really want to look  
21 at the model of academic assessment and how those  
22 assessments change over time. So the idea of

1 continuous improvement was very important to us.

2 For us writing the initial grant, we  
3 recognized the value of public-private  
4 partnerships and contract relationships. I think  
5 we would have never gotten off the ground without  
6 working with the right people. And that was, in  
7 our case -- well, eventually became the Wisconsin  
8 Center for Education Research. As I said, we  
9 started at the Department of Public Instruction  
10 down the road, but also our primary contractor in  
11 the very beginning was the Center for Applied  
12 Linguistics here in Washington, D.C. So, we are a  
13 state-administered cooperative, as I said before,  
14 now with 22 member states. And so it's important,  
15 I think, in your consortium to have the team  
16 assembled that can really do the job that you  
17 need. And for us, the original grant -- in the  
18 original grant, we outlined what we saw as the  
19 sole source providers, which in this case was the  
20 Center for Applied Linguistics. We felt that they  
21 had a unique set of skills that they brought to  
22 the table in terms of creating an assessment, and

1 also understanding the population we're working  
2 with, English language learners.

3           And then within our grant we also  
4 stipulated that there would be a competitive bid  
5 process to look for a commercial, for-profit  
6 company that eventually became for us, MetriTech  
7 Inc. But that was done according to Wisconsin  
8 procurement requirements, which I think is an  
9 important point because the states that have come  
10 on board with us and have joined as members of the  
11 consortium, have looked to us to say did you do  
12 this in a way that is in sync with our own  
13 procurement requirements? And we have been able  
14 to provide them with the documentation as they  
15 join later on to say, yes, we did, we used  
16 Wisconsin's process and we did it on behalf of  
17 member states.

18           And for the most part that's worked,  
19 although we've had states call us and say we can't  
20 do it that way. We would have to do a bid through  
21 our own state.

22           Here you see the organization of WIDA

1 now. WIDA management, which is -- again, in 2006,  
2 we moved over to the university, and our  
3 management is both through the university and both  
4 through a governance board of directors, which  
5 I'll talk a little bit more about in a minute.  
6 And here you see our contractors. The test  
7 development happens in at the Center for Applied  
8 Linguistics. The printing, distributing, scoring,  
9 and reporting of our main assessment happens  
10 through our commercial contract through MetriTech.  
11 And then standards development, Dr. Margo Gottlieb  
12 in conjunction with a lot of teachers who have  
13 worked with us on the development and the  
14 iterations of the standards, we're now in our  
15 second iteration, main iteration. The first one  
16 was in 2004, the second came out in 2007. We're  
17 already talking about a new iteration of our  
18 standards particularly keeping in mind the changes  
19 that are happening through the movement for common  
20 standards and assessments.

21 Okay, so principle number four,  
22 accountability and capacity. For us, we have set

1 up our consortium in a way where we are  
2 accountable to our consortium members in several  
3 ways: To meet federal and state requirements; to  
4 meet educator needs and ultimately the needs of  
5 students, which we feel very strongly about. We  
6 wouldn't have gotten in the business if we didn't  
7 think the standards and the assessments that we've  
8 provided push educators in the right direction  
9 towards helping English language learners really  
10 be successful within school environments, and the  
11 providing useful tools and information for those  
12 educators so that accountability to the consortium  
13 is very important to us. But as Mike and Byron  
14 noted, I think there are very different roles in  
15 terms of what the consortium wants to be  
16 accountable to and what, on a day-to-day basis,  
17 the leadership through the university is doing.  
18 In other words, the day-to-day operations our  
19 consortium SEA board doesn't really want to have  
20 much to do with and, thankfully, we don't bother  
21 them with those things.

22 But the university, on the other hand,

1 provides us with a system of fiscal accountability  
2 that I would say is extremely rigorous. A recent  
3 example of that is when I paid the taxi driver  
4 slightly more than the 15 percent tip and found  
5 that I got docked on my travel by 3 cents. So,  
6 there is fiscal oversight to the nth degree in  
7 terms of everything we do within the university  
8 environment, so, fiscal and regulatory oversight  
9 sometimes to the point of driving you crazy.

10 I think that's something for consortia  
11 to think of. What really is the best place in  
12 which you're going to thrive? For us getting out  
13 of the Department of Public Instruction was the  
14 first step that we absolutely had to do. State  
15 education agencies are not the right place to run,  
16 in my opinion -- particularly our consortium, I  
17 don't know that I could speak for all consortia,  
18 but when you think about it the basic mission of  
19 any state department of education is to serve the  
20 state within which they work, they operate. So,  
21 if you're housing a consortium with multiple  
22 states within that operation, there's an

1 incongruence from the get go in terms of the  
2 agency's mission and your mission.

3           So, as soon as we got the grant and  
4 began developing the standards and assessments, I  
5 began going around my department saying, you know,  
6 guys, you don't really want us here when we get  
7 this built. And the first response I got was,  
8 well, sure we do. You're going to be fine. I  
9 kept saying, no, I don't think you want us here.  
10 And little by little as they saw the complexity of  
11 the operation and the number of states that were  
12 jumping on board, they began to come to me and  
13 said you're right, Tim, we don't want you here.  
14 Where are you going to go?

15           And I had been looking into  
16 possibilities. Forming a nonprofit was one  
17 possibility for us and going to the university was  
18 another, and it turned out going to the university  
19 was the best option for us. It was easy to do  
20 within our state structure because we were able to  
21 do an interagency transfer from the DPI over to  
22 the university a mile down the road. The

1 university was interested in us because I was able  
2 to sell the fact that there would be research  
3 around this, there would be professional  
4 development, it would be a great example of how  
5 the university could do a sort of theory to  
6 practice outreach and also that we had contractors  
7 to handle some of the messier stuff, like the  
8 printing and distributing, scoring and reporting,  
9 which the university would have thrown their hands  
10 up had I said we were going to do that in Madison.  
11 But the fact that we were doing it in other  
12 places, they said, okay, this sounds like  
13 something we're interested in.

14 So, getting it out -- I can't emphasize  
15 enough -- finding a home that works for the long  
16 run and the place you develop it, which was  
17 adequate when we had the original grant at the  
18 Department of Public Instruction, was definitely  
19 not adequate for the implementation phase of the  
20 operation. So, I think that's one of the pieces  
21 that at the time of the grant we had not thought  
22 through adequately. Fortunately, we got the grant

1        anyway and we began thinking of those things right  
2        away and trying to set up the mechanisms to get us  
3        smoothly transferred over to the university.

4                No sooner did I get into the university  
5        than I told them that at some point we would grow  
6        to the point where even the university structure  
7        in and of itself would probably be too  
8        bureaucratic for everything we were trying to do.  
9        We have already reached that point and we have a  
10       proposal in front of our regent's board at the  
11       university to allow us to have a nonprofit arm so  
12       that some of the auxiliary functions, not the main  
13       core functions which actually work quite well  
14       through the university, but some of the auxiliary  
15       functions like the professional development, some  
16       of the new product initiatives that we have going,  
17       really don't fit very well within the university  
18       bureaucracy. So again, we're seeking another  
19       place to go that is more nimble in terms of being  
20       able to get out into the field to directly, in  
21       some cases, to districts and schools the kinds of  
22       support materials that we think will make their

1 job of educating students easier to do.

2           Okay, so, another key piece, I think  
3 that WIDA has done a very good job of from the  
4 very beginning, is involving our stakeholders in  
5 decision making. And again, I'll reiterate that  
6 you have to focus on the decisions that people  
7 want to make, so our state advisory board gets  
8 together once a year in person and we share with  
9 them the key policy decisions that we think  
10 they're interested in. And they have been  
11 extremely helpful and very involved, I must say.  
12 When we have board meetings we typically get  
13 almost every state to the table. This particular  
14 year our board meeting -- or last year, I mean --  
15 I think there were two states that didn't come and  
16 I think it was because they were under travel  
17 bans. Otherwise, we get a lot of participation at  
18 our annual meeting. We have quarterly phone calls  
19 with our states. Almost all of our states are on  
20 those calls. So, that's gratifying that they want  
21 to keep informed of what's going on in the  
22 consortium, they're interested in providing us

1 with feedback, and that really has worked very  
2 well for us.

3 At another level, I think, one of the  
4 secrets to WIDA's success has been the involvement  
5 of educators. I mentioned that when Margo began  
6 the development of standards there were educators  
7 at the table from all of our states. And every  
8 time we sit down to look at the standards, we're  
9 working with teachers and working with  
10 administrators that have direct experience in  
11 understanding English language learners. Even our  
12 test item development we do through an online  
13 course. The first draft items are actually  
14 created by teachers, which I think has really been  
15 -- we wondered how that would work in the  
16 beginning, frankly, but it's been really  
17 successful for us. And then the Center for  
18 Applied Linguistics takes those items and revises  
19 the items to make sure the psychometric properties  
20 are what they should be and uses professional item  
21 writers for that task. But beginning with  
22 teachers, I think, is key because, you know, how

1 many tests have teachers looked at and said I, as  
2 a teacher, would never write this test. This test  
3 really doesn't reflect what my kids need.

4 So, in the development of these tests,  
5 curricular materials, everything we do, there are  
6 always teachers at the table. So, keeping open  
7 lines of communication between various  
8 stakeholders, teachers, administrators, our state  
9 partners, has been really key, I think, to our  
10 success.

11 Okay, now plan for the long term. This  
12 gets at the question about what the consortium  
13 applications should look like. And, again, I said  
14 we did some of this pretty well, some of it we  
15 probably didn't do that well. But making sure  
16 that you have a clear plan for the future and  
17 what's going to happen once the products and  
18 services are developed, and where your home is  
19 going to be for these, and making sure that the --  
20 wherever that bureaucracy might be that they  
21 understand your needs, this is a real key, I  
22 think, to making sure that you're going to be

1 successful in the long term.

2 Of course, having products and services  
3 that people really need and that those are  
4 innovative, I mean, that's at the core of all  
5 this. If you're not providing something that  
6 really goes beyond what's already out there, don't  
7 expect people to call and want to join.

8 And, as I've already said, I think state  
9 explicitly in the grant application as much as you  
10 can about the long- term capacity and how you're  
11 going to keep this going and how you're going to  
12 keep it funded. We get our revenue through the  
13 sale of the assessment. That's how we generate --  
14 primarily, that's how we generate our revenue.

15 And I think we're getting close to the  
16 end here. Principle seven, assessing the adequacy  
17 and efficiency. This corresponds to the "What can  
18 go wrong?" question in your notes. One thing I  
19 think is assuming that the SEAs can manage the  
20 products after they're developed. For us, that  
21 would have been a huge mistake. And fortunately,  
22 you know, the time came when they said, yeah, Tim,

1       you've got to get out of here.  Where are you  
2       going to go?

3                 The over-customization of the core, I  
4       think that would have killed us if we didn't have  
5       the common standards and the common assessment.  I  
6       mean, at various points states have tried to say  
7       to us, you know, we want a different set of items  
8       or we want a different set of standards, and we've  
9       held fast to the idea that the core has to be  
10      shared.  And if you want to be part of the WIDA  
11      consortium, this is what you're buying into.

12                Now, there is, I think, the opportunity  
13      to customize around the core.  And certainly you  
14      can't be so rigid as to say that nothing is  
15      different in New Mexico versus one of our --  
16      Maine, for example.  There are differences and I  
17      think we've been able to balance the need for  
18      customization with the common core.

19                Another issue is if you don't have a  
20      long term plan for management or you get stuck  
21      within the bureaucracy, which I've already  
22      mentioned.  And this was mentioned before, I

1 think, Byron said the procurement hurdles are  
2 things that you really need to be thinking about.  
3 And I know that's the focus of tomorrow's meeting,  
4 but I'll just throw that out there that you can't  
5 start too soon with asking those questions of the  
6 states that have signed up and say they're going  
7 to be your partners. What are they willing to  
8 accept in terms of sole source agreements versus  
9 the bid process and what chunk can be done through  
10 a bid and through a commercial vendor versus what  
11 is truly unique to your consortium and has to be  
12 part of a sole source agreement?

13 Okay, here you just see a screen shot of  
14 our website and I'll just mention in closing that,  
15 as I said, it's an iterative process. WIDA has  
16 not stopped with one set of standards and one  
17 large-scale assessment. We're now in the process  
18 of developing a lot more.

19 The first project you see there, ONPAR,  
20 are math and science assessments that work, that  
21 are actually reliable and valid for beginning to  
22 intermediate level English language learners;

1 something that is not really out there yet. The  
2 FLARE project, informative language assessments,  
3 and a brand new project we have on the table right  
4 now called Standards, Assessments, and  
5 Instructional Links where we hope to develop  
6 centers that assist schools in the teaching of  
7 academic language and how to infuse good academic  
8 language instruction into math, science, social  
9 studies, and language arts classrooms to ensure  
10 that kids are getting meaningful instruction all  
11 day long, not just when they're in the ESL  
12 program. The TOYBOX proposal for early childhood  
13 assessments and we're now beginning to think about  
14 moving our test online, so these are all things  
15 that WIDA's moving ahead with.

16 And I believe that's it.

17 MS. WEISS: Thank you. Questions for  
18 Tim?

19 MR. MILLER: You talked about the role  
20 that, for example, the location played in terms of  
21 influencing kind of the autonomy, the perceived  
22 autonomy. What would be the set of factors that

1 you think, in addition to location, you could say  
2 funding -- are there a set of -- what are the key  
3 things that would influence the autonomy, if you  
4 will, of the consortium, the convening, the  
5 convener of the consortium, that we should be --  
6 if autonomy is important, right, what are those  
7 key factors?

8 MR. BOALS: Right. Well, I mean, I  
9 think your location does influence because, as I  
10 said, at one point we were trying to decide  
11 whether a nonprofit would be the best way to go  
12 versus a university. And actually, I have to say  
13 a lot of those decisions were made for us by the  
14 agency within which we operated. They said, you  
15 know, we're willing to shift you over to a  
16 university. And I think the nice thing about the  
17 university is still there are lots of constraints,  
18 so you don't want too much autonomy. I mean, you  
19 want to have that fiscal context, you want to have  
20 those safeguards so that the states feel good  
21 about working with you.

22 On the other hand, bureaucracies on a

1 day-to-day level can be maddening to try to work  
2 with. I mean, we're, in many ways, we're trying  
3 to run a business out of a university. And that's  
4 something that to the university, just as we were  
5 a strange entity within the Department of Public  
6 Instruction, we are also a strange entity within  
7 the university in many ways, but the university is  
8 set up to provide quite a bit more autonomy than  
9 the DPI was.

10 I mean, to give you an example of that,  
11 within the state Department of Education, the  
12 Department of Administration keeps much, much more  
13 careful tabs on what is happening and the  
14 day-to-day operations. The university is allowed  
15 a certain amount of autonomy to run and get things  
16 done within constraints, of course, and we do have  
17 lots of auditors looking over our shoulders,  
18 particularly when it comes to money matters. But  
19 when it comes to the decisions about what to do  
20 next and what to develop, well that sort of  
21 guidance is coming from the states and we're not  
22 constrained by the university. So maybe that

1 philosophy of academic freedom that you find in a  
2 university has actually turned out to be very good  
3 for us because they don't get in the way of us  
4 doing what we need to do and what our states are  
5 saying we ought to be doing.

6 I don't know if I answered your question  
7 or not.

8 MR. MILLER: Yeah, I guess just a follow  
9 -- but maybe specifically on funding and  
10 financing. So, as you think about then -- you  
11 could imagine that, you know, you want to make  
12 sure that it's equally funded by all participants,  
13 so there's no perceived bias or --

14 MR. BOALS: Yeah, and I didn't mention,  
15 but it was mentioned earlier, the idea of  
16 memorandum of understanding. We have MOUs with  
17 all of our states and the MOUs are common for the  
18 most part, and they do stipulate that the states  
19 are using the standards and that they are buying  
20 the assessments and there's a common price for  
21 buying the assessment. And what we've managed to  
22 do is to build in that price for the assessment

1 some of the other things that our own state board  
2 has said they would like to see us do, so not only  
3 the administration of the assessment, but some of  
4 the research activities around the assessment.  
5 For example, helping states determine annual  
6 measurable achievement objectives. That's  
7 something our state said we really want you to do.  
8 Okay, well, we built that in so that when they pay  
9 for the test, they're getting the assessment and  
10 they're getting our policy support; they're  
11 getting the needed research and the needed new  
12 development money. All of that is built into the  
13 price and it's stipulated in the memorandum of  
14 understanding.

15 And fortunately for us, our growth has  
16 been quick enough to help us outrun some of the  
17 price increases that we probably would have needed  
18 to do to really maintain the sort of ambitious  
19 agenda that WIDA has done because it is a lot  
20 beyond the assessment itself. I mean, they're  
21 paying for all of these additional pieces and all  
22 that costs money. So far it's worked for us.

1 MS. WEISS: Any other questions?

2 MR. COHEN: Just a follow-up to that.  
3 I've been thinking about the cost issues since  
4 Byron raised them because we hear that from states  
5 a lot. So, it sounds like you've been able to  
6 pull off something of a miracle here, seriously,  
7 if you're building into the cost per test, right,  
8 for each state, these other costs, that would  
9 suggest the costs -- well, they fluctuate. But  
10 I'm just trying to think -- I'm wondering if you  
11 know how that plays back home in the state capital  
12 when somebody not involved in the discussions  
13 looks at the cost per test and says why are we  
14 paying so much more for this test than the other  
15 tests? How does that get worked out?

16 MR. BOALS: That's a good question. By  
17 and large, as I said, the requests to do more have  
18 come from the states themselves. So, when a  
19 particular state calls us and says, you know, why  
20 are you \$3 or \$4 more per student than X test? We  
21 can -- and we have gone back and said, well, you  
22 know, you as a voting member on a board ask us to

1 do the following, and here are the -- and for the  
2 most part, a lot of those decisions were virtually  
3 unanimous in terms of the state saying -- I mean,  
4 lately, in the tough economic times we're in, my  
5 role as the director at the board meeting has been  
6 to remind people when they say, hey, we'd really  
7 love it if you'd do the following, and to go to  
8 them and say, wait a minute, if we do do that,  
9 that's going to add a quarter to your price next  
10 year. Do you really want that?

11 And then the discussion ensues and the  
12 last two years we have not been adding much  
13 because this is not the climate to be raising the  
14 price and so we've really tried to keep it level.  
15 But certainly the growth, too, the fact that we're  
16 adding three to four new states a year has allowed  
17 us to have a little leeway.

18 MR. COHEN: Thanks.

19 MS. WEISS: Any other questions? All  
20 right, well, thank you. We are now all that's  
21 standing between you and lunch, so let me give you  
22 the lunch instructions.

1           I know a number of you preordered  
2 lunches and, if you did, they are currently  
3 outside in your registration and they're labeled  
4 for you. If you didn't preorder lunch, there is a  
5 snack bar I hear on the 7th floor. There's also a  
6 number of places right across the street where you  
7 can get a bite to eat and escorts will be  
8 available starting around 12:40 to get you back  
9 into the building.

10           And we will reconvene at 1:10. So we'll  
11 see you back here in an hour, and thank you.

12                       (Whereupon, at 12:08 p.m., a  
13                       luncheon recess was taken.)

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1 well, indeed, others have failed completely, and  
2 most were somewhere in between. And out of all of  
3 that, I've learned a few things and I thought it  
4 might be useful if I shared it with you.

5 First, some notes on, from this  
6 experience, how consortia fail. The first of  
7 these has been the focus of some considerable  
8 comment this morning, and I'll have a little bit  
9 more to say about it in a moment. But many fail  
10 for a lack of clear vision and goals to which the  
11 members are committed up front. The two most  
12 important words in here are "up front."

13 Lack of capable leadership, another  
14 point that was made by several people this  
15 morning. Not infrequently, an inadequate business  
16 plan.

17 And finally, and in my view most  
18 important, lack of alignment among all the  
19 participants. It is really too bad when you find  
20 out once you're into it that you're not actually  
21 on the same wavelength. It is often hard to  
22 recover.

1           The vision thing. Many consortia get  
2 put together because somebody put some money on  
3 the table, not because they actually are composed  
4 of organizations or individuals who actually share  
5 a strong vision and want to get it accomplished no  
6 matter what it takes. If that is the case, if  
7 there is no real common vision, my experience is,  
8 more often than not, the participants will sit  
9 there to protect their interests, primarily. It  
10 is extremely difficult to overcome a governance  
11 structure so composed and what you typically get  
12 out of that is what they will all agree to. And  
13 in that circumstance what they will all agree to  
14 is often not worth trying to do in the first  
15 place.

16           So -- wait a minute, I think I missed  
17 one. Yes, okay.

18           So, leadership. Someone must lead. And  
19 another point I think that was made repeatedly  
20 this morning is that that leadership, the actual  
21 leadership that drives the thing forward, rarely  
22 comes from within the consortium. It usually

1 comes from without the consortium. It usually  
2 comes from the people who are committed to this  
3 activity full time, who are backed up with a  
4 capable staff, who are totally devoted to the  
5 enterprise. If you don't have that, as Byron  
6 pointed out this morning, your prospects are  
7 dismal.

8 On governance. For the big decisions,  
9 the decision makers need to sit at the table. But  
10 I think it's -- this is the tricky part, actually.  
11 It's not just the key decision makers, as Mike and  
12 others pointed out this morning. It is a set of  
13 related decision makers, not only who need to  
14 participate in the decisions, but need to see  
15 others like them participating in the decisions so  
16 they have some confidence that their views are  
17 going to be represented in the final product.

18 If you're going to avoid getting  
19 involved in a situation in which the governance  
20 board reviews every decision and then gets totally  
21 bored because they don't have the time, then they  
22 have to have confidence in the staff. That really

1 is the key to this relationship, in my view. It  
2 is certainly possible to tier decision making to  
3 some extent.

4 We have actually rarely done that. That  
5 is, had committees for this and committees for  
6 that and committees for the other. More often  
7 what we've done is to figure out what the key  
8 decisions are, make sure that the key decision  
9 makers -- this is, in our case, mostly chief state  
10 school officers in the consortia I have set up in  
11 the past. If they really care about this  
12 enterprise, they will turn to their staff when a  
13 big decision comes up and say what is the right  
14 thing for me to do in this situation? And if you  
15 have not done your homework, talked extensively  
16 with them so they understand what the issues are,  
17 where you want to go, and why you want to go  
18 there, that is where it falls apart.

19 We have rarely set up formal committees  
20 of such people. Sometimes that's useful;  
21 sometimes it isn't. But the key -- one of the  
22 keys here is making -- is being clear about what's

1 a major decision and what isn't; what's a policy  
2 decision and what isn't; making sure that the  
3 people who are going to make those decisions are  
4 properly staffed back home and their staff know  
5 what you are doing and why you want to do it and  
6 you've had your arguments before the meeting takes  
7 place. None of that makes any difference, unless  
8 they're all committed to the vision. You will  
9 fall apart if that's not the case.

10 I might just add, again, in reinforcing  
11 something Mike said earlier, in most of the work  
12 that we've done, the chief state school officer is  
13 the key. But in the -- particularly in this work,  
14 if we don't have the higher education people on  
15 board, if we don't have key people in the  
16 legislature on board, if we don't have key people  
17 in the superintendent's community in the state, it  
18 won't happen. You may be able to create the  
19 assessment, but if that assessment is  
20 significantly different from the kind of  
21 assessments that you've currently got, if it's  
22 going to be used in a different way, even more

1 important, than it's currently being done, you'd  
2 better have all those folks on board.

3 In the work that we're doing now,  
4 consortium we're putting together now, we are  
5 hiring a very high-level, full-time person to  
6 work full time with no more than three states.  
7 Because that's the level of effort we think is  
8 necessary to relate to all the constituencies in  
9 the state that have to be woven together to make  
10 it work. You can't rely on the folks in the  
11 states to do that, they have other jobs. You need  
12 to help them.

13 On expert advice. Well, in this  
14 particular case that we're talking here about  
15 assessment, it's fraught with technical and legal  
16 issues, as everybody in this room knows. There's  
17 a lot of pressure right now on political leaders  
18 to keep the costs of assessment low. That's a  
19 constraint, we all have to face it.

20 In that circumstance, quality is likely  
21 to take a back seat and you need to have a counter  
22 pressure here. I believe that it's going to be

1 very important as these consortia are put together  
2 to have absolutely first rate technical advice  
3 coming from people whose reputation largely  
4 depends on the quality of their advice and who are  
5 not likely to compromise on that. You're really  
6 putting together a little social structure here.  
7 You've got the governance people here, you've got  
8 the people whose job it is to make the system --  
9 to develop the product over here, and you've got  
10 the technical experts over here, and you need to  
11 hold that all in balance to produce a product that  
12 is going to be used and useful and technically  
13 adequate. And those are three things that have to  
14 be done, they're not optional.

15           There we go. So. It's been said this  
16 morning, I thought Byron said it very well, if  
17 you're going to put together a consortium that is  
18 basically cobbled together from people who have  
19 other jobs in the states, don't bother. It won't  
20 work. We are mostly dealing now as an  
21 organization with people in the state agencies who  
22 have the jobs that three people had three years

1 ago. And each one of them was doing jobs that  
2 three others had three years before that. That's  
3 what we see from one end of this country to the  
4 other. These are not organizations that are going  
5 to be in a position to take on a big new job of  
6 any kind. It's just -- it is really hard for them  
7 to get from one day to the next doing the jobs  
8 they've been assigned, never mind writing RTTT  
9 proposals.

10 So, I think it's going to be very  
11 important for the states as they put the consortia  
12 together and for the government as it looks at the  
13 proposals to ask themselves who is going to do  
14 this work? And what are their qualifications to  
15 do it? And largely, that's not going to be the  
16 people in the states.

17 The people in the states have a  
18 crucially important job to do, which is to ask the  
19 question how is this going to meet our needs? Is  
20 this going to get my state where it needs to go?  
21 And when my boss turns to me and asks me is this  
22 something I should do, and I'm giving that person

1 the right advice. That's not something that the  
2 leadership group, if you will, can do. The state  
3 employees upon whom the commissioner relies have  
4 to do that and all the related people. But we  
5 shouldn't fool ourselves about how the work is  
6 going to get done.

7 So -- I'm just reading through this to  
8 see what other points I really need to press on  
9 here.

10 The last point really is who's  
11 responsible at the end of the day? If you have a  
12 group of people who are lead by a capable leader  
13 and who themselves have the technical and, by the  
14 way, political capacity to get this work done,  
15 they are, in my judgment, equally important.  
16 Who's responsible at the end of the day? Is it  
17 that group? Is it the chairman of the board of  
18 the governing board? Is it the state that holds  
19 your grant? It's going to need to be very clear,  
20 I think, both to the consortium itself and its  
21 members, and the government, when it makes a grant  
22 who's responsible at the end of the day.

1     Actually, the answer to that is for what? And  
2     that all needs to be spelled out. Otherwise,  
3     there are going to be problems. If it's not clear  
4     to the participants, you're going to be in  
5     trouble. And if it's not clear to the funder,  
6     you're going to be in trouble. And often these  
7     things are glossed over when you try to get  
8     started. You can't gloss them over.

9             On the business plan. What will the  
10     costs be in the short, the medium, and the long  
11     term? Will it cover just the assessments or all  
12     of the associated costs? This was a question  
13     Byron raised in his remarks. Our point of view --  
14     and you may have a different one. But our point  
15     of view on testing is that we're not actually  
16     going to use testing to effect a very big  
17     difference in the outcomes for students unless  
18     they have a different curriculum that is closely  
19     tied to the standards and to the tests. And that  
20     curriculum is well delivered in classrooms.

21             So, if you're sitting there saying the  
22     costs of this are going to be the cost for the

1 test, I'm standing there on the other side of the  
2 fence saying, oh, no, it's not. Because if you're  
3 telling me that there's going to be an outcome  
4 here in terms of improved student performance,  
5 there are many other things that have to be done.

6 And if I'm reading your proposal, I want  
7 to know what's your plan for doing them. How are  
8 all pieces fit together? What are they going to  
9 cost? How does that compare to what you're  
10 currently spending?

11 You will find without a doubt that even  
12 though everybody is poor -- I'm speaking of the  
13 states these days -- some are poorer than others.  
14 And that's probably going to be more true over the  
15 next two or three years than it is now. The  
16 petrol states along the Rocky Mountain frontier  
17 are doing not so badly, right down to Texas, but  
18 other states are hurting really badly.

19 So, when you're putting a consortium  
20 together, if you're not clear up front what the  
21 plan is, where the money is going to come from,  
22 who has to contribute what at which point, you are

1 going to build up a set of conflicts which may be  
2 impossible to resolve. That, too, has to be, in  
3 my view, very clear up front. What's the business  
4 plan? Where is the money going to come from?

5           Byron said this morning because of all  
6 this that he thought that for all these reasons  
7 that the tests that are proposed have to be  
8 proposed at a price that is no higher than is  
9 currently being paid. I actually don't agree with  
10 that. But what I do agree with is that it --  
11 because I think there are ways of putting systems  
12 together which will actually result in lower net  
13 costs, even though the costs of the tests are  
14 higher. But the point remains the same. I think  
15 that you who are putting a consortium together and  
16 you who are evaluating their proposals need to be  
17 very clear in your own head where is the money  
18 going to come from. How much is it going to cost?  
19 What is it going to be used to pay for? Have they  
20 covered the actual costs of making this thing  
21 work, producing what they say they're going to  
22 produce? And so on. There has to be a business

1 plan.

2           Okay. So, the last and -- one of the  
3 last, I guess, most important questions here is to  
4 what extent will the interests of the participants  
5 be aligned? I've put together and run a number of  
6 consortia. Almost all of them have consisted of  
7 entities that were really on the same wavelength  
8 at the beginning, sometimes in a very detailed  
9 plan. And some of them have just come apart over  
10 time, because it turns out that they were -- other  
11 organizational participants, they changed  
12 leadership, their organization changed direction  
13 and asked them to go in a different way even  
14 though they might not have wanted to do so.  
15 Consortia are essentially centrifugal, geometrical  
16 figures. Takes an enormous amount of energy to  
17 keep them together, the general forces are to  
18 tear them apart, not to push them more tightly  
19 together.

20           So, when you're evaluating the way you  
21 put the consortium together, if you are doing it  
22 or you're evaluating a proposal to do it, ask

1       yourself the question: What is it that's getting  
2       these folks to say they're going to be a part of  
3       this? What's driving them? Is that likely to be  
4       in place for very long? Have you got the  
5       incentives right? When we were doing new  
6       standards, some of you know what that is. It's a  
7       large, 23-state coalition of states to develop  
8       within state-of-the-art standards in assessments.  
9       We ended up with a whole thing with a set of, I  
10      thought, really great assessments and we  
11      contracted with one of the country's leading  
12      companies to publish the assessments.

13                 We hadn't sat down and really thought  
14      about the incentives facing their salespeople.  
15      And it turned out that the product that we had  
16      produced was more complicated than what they sell  
17      -- normally sold, by quite a lot. Took a lot more  
18      explaining. And the incentives that they had to  
19      sell it were the same as the incentives that they  
20      had to sell the stuff they'd been selling for 20  
21      years, which they could explain like that and  
22      which everybody understood, and they actually got

1 a bigger commission. And that was the end of us.

2 Think through the incentives, that each  
3 of the actors have all the way through, to get  
4 this thing done that has been proposed. It isn't  
5 enough to get a group of people around the table,  
6 holding their hand in the air, saying this is a  
7 good thing and I'll sit at the table. What is it  
8 they're actually signing up for? What incentives  
9 are going to keep them at that table and what  
10 incentives are going to drive them away? It's  
11 worth thinking all of that through.

12 I put here just a sample list of  
13 participants. By providers, by the way, I meant  
14 just the sort of thing I was talking about:  
15 Publishing company, testing company, the people  
16 who are actually going to do the work on which  
17 you're going to depend to get the job done. What  
18 are their incentives? But all the others count,  
19 too.

20 So, one of the -- I wanted to close,  
21 really, on this note. I believe the department  
22 has said -- and you should correct me, Joanne, if

1 I'm wrong -- that you're planning to fund multiple  
2 consortia. I know also that there are folks who  
3 are saying there really ought to be only one.  
4 Where that is coming from, I believe, is the fear  
5 that many states now have that if there is more  
6 than one consortium producing more than one test,  
7 what you're going to wind up with all over again  
8 is different standards. They'll be set to  
9 different cut scores, other problems of, in  
10 effect, alignment.

11 And we could solve, they say, that  
12 problem very simply: One test, one consortium for  
13 K-12. We have spent -- our organization has spent  
14 our last 20 years studying the education systems  
15 in those countries that have the best performing  
16 education systems in the world. That's our  
17 hallmark, that's what we do for a living. And I'm  
18 here to tell you that there are countries that  
19 have very fine assessment systems that have --  
20 offer multiple exams, same subjects, same grades.  
21 And they have means of comparing them in such a  
22 way that they can be quite certain that an A is an

1 A is an A across systems. A B is a B is a B  
2 across systems.

3 It's counterintuitive in the American  
4 context. It is done at a national scale in a  
5 number of countries. We can have a system that  
6 does that. To me, it's crucially important that  
7 we have a system that does that because that's how  
8 we're going to get genuinely different curriculum  
9 set to the same standards, which, in our view at  
10 least, is what this country needs to move ahead.

11 So, let me just finish here. We were  
12 asked to comment on success factors and these are  
13 they. Because there are folks who can't see this  
14 I will read through it. I don't like to do that  
15 when I'm doing a PowerPoint.

16 A clear and compelling vision. I've  
17 spoken to that. The quality of leadership and the  
18 quality of the staff. And I've said, by the way,  
19 about staff quality that to me this is technical  
20 quality, this is management quality, this is  
21 political competence in dealing with a very  
22 complex political environment, all those things.

1           Quality and independence of technical  
2 advice. Critically important, particularly given  
3 the subject of the work in this instance.

4           The representativeness, in effect, of  
5 the decision makers and the constituencies in the  
6 governing structure and their commitment to the  
7 vision. It's not enough that they be  
8 representative. It doesn't matter if they're  
9 representative if they're not committed to the  
10 vision with which you start.

11           The soundness of the technical plan is  
12 obviously important, but no less important is the  
13 soundness of the business plan. The alignment of  
14 the interests of the participants I earlier said I  
15 thought was perhaps the most important of all.  
16 The appropriateness of the institutional  
17 arrangements is, as I look at it, a bit vague.  
18 What I meant by that was the relationship of the  
19 organization that -- for which this is the  
20 full-time job to the other parts and pieces of the  
21 puzzle. The governance structure, the -- in our  
22 case, the technical advisory committee, the

1 vendors and all of that. What you're doing when  
2 you do something like this is you're actually  
3 creating not an organization, you're creation --  
4 you're creating a set of relationships among quite  
5 a complex of organizations. And looking  
6 explicitly at how those institutional arrangements  
7 are going to work is a key part of the judgment as  
8 to whether the consortium is going to work,  
9 whether it's going to be able to get its job done.

10 God, 5 minutes and 10 seconds ahead of  
11 time. Done.

12 MS. WEISS: Thank you. So, let me start  
13 by asking you a question about this very last  
14 item. On your earlier slide where you talked  
15 about this, you asked the question, I think, like  
16 whether that entity needed to be incorporated.

17 MR. TUCKER: I did, right.

18 MS. WEISS: What's your thinking on it?

19 MR. TUCKER: Well, I don't know. You  
20 talked about living inside a university, and I  
21 could see how that would happen. You also talked  
22 about the importance of the disciplines, in

1 effect, of fiscal processes and all of that.

2 That's actually what I was referring to.  
3 They've done it inside a university, which is  
4 incorporated, and, therefore, has all of the  
5 functions -- you can hold it accountable, right?  
6 For every feature of this. It's very different  
7 from saying there's this group of five people over  
8 there in the corner, go and talk to them, right?  
9 I don't think that's a winning formula. Mike's  
10 organization is separately incorporated, ours is.  
11 I'm not sure you have to be, but somebody would  
12 have to prove to me why you shouldn't be.

13 MS. WEISS: Okay. Other questions.

14 MR. MILLER: You had talked about the  
15 notion of clarifying accountability?

16 MS. WEISS: Can you guys hear, is Tony's  
17 mike on? Okay.

18 MR. MILLER: So, at least in my  
19 experience it's very challenging in a consortium  
20 because by definition you don't have singular --  
21 I'm curious in terms of -- well, you've seen it  
22 work or -- how do you -- what are the mechanisms

1 for accountability? Spending funding -- I mean,  
2 when it gets right down to it, if there is lack of  
3 performance, what is recourse?

4 MR. TUCKER: Yes, is the answer. I used  
5 to be in your shoes. That is, if you can't  
6 suspend the funding, they can go and do whatever  
7 they wish.

8 It's actually never dawned on me that  
9 you would not be able to do that. That is the --  
10 in the relationship between the government and  
11 these entities it seems to me what you're saying  
12 is you have submitted a proposal, and on the basis  
13 of what you promise to do in that proposal, we're  
14 going to give you some money. And then you  
15 basically need to make a determination as to  
16 whether that is either being done or a good faith  
17 effort is being made to have it done. And if you  
18 conclude that neither of those things is true, you  
19 ought to take the money back if there's any left.

20 MR. MILLER: But that would --  
21 implication then would be to -- a mechanism that  
22 would allow the staging of the disbursement of

1 funds --

2 MR. TUCKER: Yes --

3 MR. MILLER: -- right, to key milestones  
4 would be an important part of the accountability  
5 mechanism.

6 MR. TUCKER: Right. Yeah.

7 MS. WURTZEL: So, Marc, you talked about  
8 the incentives that drive people to come together  
9 and then the incentives that keep people together  
10 over time --

11 MR. TUCKER: Yes.

12 MS. WURTZEL: -- in a consortia. So,  
13 we've got a set of incentives on the table that  
14 bring people together, particularly a very large  
15 pot of funding for assessments. But in terms of  
16 --

17 MR. TUCKER: I mentioned that, yes.

18 MS. WURTZEL: -- thinking about the  
19 incentives to keep people together over time, what  
20 are some of the things we -- states might think  
21 about or that we might think about building in  
22 here?

1           MR. TUCKER: Well, this was mentioned  
2 earlier this morning. We are -- with respect to  
3 our current consortium, asking our -- the states  
4 that we're inviting to participate to send us  
5 about a -- I think it's a four-, five-page MOU,  
6 single-spaced. It's not a trivial document. And  
7 it lays out a pretty specific and detailed version  
8 of the vision that is not just the kind of  
9 assessments we're talking about, but how they  
10 relate to curriculum, how they relate to  
11 standards, how they would actually be used. It's  
12 a -- without going into the details, it's a  
13 complete high school reform plan. And it's very  
14 different from current practice. And it also  
15 includes a description of what the role of the  
16 state would be, a description of what our role  
17 would be, and so on. There are several other  
18 elements in it.

19           At the beginning of this -- this is  
20 pretty important, too. I don't know how this will  
21 sit with you, but at the -- on the -- in the very  
22 first paragraph we make it clear this is to be

1 signed by the chief state school officer. It is  
2 not intended to be a contractual document, it's  
3 not intended to be legally enforceable. It is  
4 intended to be signed by a chief state school  
5 officer, who by signing it is making a personal  
6 commitment to doing everything that he or she can  
7 to enact this vision the way it's laid out.

8 Now, why did we do that that way?  
9 Because in our case, we recognized that to carry  
10 out this vision, they're going to have to be  
11 legislative changes. There's going to have to be  
12 changes in the way things are financed. This is a  
13 long list of things that are probably going to  
14 take a year or a year and a half to get done to  
15 which nobody can commit because they entail  
16 processes that will have to take place in the  
17 state over a period of time. And I personally  
18 don't think that most of the promises written in  
19 such circumstances by people now in office with  
20 their signatures and the usual checklists are  
21 worth the powder to blow them to hell anyway in a  
22 real world.

1           So, I'm much more interested in looking  
2 a chief state school officer in the face and  
3 saying do you really want to do this? Because I  
4 want a document from you that says you really want  
5 to do this and you're going to do everything you  
6 can to get it done, and that document's going to  
7 be available to anybody who looks at it.  
8 Governor, legislator, your constituencies, this is  
9 your personal pledge you're going to do what you  
10 can to get this thing done.

11           In my experience being on your side of  
12 the fence and my side of the fence for 35 years,  
13 I'd rather do it that way. I think it actually  
14 means more. We can all differ on that, but that's  
15 how we've approached it and it's very specific.

16           MS. WURTZEL: And does everyone sign it  
17 in order to be part of your (inaudible)?

18           MR. TUCKER: Yes, ma'am. If they don't  
19 sign it, they're not part of it.

20           On another point that was raised this  
21 morning, we are limiting this consortium to states  
22 that are signing this pretty detailed statement.

1 Why are we doing that? Because we don't want to  
2 have to argue about what the vision is. Right?  
3 You sign up if you subscribe to the vision. We  
4 aren't trying to be big, we're trying to be  
5 effective. Right? And the consortium will always  
6 be open to additional states who are willing to  
7 sign the same document, and basically subscribe to  
8 whatever decisions have been made prior to their  
9 joining.

10 MR. MILLER: Just a related question  
11 and, admittedly, this is a somewhat artificial  
12 construct that I'm going to provide.

13 MR. TUCKER: Yes.

14 MR. MILLER: But if you said, for  
15 example, I'm going to break up the consortium as a  
16 whole and think about their -- the alignment of  
17 interests, the decision making processes, right,  
18 that we've been talking about this morning, that's  
19 one category. But you said the next category is  
20 the convener, the important role of the convener  
21 in this, right, in terms of the credibility, the  
22 capacity that they have to lead and execute that.

1           And then if you said at the individual  
2           state -- the participating state level, their  
3           level of capacity to be able to support it all the  
4           way through execution, implementation. I'm just  
5           curious, do you see those equally weighted in  
6           terms of their relative -- you need all three,  
7           let's stipulate that all three are important. Are  
8           they all equally important?

9           MR. TUCKER: What was the first one?

10          MR. MILLER: The consortium as a whole,  
11          the shared vision, the alignment of interests.

12          MR. TUCKER: The shared vision is, to  
13          me, essential. Otherwise, what you have is what  
14          Judy was referring to earlier. You have an  
15          association of people who are interested in  
16          getting money.

17          So, the only alternative to that is a  
18          strong shared vision. So, I would view that as  
19          essential. I would view the second as essential  
20          because it's your engine for getting things done.

21          With respect to the capacity of the  
22          states, I said earlier, I think right now -- this

1 is very personal statement. To be one of the  
2 biggest problems in American education right now  
3 is the degree to which the capacity of the states  
4 has been systematically starved over the last 20  
5 years. There is very little left. This is not a  
6 slur against the people who are doing the job. I  
7 am amazed at what they do every day considering  
8 the circumstances in which they work. But I don't  
9 see how anybody can expect this country to have  
10 the kind of revolution in performance that we need  
11 by continually cutting state departments of  
12 education capacity to shreds. So, I would not  
13 make state department of education capacity a  
14 criterion in awarding these grants. I would make  
15 their commitment a criterion, but not their  
16 capacity. In fact, I would think hard about how  
17 to use these grants as a way to increase their  
18 capacity. That I would do. I would strongly  
19 recommend that.

20 MR. MILLER: And I assume you're --  
21 that's broadly defined. So it's state departments  
22 of ed, but it could be, you know, the whole

1 mechanism by which you would --

2 MR. TUCKER: Yes, but I --

3 MR. MILLER: -- be working with state  
4 legislatures, governors. It's all that in terms  
5 of the --

6 MR. TUCKER: Yes, but I am referring  
7 specifically --

8 MR. MILLER: Okay.

9 MR. TUCKER: -- to the state department  
10 of education's capacity, which I think has been  
11 just decimated. And, again, I -- if you look at a  
12 lot of states we're dealing with here, just -- the  
13 average state that we're dealing with had maybe  
14 six people with psychometric training, headed by a  
15 state testing director with strong psychometric  
16 training and a lot of experience. Now, you're  
17 lucky to find one person with any psychometric  
18 training in any of those positions, including the  
19 director of testing.

20 Now, there are some states for which  
21 that's not true; they still have a substantial  
22 capacity. But, you know, that's -- and, again, in

1 our work it's not just the testing director and  
2 department, it's also curriculum because we see  
3 these two things working hand in glove to make our  
4 work work. And the capacities of curriculum  
5 people in state departments of education has been  
6 almost totally shredded.

7 MS. WEISS: All right, thanks. I think  
8 we are going to move on to Tammy. Would you pass  
9 the baton there?

10 MR. TUCKER: She may want to come here.

11 MS. WEISS: Can you --

12 MR. TUCKER: You won't be able to see it  
13 from here.

14 MS. BATTAGLINO: Great. Hi, I'm Tammy  
15 Battaglino from the Parthenon Group, and it's a  
16 pleasure to be here today. I appreciate the  
17 luxury of some time to engage in these  
18 conversations around some critical issues for all  
19 of us.

20 By way of context, Parthenon is a  
21 strategic advisory firm and we have an education  
22 practice where we work closely with districts,

1 states, school networks, as well as education  
2 companies in the private sector across K-12,  
3 higher education, international, and university.

4 I'm humbled today to be here with  
5 obviously a lot of practitioners who have had many  
6 years and decades of experience in the field  
7 specific to consortia. The perspective that I  
8 hope to share today is from the lens of our  
9 partnerships with several of you in this room  
10 today across states, but as well as our districts  
11 in thinking through the practical implementation  
12 of as we take on the lofty goal of consortia  
13 around common assessments. How is it that we can  
14 combine some of the key factors to ensure success  
15 and critical success factors?

16 First, as we step back, a lens we tried  
17 to take as we think about common assessments,  
18 there are multiple levels for consideration. One  
19 is to really explore, what are some of the  
20 non-negotiables going in for assumptions of what  
21 will define success. And then what are some of  
22 the competing pressures that will force some

1 decisions or design elements along those?

2 And we take as given -- as everyone has  
3 reiterated today in the presentations -- that  
4 standards linked to college and career readiness  
5 for all students, including English language  
6 learners and students with disability, is a given;  
7 that we need to be working off a foundational goal  
8 of college and career readiness for all students.

9 And, two, as we're working towards that  
10 goal, that we can have clear data regarding  
11 outcomes for students along the way, both on an  
12 absolute and growth basis, that are comparable  
13 across states. There will never be perfect  
14 comparability, but how is it that we can start to  
15 think about our system of states in a collective,  
16 to really understand our performance, both at the  
17 individual student level, as well as systemic.

18 Now, those are lofty goals and it's  
19 certainly easier said than done. And three of the  
20 huge pressures on that are really considerations  
21 around speed, how quickly can work be done?  
22 Consensus, how many states will be on board as we

1 think about building consortia? And the cost,  
2 what are some of the fiscal constraints?

3 Now, all of these themes have been  
4 addressed by other panelists at some point, so  
5 I'll try to add points rather than just be  
6 repeating for the next 20 minutes, because I know  
7 I'm standing between the group and the roundtable  
8 session, which will allow us to go deep on some  
9 issues. But it is absolutely critical for  
10 effective consortium design and management to  
11 enable focusing on the key objectives, and not  
12 backing down from some of the -- or priority  
13 non-negotiables while finding the best balance of  
14 the competing pressures and trying to mitigate  
15 them.

16 One of the key questions we were asked  
17 to address was what are some of the key dimensions  
18 for state collaboration? And we really envisioned  
19 it along four dimensions.

20 One, which has been addressed at length  
21 today, are the common objectives and common vision  
22 for the policies and priorities of the states.

1 Absent that, it's a non-starter. We know that you  
2 can gather, but if you don't have the underpinning  
3 and kind of the stomach to take on the hard issues  
4 and very complex issues across many fronts,  
5 ultimately the consortia will not succeed.

6 As we've worked with our state partners  
7 it's been interesting as many of our partners have  
8 reflected with us in thinking about the consortium  
9 of the common core. The assessment design is  
10 something that I feel we've talked less about  
11 today from the group, but we actually have heard  
12 philosophically there are some pretty significant  
13 differences. And from our state's perspective,  
14 you really want to find states who are closer in,  
15 whether you're thinking about adaptive versus  
16 fixed assessments, balanced, computer-aided. All  
17 of these have implications for approaches I think  
18 implicit in many of the comments today, but that's  
19 that we've heard loud and clearly around if that  
20 is not something that is agreed upon at the  
21 outset, it can cause significant complexity and  
22 delay in the work.

1           Some others that we've talked about, but  
2 I'd like to address a little bit more explicitly  
3 around infrastructure and physical flexibility.  
4 Again, as we've worked with our states, there's  
5 just the practical reality of -- I might have a  
6 vision that I want to do some of the most  
7 forward-thinking, advanced assessments, but, quite  
8 frankly, as many have referenced around the fiscal  
9 pressures or the economic pressures, I just can't  
10 do that on my own.

11           Now, certainly in the short term there  
12 could be an influx of some federal dollars to help  
13 that, but how do I then sustain that on an ongoing  
14 basis? So, Byron, Mike, everyone has referenced  
15 this question of sustainability. We don't want to  
16 limit states, necessarily, to their current state.  
17 But we do have to recognize the conditions within  
18 their operation, and the implications that can  
19 have on the effectiveness of consortia moving  
20 forward.

21           And partly that begs the question of how  
22 do you think across consortia in allowing states

1 to be benefiting across a range of consortia that  
2 might develop?

3           Finally, we've heard pretty clear  
4 feedback and, from our experience, the state  
5 demographics. That is sometimes one that I think  
6 we gloss over, but there is a reality of as we  
7 think about states with different sizes,  
8 diversity, and other considerations, it doesn't  
9 mean that you have to have only like states within  
10 consortia. But you have to recognize some of the  
11 considerations and be eyes wide open so that you  
12 can anticipate some of the complexities of working  
13 together across those. And I'm sure Mike and Tim  
14 and others who have actually led consortia can  
15 speak to that. All of this points to the fact  
16 that several smaller but aligned consortia, as all  
17 of the panelists have said today, will allow  
18 expedited processes and progress around common  
19 assessments.

20           Anticipating that a lot of us were on  
21 the same page in terms of thinking about  
22 governance and decision issues, a couple of

1 themes, you know, very much from our experience  
2 were consistent with the comments of the other  
3 panelists around as we think about building out  
4 governance and decision rights across consortia.  
5 Organizations have to be clearly aligned along the  
6 dimensions of governance, operations, and  
7 development.

8           You have to have clear lines for that.  
9 We don't want -- you cannot allow for murkiness or  
10 blurring because there are very different  
11 functions and skill sets needed to move forward  
12 and allow the focus.

13           The reality is, as we look at it, each  
14 consortia certainly needs to have member states,  
15 likely the executive team and states who take on  
16 lead roles, specifically lead states around  
17 issues. I know, Mike, we've heard even from our  
18 experience in the field thinking through some of  
19 the procurement issues or others that have come  
20 up. It's not a non-starter that you have to have  
21 the lead states, but as many other panelists have  
22 mentioned, there do have to be partners in states

1 with differentiated roles who are willing to put  
2 more resources or skin in the game around certain  
3 issues to help move the consortium forward.

4 We have heard also a lot of feedback and  
5 expectation that as many of the panelists have  
6 said around the third party management  
7 organizations as critical partners in this work.  
8 I think Mike and Tim, you had mentioned -- I think  
9 Byron mentioned it as well -- all of the SEA's  
10 clearly have full-time jobs when we're embarking  
11 on endeavors that are requiring strategic planning  
12 and development. That at times is considered a  
13 luxury versus the reality of getting work done on  
14 a daily basis. So, how do you think about  
15 organizations to help move the work forward in  
16 addition to everything that is occurring on a  
17 daily basis at the SEA level?

18 Again, reiterating a theme. We've heard  
19 a high value placed on the technical advisory  
20 committee and how critical that is to keeping the  
21 consortium focused, to helping bring resources to  
22 bear and push conversations to decisions.

1           There's one item for discussion that  
2 we've talked a lot today about the capacities to  
3 be built within consortia, and how we organize and  
4 have to focus member states and their various  
5 responsibilities within consortia. I know, you  
6 know, in the -- as we think about alignment and  
7 the second non- negotiable goal that we had  
8 outlined in terms of how is it that we can  
9 maximize comparability across states, I wanted to  
10 provide for discussion just the objective if we do  
11 truly want to ensure comparability of outcomes  
12 across states, how is it that we can think about  
13 some sort of technical oversight board across  
14 consortia that would allow for us all to continue  
15 to keep our eyes on the collective goal of  
16 comparability more broadly than within our  
17 consortia.

18           This is more easily said than done. But  
19 I -- we would agree and commit to that how is it  
20 that we can think through the right mix of  
21 leadership, both from within states as well as  
22 external technical experts, to help keep that as a

1 focus and a priority to ensure that our consortia  
2 as they develop do not move further apart from one  
3 another rather than staying close in.

4 One of the themes that I wanted to take  
5 a -- as we think about organizational capacities  
6 in critical roles within the consortia, I wanted  
7 to take a few minutes to share some of the  
8 reflections around third party consortium  
9 management. Oftentimes, this can be simplified or  
10 shortcut as facilitation and logistical support.  
11 But what -- sorry, leaning backwards. But what we  
12 have heard is that states really view this as  
13 almost a lifeline to keeping them in line. I  
14 think a few of the panelists before have mentioned  
15 help us manage ourselves. We know what needs to  
16 get done in theory, but help us be practical and  
17 stay focused and don't let deadlines or timelines  
18 slip.

19 From our experience, the third party  
20 consortium management really starts at the outset  
21 with helping to bring best practices to bear to  
22 the consortium. That's one theme I didn't hear as

1 much today, but that from our experience we've  
2 seen to be critical in -- when we're consortia  
3 together, making sure that all of the partners are  
4 really starting out on a similar a foundation as  
5 possible. And in terms of questions on the mind  
6 as well as information to come to the table.

7           As the theme that has come across, I  
8 think, from just about everyone today has been  
9 around management and enforcement of a highly  
10 detailed timeline for progress, you know, having  
11 very explicit rules, metrics, milestones for  
12 delivery, and having this third party management  
13 group really help with keeping people on task and  
14 moving forward in identifying issues and helping  
15 to propose solutions for any challenges.

16           There really are, you know, the  
17 technical assistance for ad hoc state issues that  
18 we've talked about in depth. I know tomorrow will  
19 be a whole session on procurement, but how is it  
20 that we can think about assisting and wrestling  
21 and solving some of the challenges in those areas.

22           An issue that was raised earlier was how

1 do we think about the balance between consensus  
2 and majority rule, or votes within consortia? And  
3 there is a balance and there clearly have to be  
4 tiered decisions, but consensus on all key  
5 decisions is unlikely. And so the third role,  
6 what we've heard from state partners is that  
7 having an organization that can really help push  
8 those conversations and push them hard when you  
9 get to an impasse with states is valuable.

10 And finally, there is a level of just  
11 the ongoing knowledge management and knowledge  
12 capture and learnings and reflections to share,  
13 both within and across the consortia.

14 As we think about the timeline and key  
15 milestones to achieve success, I think, Tony, to  
16 the point you summarized as we were responding to  
17 some of Marc's comments, ultimately, it is  
18 absolutely critical to have clear metrics and  
19 milestones that would allow for the applications  
20 to really demonstrate kind of a planning phase as  
21 well as an implementation phase. So, recognizing  
22 that likely the planning grants and implementation

1 grants would have to be collapsed, there's an  
2 aspect of saying before you move from planning  
3 phase into implementation, there are clear  
4 milestones that have to be reached.

5           There are certain aspects of  
6 pre-application that, I think, there's been much  
7 conversation today regarding how high we set that  
8 bar for pre-application. And I think that's a  
9 serious consideration as we think about this  
10 process, because in the ideal, we want to have it  
11 locked down and signed, sealed, delivered that  
12 these consortia will -- we want to minimize the  
13 risk as much as possible from the disbursement  
14 standpoint. The challenge there is just given the  
15 timeframe what is realistic to expect. And I  
16 agree with many of the comments around, you have  
17 to have a clear leadership vision, have to have  
18 obviously clear agreement around the objectives,  
19 the scope, the assessment philosophy as well as  
20 the capacity of the state partners.

21           I think there's the balancing act of the  
22 commitment of the state partners and the capacity.

1 And from our experience there's also an  
2 expectation of to what extent would a plan show  
3 the recognition of where there are capacity gaps  
4 and plans to build those over time through use of  
5 external partners or otherwise. But ultimately,  
6 the transition and building of that capacity  
7 internally.

8 Two aspects that we do feel are  
9 critical, though -- absolutely critical to the  
10 pre-application phase are, you know, the  
11 conversations around the procurement process, but  
12 also a common definition of proficiency. Not that  
13 that has been established in the pre-application,  
14 but within the consortium a commitment to say we  
15 are committed to a common definition of  
16 proficiency as we move through this process  
17 together.

18 As you move through over the 6- or  
19 12-month period I know some of the questions  
20 asked, how can -- how should we be thinking about  
21 critical milestones to know whether consortia are  
22 moving in a positive direction or slipping off

1 track? Six months in, you really would want to be  
2 seeing very crystallized lead roles by area, lead  
3 responsibilities, and lead states and  
4 organizations moving the group and taking, for  
5 lack of a better phrase, putting the skin in the  
6 game and starting to move and have clarity around  
7 the roles and their commitments.

8           The -- you know, it would be clear as  
9 well that the governance rules would be clear and  
10 agreed upon by the group in a very specific way.  
11 Certainly at the outset, you want to have some  
12 commitment to general governance guidelines, but  
13 within the first six months have crystallized  
14 processes that have really hit the stride.

15           There's also a recognition of within the  
16 first six months there's an identification in the  
17 pre-application of some of the potential gaps that  
18 might exist. But how do you begin to, 6 months  
19 in, 12 months in, begin to identify paths to close  
20 those gaps and build out the capacities as  
21 required? And then as the consortium moves  
22 forward, clearly as you're getting into the 12

1 months phase, you want to see the rich partnership  
2 between the states and the third party management  
3 organizations where it's very clear activity  
4 mapping and goals and seeing progress against some  
5 of the key metrics and milestones.

6 I think the key point here is that it  
7 has to be a seamless process between the planning  
8 and implementation and that many of those aspects  
9 can be crystallized with clear expectations at the  
10 outset, so that there are no surprises as we go  
11 into the process.

12 The final reflections are around, you  
13 know, the key risks that exist. And from our  
14 experience, we've already talked a bit about the  
15 lack of comparability across consortia. There's  
16 also a theme which I'd like to touch on for a few  
17 minutes, which is the do-it-yourself approach  
18 across consortia and how do we think about  
19 leveraging benefits and leveraging capacities  
20 across states, but also across vendors to address  
21 some of these issues that Byron and others have  
22 raised around the sustainability questions. How

1 do we avoid reinventing the wheel as much as  
2 possible? And also, how do we stretch what seems  
3 like a lot of resources, but we all know will go  
4 very quickly? How do we stretch them as far as  
5 possible?

6           And then, finally, a third risk is the  
7 process slowing down due to a lack of consensus.  
8 As we talk about the lack of comparability across  
9 consortia, we've discussed this at length. But  
10 the key point here is to say knowing that a goal  
11 is to have as much comparability across consortia  
12 as possible, how do we think about setting up  
13 incentives to encourage the states to have the  
14 ability to move and to over time find the  
15 consortia that is the best fit for them?

16           We don't want to be having states  
17 force-fed into consortia and then ultimately have  
18 the weight of the consortia if it's a mismatch up  
19 front, be something that ultimately pulls down or  
20 burdens consortia over time.

21           So, how do you think about the best  
22 consortia and market mechanisms and incentives to

1 really motivate states and to allow for some of  
2 that flexibility, knowing that up front -- I think  
3 Michael, you had mentioned that some of the  
4 decisions or -- that would be made or stakes you  
5 might have put in the ground early on as you went  
6 through processes, whether over the first year or  
7 two, eyes were opened. And that how do we allow  
8 -- we want to know as much going in that there  
9 aren't surprises, but also recognizing to the  
10 extent that there will be challenges in the  
11 consortia that flexibility is allowed, and that  
12 there can be some of that movement.

13           When we think about the do-it-yourself  
14 approach from our states -- and we've heard time  
15 and again across their experiences, that how can  
16 states be encouraged to really build new common  
17 systems for key procedural functions that states  
18 might now do alone? Some of the issues there  
19 would be around item development or bias review.

20           Now, certainly, there are challenges of  
21 -- issues of control in terms of thinking about  
22 those from a common standpoint. But again, given

1 the questions that were addressed at length  
2 earlier around limited resources, the -- some of  
3 the pressures and thinking about sustainability,  
4 how is it that we can be asking the hard questions  
5 and getting the states to think through creative  
6 ways or new ways of working together such that we  
7 can get the biggest bang out of the resources.

8 Finally, in terms of effective use of  
9 the vendors, we've talked a bit about to what  
10 extent markets can be created to give vendors  
11 confidence to invest in some of these products.  
12 How can we be thinking about using preexisting  
13 content to the greatest extent possible? Well,  
14 certainly customizing it to meet the needs.

15 And finally, as we think about one of  
16 the final risks is the process and the lack of  
17 consensus, how do we keep it moving. What we have  
18 heard from states is not only the project  
19 management internally and the state leadership  
20 teams, the third party partners that we've  
21 discussed, but also critical are the technical  
22 advisory committees to weigh in on the important

1 questions around implementation or design.

2           Ultimately, the risks are real. But we  
3 do feel to the extent that there are clarity of  
4 expectations and key milestones set out around  
5 planning and implementation, which then will allow  
6 states to converge around the best emerging  
7 partnerships and products. That flexibility and  
8 the fluidity of the consortia, you know, certainly  
9 you need the core consortia in place to sustain  
10 the work. But there does have to be some  
11 flexibility in allowing the consortia -- the  
12 states to move across the consortia.

13           I think ultimately, as I've listened to  
14 the comments today, there are the tensions around  
15 how is it that we're striking the balance between  
16 development and implementation in this work? And  
17 while the risks are there with the right up front  
18 questions and really scanning and asking for the  
19 commitments and the leadership, we feel that the  
20 consortia can be designed in a way or can be  
21 partnered in a way to set the foundation for the  
22 success.

1 MS. WEISS: Great, thank you. Questions  
2 for Tammy. You have one, Tony?

3 MR. MILLER: Yeah, I do. Something that  
4 you didn't talk about, but I'm curious because it  
5 -- especially in the context of the comparability  
6 and the role of transparency as a consortium. So,  
7 early on we talked about public engagement. But  
8 if you want to have -- how do you actually -- has  
9 it come up in terms of how transparent the  
10 processes are, the decision making is so that as  
11 you go from a, you know, let's assume well  
12 functioning consortium at its best, right?

13 MS. BATTAGLINO: Right.

14 MR. MILLER: And as that grows, what  
15 role does transparency play?

16 MS. BATTAGLINO: Transparent -- well,  
17 within the consortium that's critical, the  
18 transparency of process -- are you talking about  
19 the decision rights, Tony? Or the --

20 MR. MILLER: Well, I'll put it more  
21 broad. What aspects of transparency are most  
22 critical, both within the consortium? But I'm

1 also talking about external to the public and  
2 other key stakeholders, if you will.

3 MS. BATTAGLINO: Well, from the  
4 perspectives that we have heard and seen in the  
5 states that the transparency up front around the  
6 goals is absolutely critical and the commitments  
7 of the roles of the different partners to know who  
8 will be -- what will be the various roles and what  
9 they will be driving.

10 In terms of also the priorities that are  
11 set out and the commitments and the tradeoffs that  
12 will be made -- associated with those and being  
13 very explicit with those up front, which I guess I  
14 would call transparency as well, which is being  
15 explicit about the key considerations and some of  
16 the decisions and commitments that will be made in  
17 the resulting tradeoffs is absolutely critical so  
18 that people can be involved in the consortia up  
19 front, from -- this is from within the consortium  
20 perspectives. And have clarity about expectations  
21 and what they're getting into.

22 I think from the -- when you're talking

1 about the external perspective of the  
2 transparency, I think again it's just linked to  
3 the process and the goals, long term, so that  
4 there is transparency about where are we seeking  
5 to go. How will we get there? And then, how do  
6 we manage accordingly?

7 MR. MILLER: Things like performance  
8 against milestones? We talked about milestones.

9 MS. BATTAGLINO: Right.

10 MR. MILLER: Should that be broadly  
11 syndicated, right? So that it's not just known  
12 within the consortium, but in the community at  
13 large. Or is that better to be more privately  
14 held, if you will, until you can kind of reach a  
15 point that it's ready for prime time? You can  
16 imagine -- I can imagine those would be key.

17 MS. BATTAGLINO: Right. And I think the  
18 -- our experience on that is that you have to set  
19 the milestones that will allow for some short-term  
20 and mid-term victories that are public. And so  
21 you'll say there are milestones that we will know  
22 will help us to build momentum for this work that

1 we know will be difficult at times.

2           There's -- I would argue that there  
3 would be an internal level of transparency for  
4 some of the milestones. That would be at a more  
5 granular level, because certainly we'll want to  
6 set aggressive but realistic goals for ourselves  
7 and be pushing hard that we want to allow for some  
8 flexibility that if we are off track, that it  
9 isn't viewed as a momentum killer for the work.

10           But I think definitely you can envision  
11 a tiered leveling of milestones that would be very  
12 concrete and aggressive internally, but also  
13 there's some contingency planning that you'd say  
14 we're still on track even if these milestones are  
15 looking like X, Y, or Z rather than our original  
16 goal.

17           But I think it absolutely is critical  
18 from the milestone standpoint, both internally and  
19 externally. And that's the critical role of that  
20 third party management group to say how is it that  
21 we keep a relentless focus on that that we are  
22 clear about what the expectations and milestones

1 are from the outset. That we track that  
2 aggressively and communicate that and really over  
3 communicate that internally at one level of detail  
4 and externally as appropriate to give our external  
5 constituents the confidence that things are moving  
6 forward.

7 So, this ties back to some of the  
8 earlier conversation around there are the  
9 operating milestones. You could envision that  
10 they'd be -- some of the operating milestones that  
11 would be relevant for the groups that are really  
12 in the work, which varies across the levels of the  
13 staffers and then as you move up.

14 And then there's almost the operating  
15 milestones that are appropriate for higher level  
16 decision makers, whether it's the state chiefs or  
17 the governors to say I'm confident that what we  
18 have committed to and the resources we're putting  
19 against this are a good investment, and moving  
20 forward.

21 MS. WEISS: Mike, did you have a quick  
22 question?

1           MR. COHEN: Yeah, thanks, Joanne.  
2 Tammy, there were a couple places in your  
3 presentation where you, I think, mentioned a role  
4 for the Department of Education I hadn't thought  
5 about before. So I wondered if you could  
6 elaborate a bit.

7           One, I think, was having the department  
8 involved in what's on this slide here, on  
9 governance across consortia including, I think,  
10 helping states sort of make the shift from one  
11 consortia to another. And elsewhere, if I  
12 followed it correctly, you were talking about  
13 having department officials involved in some sort  
14 of overall technical group that would be focused  
15 on comparability. Could you just talk about that  
16 a bit?

17           MS. BATTAGLINO: Sure. And we've -- and  
18 this was a bit meant to push some conversation  
19 today, but it --

20           MR. COHEN: It will.

21           MS. BATTAGLINO: So, this -- so you're  
22 going back to the chart here on the technical

1 oversight board.

2 MR. COHEN: Yeah.

3 MS. BATTAGLINO: There is a -- the theme  
4 trying to push here, and, Mike, it's really around  
5 how is it that we can keep ourselves focused not  
6 only on what's best for the consortia, but  
7 thinking more broadly about comparability across  
8 consortia.

9 And so, the reflections here are to say  
10 how can we think about constructing a technical  
11 oversight board that would have a blend of  
12 representatives from the department as well as  
13 from state consortia, working teams, and  
14 leadership roles, as well as external technical  
15 experts, who would be non-partisan, completely  
16 objective sources to help think through the issues  
17 and say -- and really push the group and push the  
18 consortia to think about the -- and comparability?

19 I think it's, you know, why we wanted to  
20 push this is that as we take it as a group -- and  
21 I know Marc and others had referenced it in their  
22 comments, which is as we think about the consortia

1 and think about where we want to end up, which is  
2 more comparability across states rather than less,  
3 this is the aspect of saying how is it that we  
4 could create -- without over-engineering  
5 structures. I think to Byron's comment earlier,  
6 we certainly do not want to be creating linkages  
7 that will be burdens on the consortia and any  
8 operating or in the weeds way. But how is it that  
9 we can think about setting high-level goals that  
10 would help increase the chances of comparability  
11 when we're sitting at the table 3, 5, or 10 years  
12 from now?

13 MR. COHEN: I think there's a way for  
14 the department to send very, very clear signals  
15 insisting on comparability in results without  
16 getting involved in operational decisions about  
17 how to make that happen.

18 MS. BATTAGLINO: Yeah, you mean like  
19 (inaudible) linking studies (inaudible)  
20 psychometric things, right?

21 MR. COHEN: Yeah.

22 MS. WEISS: Yeah, but was there another

1 -- so this is the only role I know. It sounds  
2 like you noticed another role that I hadn't  
3 noticed.

4 MS. BATTAGLINO: No, no, it's the same  
5 role. This is the same role, just recapped.

6 MR. COHEN: No, no, on the last slide --

7 MS. WEISS: You were talking about,  
8 like, facilitating states moving across --

9 MR. COHEN: Yeah.

10 MS. BATTAGLINO: No, no, no. That's not  
11 -- the only department role that we put out for  
12 conversation today was around this. It's a  
13 similar role, just saying that it's on the  
14 oversight. So, the Department would not be  
15 facilitating the state's movement, no.

16 MR. COHEN: Okay.

17 MS. WEISS: Good, correct. Any -- yeah,  
18 Tony.

19 MR. MILLER: Could you go back to the  
20 prior slide -- I mean, earlier in this deck.  
21 Bingo.

22 So, what strikes me about this is there

1 is a real tradeoff, depending on your policy  
2 objective. So you could say, if you take these  
3 into account, you're going to get a more  
4 homogenous set of states, potentially, on a number  
5 of these.

6 MS. BATTAGLINO: Right.

7 MR. MILLER: And you will likely get --  
8 let's assume for a moment -- I think your argument  
9 was you'll get a more productive consortium. The  
10 question is, if that is a pick the number, right,  
11 if that's not representative of a broader  
12 population, is the risk that the growth of that  
13 consortium beyond its core is constrained because,  
14 in fact, it's too homogenous and the design  
15 doesn't take into account the more heterogeneous  
16 population that's out there? And how do we think  
17 about how you would design it or make those kinds  
18 of tradeoffs?

19 MS. BATTAGLINO: Right. And I think  
20 that there very much is a level -- part of the  
21 assumption going in here is as consortium gets  
22 started, how do we give them the -- maximize the

1 chance of success in the short term? Which is how  
2 is it that you can envision, Tony, where you would  
3 start in the short term -- more common -- almost  
4 to incubate some of the ideas and get legs and get  
5 momentum behind it? That, especially as you think  
6 about trying to get the legs under the consortium  
7 and get some momentum behind it, and the speed to  
8 do that and have consensus and legs behind the  
9 implementation, more commonality rather than less.  
10 We definitely do not mean to suggest that it would  
11 then be the endgame that everything has to look  
12 the same. And certainly, across the demographics  
13 and other considerations, we would not expect nor  
14 would not want that to be the case.

15           But there is -- there's a timing  
16 dimension of short versus mid and longer term.  
17 And that you could envision a scenario where  
18 consortia could start out with more commonality  
19 around the objectives at a minimum, likely around  
20 some of the assessment design as well. And that  
21 would be -- that's almost the consensus driving  
22 factors.

1                   And then the other considerations are on  
2 the demographics or the infrastructure is the  
3 ability to move quickly. But that you would fully  
4 expect and we would actually expect there to be  
5 fluidity that the core that you start with would  
6 not necessarily be the endgame of the consortium  
7 and that over time the consortium would evolve.  
8 It's getting through that critical stage of  
9 getting the momentum behind the ideas.

10                   MS. WEISS: Great, thanks. All right.

11 I am going to, judging from the post-

12                   Lunch lethargy in the room, ask that we  
13 take the 7th inning stretch 2-minute break. So,  
14 head for the restrooms or grab a drink or  
15 whatever, and let's reconvene really quickly  
16 because we do have some really good questions that  
17 we're getting ready to ask folks.

18                   (Recess)

19                   MS. WEISS: So, Byron's going to be back  
20 in a couple minutes. I'm inclined to get started.

21 All right. We're ready to get started again up  
22 here. Byron Auguste is going to be back in a

1 moment, so you will see him slip into his chair  
2 momentarily.

3           And we're also joined up here by Ann  
4 Whalen, who is with the Department of Education,  
5 and many of you will recognize from all the  
6 previous meetings that we've been having about  
7 this. So, thank you.

8           As we were talking at lunch about the  
9 questions that we had for this group, we came up  
10 with way more than we can do in the next 80  
11 minutes or so that we have planned for this  
12 roundtable, so -- and many of them are really  
13 important questions. So, I'm going to use the  
14 power of the facilitator occasionally to move us  
15 on possibly before we've completely reached that  
16 place of consensus or feeling requited just in  
17 order to make sure that we're really covering the  
18 spectrum of points of view.

19           So, the first question that we wanted to  
20 ask folks is there's this tension that we've all  
21 noticed and I think been talking about really for  
22 the last couple of months as we've been discussing

1 this competition between incenting innovation and,  
2 at the same time, enabling success. And it's a  
3 lot easier to enable success if we're very tight  
4 and do things that we all know how to do well.

5 On the other hand, that's not really the  
6 goal that we have for this. We really want some  
7 innovative practices and designs and tests to come  
8 out of this at the end. So, the questions that we  
9 had for you all is to help give us some thoughts  
10 on what evidence of commitment we should ask for  
11 at the front end from states in consortia that  
12 would be an appropriate way to balance this.

13 What are the things that are just the  
14 non- negotiables that people really need to be  
15 aligned on up front? And where to do we allow  
16 flexibility so that as things change, as we learn  
17 more in these consortia, we can actually incent  
18 the creativity and innovation that is less  
19 predictable at the front end?

20 MR. COHEN: I think I have part of an  
21 answer to that. One of the things that's going on  
22 now is every state is signing up for one or more

1 consortia. And by, you know -- by a few days from  
2 now, you'll have applications that if you simply  
3 count the suggestions, there were several hundred  
4 states in the union, I think.

5 So we've got a dynamic where states  
6 think they need to be part of a consortia. And if  
7 that persists without some correction, then I  
8 think you'll have -- you'll be very heavily tilted  
9 towards traditional -- the tests we have now.

10 So, what I think we need -- you need to  
11 do or consortia need to do is figure out a way to  
12 do two things. One is to have differentiated  
13 tiers of participation.

14 MS. WEISS: And let's come back to that  
15 in a second.

16 MR. COHEN: Okay.

17 MS. WEISS: Because I want to spend a  
18 bunch of time on that question.

19 MR. COHEN: Okay.

20 MS. WEISS: But -- and the other is?

21 MR. COHEN: Well, and -- secondly, to  
22 allow for the phase-in of implementation of the

1 tests in the states.

2 MS. WEISS: Okay.

3 MR. COHEN: I think you want states,  
4 particularly that are playing the most critical  
5 role in a consortia, to have as unwavering a  
6 commitment to actually using the tests in their  
7 states as possible. So that there's some reality  
8 to this. But to allow for innovation, you want at  
9 least some components of them to be phased in over  
10 time. So this is Byron's point, that you don't  
11 have to do everything all at once. You can do  
12 some things that may be a bit more conventional up  
13 front and add some more innovative components to  
14 be implemented in states over time, and perhaps at  
15 different rates of implementation in different  
16 states, depending upon their readiness for it.

17 MS. WEISS: So, let me also come back in  
18 a minute more to this question of implementation  
19 and what we should be looking for there. But let  
20 me just ask again, like, what's the evidence of  
21 commitment that we should be asking for at the  
22 front? How much and to what should we ask for

1 people to be committed?

2 So, the implementation plan is one piece  
3 of that. What are some of the other things?

4 I mean, many of you gave, like, laundry  
5 lists of the things people needed to know that  
6 sounded like they needed to know them  
7 pre-application. And that's kind of what I'm  
8 asking. Pre-application, what are the things that  
9 people should really be able to give us evidence  
10 of and what are the things that we should not ask  
11 for?

12 MR. COHEN: So the thing that's most  
13 important to get in the application itself is a  
14 clear description of the vision of the assessments  
15 and how they will be used to improved teaching and  
16 learning. Right? If you don't have commitment to  
17 that in the consortium, you don't have the ability  
18 to proceed to develop much of anything. So it's  
19 essential to get a commitment to that.

20 Without running through the whole  
21 laundry list, the more clarity there is around the  
22 governance structure and the decision making

1 processes and a variety of other things we talked  
2 about. Some of that does have to be figured out  
3 so that you know that the -- that this consortium  
4 can actually operate.

5 But in terms of the innovation issue  
6 that you're talking about, and how to make sure  
7 that you're leaving room for that and striking the  
8 right balance with odds of success, again I think  
9 the vision up front, commitment to the -- not just  
10 the vision of the assessment system, but the  
11 vision of the -- how the assessments will be used  
12 to improve teaching and learning, and what other  
13 things in the system need to change in order to  
14 carry that out. That's got to be crystal clear up  
15 front. It seems to me that's just essential.

16 Don't ask everybody to implement  
17 everything all at once. Right? You know, sort of  
18 things you shouldn't ask for. But you ought to  
19 know that there's a core group of states in a  
20 consortia that are fully planning to implement a  
21 full assessment system that they develop, and that  
22 key pieces will be implemented at various points

1 along the way.

2 MR. TUCKER: So, I am in complete --  
3 Mike and I are in complete agreement on the  
4 dependent variable. You want an assessment plan  
5 that is linked to a very clear conception of how  
6 that's going to be used to improve student  
7 learning. We're in complete agreement on that.

8 And you actually, in my mind, asked two  
9 questions, and that's the answer to the first one.  
10 But the second one, how you find out they're  
11 committed, is an entirely different question.  
12 That is, what does it mean to be committed and how  
13 do you figure out whether they are, in fact,  
14 committed?

15 I spent 10 years in government and quite  
16 a few years in foundations trying to figure out  
17 how to answer those questions. And I think, for  
18 what it's worth, I've come to the following  
19 conclusion: Whatever papers you ask people to  
20 sign in the process, you'll get -- are worth  
21 almost nothing. People -- when the governor or  
22 the chief state school officer says it's terribly

1 important for my state that you sign this letter  
2 that we've sent you, they'll sign it because  
3 there's very little downside to that.

4 And then once that's happened, I gave  
5 Tony the answer I gave him. But the reality is  
6 that the federal government finds it very hard --  
7 or a foundation, for that matter -- to withdraw  
8 money once given.

9 There's always the threat, but rarely  
10 the reality. And so in the end, what you're stuck  
11 with is trying to find out whether people are  
12 really committed. And from my point of view,  
13 that's almost impossible to discover in paper and  
14 pencil process. That is, proposals read, boxes  
15 checked, and all that. That in the last analysis,  
16 what you need to do is talk to people. That's  
17 what we've found. Just talk to the people whose  
18 commitment is most important to you. And it isn't  
19 hard, usually, in a conversation to find out  
20 whether they're committed. Because often what  
21 happens is they've forgotten what the letter was  
22 that they signed and they have no idea to what

1 they're committed. Unless, in fact, they are  
2 committed. And it's pretty easy to find that out.

3 I would strongly suggest to you that you  
4 invoke a process in which whoever you trust goes  
5 out and talks to the key actors in the consortia  
6 that -- whose proposals you are evaluating, and  
7 see if you can discern through that process the  
8 degree to which those actors are, in fact,  
9 committed, never forgetting that many of them  
10 would be elected officials and they won't be  
11 serving very long. So, it's the breadth and the  
12 depth of the commitment that's really important.

13 MS. WEISS: So we talked a lot -- you  
14 guys talked a lot this morning about the level of  
15 design that people should be -- how much of the  
16 assessment design people should be talking about  
17 in their proposals. And the words we just used  
18 were, vision, so everyone should have a common  
19 vision. So, between a common vision and a common  
20 design, how far along that continuum are we asking  
21 people to go before they put in their application  
22 to us?

1 MR. TUCKER: Well, they better be  
2 related, that is if all you're talking about is a  
3 set of values. If you're talking about a  
4 philosophy, then it's extremely unclear what --

5 MS. WEISS: Right.

6 MR. TUCKER: -- in fact, they're  
7 committing themselves to --

8 MS. WEISS: Right, so how far do we go  
9 down the design -- how much of a design do we want  
10 in place? Again, I'm back to this question of  
11 innovation versus constraint.

12 MR. TUCKER: It's hard to make a formula  
13 for that. In my mind, you need to satisfy  
14 yourself that it goes beyond philosophy and it  
15 goes beyond values to a design, which is clear  
16 enough, so you have some understanding of what it  
17 is they are actually going to do. And to which  
18 the policy makers are committed as a matter of  
19 implementation policy doesn't mean they've  
20 implemented it. It means they're committed to  
21 implementing it. What the specifics of that are  
22 depend entirely on the design.

1 MS. WEISS: But, I mean, like, Byron in  
2 his presentation -- we'll talk about him not  
3 having him here to defend himself -- but said that  
4 we should have the deliverables, we should know  
5 the frequency of the assessments. I mean, he got  
6 pretty specific about the things that we ought to  
7 know -- that we ought to ask in the application in  
8 order to assess that people are really committed  
9 to developing the same thing.

10 MR. BOALS: But within the deliverables,  
11 what's the plan for change?

12 MS. WEISS: Okay.

13 MR. BOALS: What's the plan for  
14 iterations?

15 MS. WEISS: Uh-oh, now he can defend  
16 himself. So, now we're in trouble.

17 MR. BOALS: I think you can do both. I  
18 think you can be specific and you can also lay the  
19 groundwork for how the assessment, or whatever it  
20 is you're talking about, can evolve.

21 MS. WEISS: Great.

22 MR. COHEN: And I would argue along with

1 that, you want a pretty decent plan for how the  
2 operational version of the vision that they lay  
3 out in the proposal -- but what's the plan for  
4 actually developing the components of that in a  
5 manner that can be implemented? Also subject to  
6 the provision that a year later, they might come  
7 back and tell you we've learned enough to have  
8 changed our view or our approach or how we're  
9 going to do that.

10 But I think that, you know, to Marc's  
11 point, you want to push them an awful -- you know,  
12 pretty far down the road to be clear about what  
13 the recurring vision would look like if they had  
14 to put it in place tomorrow. You want them to be  
15 able to tell you how they would do that and you  
16 want them to be able to tell you how they're going  
17 to figure out when they need to make the  
18 adjustments either to the operationalization to  
19 the vision, because they figured out something  
20 isn't going to work, or to the development process  
21 because they found a new way to do it or whatever.

22 But I think again, to Marc's point, you

1 want them to be specific enough so that when  
2 you're sitting across the table from them, you can  
3 tell if they're talking about the vision that they  
4 signed on to because they'll be able to talk about  
5 it in pretty consistent and compelling ways or  
6 acknowledge where they still have to fill it in a  
7 bit.

8 MR. WHALEN: So I had a --

9 MS. WEISS: Go ahead --

10 MR. WHALEN: -- quick follow-up question  
11 of that. Is there any way that you guys can think  
12 of or that you have experience where it's not  
13 around a commitment of an individual?

14 So, Marc, you talked about looking in  
15 the face of the chief school officer and said are  
16 you committed? But then as a follow-up, said that  
17 individual may not be there six months later.  
18 Same thing with the governors, you know. These  
19 are elected officials, for the most part, and  
20 there's going to be turnover. How -- we're  
21 running an application where it's due, you know,  
22 before September where we expected a four-year

1 process. How can we make it not about a person?

2 MR. TUCKER: Let me contrast for you two  
3 situations. These are very real. You walk into  
4 the office of a governor of a state, and that  
5 governor, without looking at any paper or  
6 consulting any staff assistant, can carry on for  
7 an hour about what he or she really thinks  
8 education in that state ought to look like. And  
9 you leave that person's office absolutely  
10 convinced it's real, it's deep, and this person is  
11 committed.

12 And then you send a team back to the  
13 state a week hence. And you talk to the chief  
14 state school officer and the chair of the state  
15 board of education and the head of the higher  
16 education commission. And you discover that the  
17 governor and the chief state school officer don't  
18 speak. That the head of the state board of  
19 education believes that the governor is  
20 constitutionally prohibited, I quote, "from  
21 interfering in such matters." They are the proper  
22 prerogative of the state board of education.

1           I've been in a number of such states.  
2           I'm not making any of this up, right? But you go  
3           to another state and you sit down with the chief  
4           state school officer, who suggests that you spend  
5           an afternoon, and he or she will bring in the P-20  
6           council, a bunch of personal advisors, the  
7           governor's education aide. Spend 15 minutes, 20  
8           minutes with the governor, and you ask them all  
9           kinds of questions. And every which way you can  
10          come by it, they're all saying the same thing and  
11          they're saying it passionately. And when you  
12          press them, they understand why they're saying it.  
13          There's a rationale behind it. I've been in those  
14          states, too.

15                 It's actually when you're on the ground,  
16                 it's not hard. And when you're trying to do this  
17                 by paper, it's impossible to distinguish between  
18                 these two states. That's the point I was making  
19                 earlier. What Marc -- let me just put it one more  
20                 way.

21                 The way to -- there's no 100 percent  
22                 insurance policy against change that occurs

1 because there's a change in incumbents. We have  
2 designed a democracy so there will be change in  
3 such a circumstance, right? But you are much less  
4 likely to get capricious change if there's a broad  
5 base of support in the state for what you're  
6 trying to do, which is why you need to talk to not  
7 just the governor and not just the chief state  
8 school officer, but a reasonable sampling of the  
9 actors whose actions will be important to making  
10 it happen. If that happens, the successor will be  
11 significantly constrained in changing things  
12 capriciously because there are a whole lot of  
13 people who are committed to doing what was  
14 committed to before. That's the point I'm making.

15 That's the only insurance you've got,  
16 really. What's written on paper doesn't matter.  
17 What's the personal commitments of people? That's  
18 -- and more and diverse is better than fewer and  
19 not diverse.

20 MR. COHEN: If I were in your shoes, I'd  
21 be getting a little worried at this point, trying  
22 to imagine --

1                   MS. WEISS: That happened long ago, so  
2 go for it.

3                                   (Laughter)

4                   MR. COHEN: A little more worried.  
5 Trying to figure out how in a review process,  
6 right? Do you have those kinds of conversations  
7 without it looking like a whole bunch of  
8 extraneous factors are coming into play?

9                                   So it's not easy to do, though it hits  
10 me as I sit here that the Department has done this  
11 before. Well, you -- it's certainly been done on  
12 research proposals, right? Endlessly --

13                   MR. TUCKER: We've both done this --

14                   MR. COHEN: -- it was also done when the  
15 department was reviewing states' Goals 2000 plans  
16 where they sent the peer review team into the  
17 state to talk to a range of people of the sort  
18 that Marc was talking about. Now, those were not  
19 competitive, which made it --

20                   MS. WEISS: Right.

21                   MR. COHEN: -- which meant there was  
22 less pressure on it, and it was one state at a

1 time as opposed to a consortia at a time.

2 So, it's not simple to do, what Marc  
3 planned out. And it's a lot easier to do it if  
4 you're at his organization or mine where you're  
5 not making a funding decision, but just trying to  
6 figure out who's serious enough to work with. But  
7 it's worth thinking about how you might approach  
8 that. There's some models that you could begin to  
9 draw.

10 MS. WEISS: Great, thank you. Other  
11 follow-up questions before I wanted to turn to  
12 this implementation timing and plan question.

13 So, Ann, I think, alluded to the fact  
14 that the period of this grant is about four years,  
15 during which we expect to be able to design, field  
16 test, build a new set of assessments. But the  
17 implementation, at least the implementation at any  
18 kind of scale, probably follows after the period  
19 of this grant is over.

20 So, let's get to the business plan  
21 sustainability part of that conundrum in a second.  
22 The first question that we had was what should we

1       require states to tell up front in their  
2       application in regard to their implementation  
3       plans and timeframes if our goal is really to have  
4       implementation that improves student learning? So  
5       it's a more complex question than just tell me the  
6       date it's going to go live.

7               MR. TUCKER: So part of the question is,  
8       in effect, what is your theory of action?

9               You're going to produce a set of tests  
10       with a certain set of characteristics. You've  
11       chosen them as opposed to other characteristics.  
12       You must have some idea about how this is going to  
13       improve student learning in your state. What is  
14       it? What other components do you need to add to  
15       the tests themselves to have the kinds of effects  
16       that you're predicating your tests are going to  
17       have? How are you going to produce those? Who's  
18       going to produce them? What capacity do you have  
19       to produce them? How are you going to finance it?  
20       How are you going to put it all together? Who's  
21       going to have the capacity inside state government  
22       to plan all this, carry it out, see that it's

1 implemented? What -- how much time will it take?

2           And if they haven't thought about the  
3 answers to any of those questions, you almost  
4 certainly will be funding a test that's not likely  
5 to have any effect at all on student performance  
6 because they haven't thought about the other  
7 components that are going to be necessary to do  
8 it. So, it just -- having a plausible plan is at  
9 least some indication that they've thought about  
10 these issues in a serious way.

11           MS. WEISS: So what's the distinction  
12 between what we ask at the consortium level and  
13 what each state needs to tell us?

14           MR. TUCKER: So, what I'm thinking about  
15 is the possible differences among plans, because  
16 there're going to be different answers depending  
17 upon what the theory of action behind the  
18 consortium.

19           MS. WEISS: Right.

20           MR. TUCKER: It may well be that the --

21           MS. WEISS: I mean, presumably there's  
22 this shared theory of action that the consortium

1 is operating on.

2 MR. TUCKER: Right.

3 MS. WEISS: But there might be different

4 --

5 MR. TUCKER: There might be different  
6 ones, that's right. And you need to find that  
7 out. It's not necessarily bad that there are  
8 different theories of action, but there better be  
9 some theories of action that are at least  
10 plausible.

11 So -- and the one we're putting  
12 together, we have a theory of action. But I can  
13 imagine others where they're going to say these  
14 are the tests and they will have different ways of  
15 using them. But you're still going to need to  
16 come to a conclusion as to whether the tools that  
17 they're creating are being thought about in a way  
18 that is likely to lead to improvements in student  
19 performance because tests by themselves don't lead  
20 to any improvements in student performance. It's  
21 the accountability systems, the incentive systems,  
22 the curriculum that's offered, the quality of

1 instruction, the training for the teachers -- all  
2 those things will affect it.

3 MR. COHEN: A couple things to build on  
4 what Marc said. I agree completely with what he  
5 said. It seems to me -- just going a little bit  
6 further, you might ask in the application what  
7 components of the guiding theory of action are, in  
8 fact, shared among the states, and where do they  
9 have differences and what are they. And that  
10 would tell you in part what you need to know  
11 consortium-wide and what you need to know state by  
12 state.

13 You might also consider re-reading the  
14 state's Race to the Top applications when you're  
15 reading the assessment application to see if  
16 various versions of the theories of action  
17 actually are consistent with each other. And  
18 where they're not that would be an area you'd want  
19 to probe during the review process.

20 MR. MILLER: Let me build in, and I want  
21 to take -- I want to separate out any potential  
22 legal issues because obviously we would do nothing

1 that was --

2 MR. COHEN: Nothing --

3 MR. MILLER: -- less than legal. Not  
4 being a lawyer, I don't know.

5 MS. WEISS: And our general counsel's  
6 people have left, so go for it.

7 MR. MILLER: But I'm trying to marry the  
8 idea of you really do want to have what's going to  
9 improve teaching and learning in the classroom.  
10 And that -- the whole notion of the assessment and  
11 the assessment system is really around that end.

12 And so, okay, let's stipulate we -- for  
13 a moment, right, that's true. And let's assume  
14 for a moment that the real -- through  
15 implementation, is a multiyear effort, that's  
16 going to be a multiyear exercise, to achieve that  
17 outcome for a moment.

18 If I link that, though, back to this  
19 notion of milestones and accountability with  
20 funding, could you actually -- would it be  
21 appropriate or inappropriate to identify a set of  
22 milestones that in terms of how you were making

1 progress separate from milestones with how you are  
2 obligating funds? And are there problems with  
3 that because consortium may incur costs, right?  
4 Separate from the application of the money. And  
5 is that problematic, not problematic?

6 MR. COHEN: I think what you're asking  
7 -- let me fill in some gaps here. So, depending  
8 on how large my consortia's grant is, I may wind  
9 up using the funds primarily if not exclusively to  
10 develop some idea of assessments. But my theory  
11 of action suggests a whole bunch of other tools  
12 that need to get developed.

13 So, legal issues aside of what you can  
14 or can't ask for within the four walls of this  
15 particular grant, you might imagine some  
16 milestones that speak to whether the professional  
17 development programs, the formative assessments,  
18 the benchmark assessments, the curriculum, et  
19 cetera, whatever. What's the timetable for  
20 developing those with other funds and are those  
21 milestones being met?

22 Now, what I don't know is, to go to the

1 extreme, whether you can pull the funds on a grant  
2 if the funds from some other source that's not in  
3 the grant aren't working out. I don't know how  
4 you deal with that. But in terms of knowing  
5 whether the -- this initiative is on track, it  
6 seems to me it ought to be fair game to ask about  
7 the other things that are essential to the theory  
8 of action that need to get developed or  
9 implemented, whatever they are, and is that  
10 happening. Because by the consortia or state's  
11 own theory, if those other things don't happen,  
12 this test isn't going to really do what we want it  
13 to, you know.

14 MR. TUCKER: Something here depends on  
15 whether you're making grants or contracts, and I  
16 hope you're talking about grants. Grant -- the  
17 term "grants" is a shorthand for the term "grant  
18 in aid," literally. You're aiding somebody else's  
19 work. If you're making a contract, you're getting  
20 your work done through the person to whom you're  
21 giving the money. It's a very different theory.

22 The reason that's important is because

1 we have in our organization gotten money, both  
2 grants and contracts, from foundations in federal  
3 government that have been contributed as  
4 contributions to a program which is larger than  
5 their own contribution, right? And then, in  
6 effect, everybody who does that has a right to sit  
7 down at the table and essentially look at our  
8 accomplishment of what we said we would do against  
9 the entire pot of money, whether they've  
10 contributed a little or a lot.

11 They do that because they recognize that  
12 their part can't get done unless the other parts  
13 get done. So they're all in it together anyway,  
14 right? Grants and contract officers can figure  
15 out how to get this done. And it really does have  
16 a lot to do with whether you're talking about a  
17 grant or a contract and all that sort of thing.

18 But if it's a grant in aid, it's much  
19 easier. But I -- it is entirely possible to do  
20 this if you take the view that what you're doing  
21 is an integral part of a larger picture, you can  
22 find a way to do it.

1           MR. AUGUSTE: I would just say I think  
2           that in the application process, I do think  
3           deliverables being defined both in terms of the  
4           milestones of, you know, creating high- quality  
5           set of summit of assessments and the milestones  
6           with regard to, you know, real value for end  
7           users, as you're talking about or educators or  
8           schools, for parents, et cetera. Real -- whether  
9           it's reports or that the information needed that's  
10          actually incorporated into these processes, I  
11          think is extremely important to have that as a  
12          judgment, as a -- one of the -- as some of the  
13          criteria.

14                 And then in terms of releasing funds, I  
15          think that there will be certain costs associated  
16          that are more clearly estimable costs associated  
17          of creating a summit of assessments, and the  
18          release of funds triggered by those milestones  
19          should be related to what those cost. I think it  
20          will be much harder to assess the costs because  
21          they will be different by state, depending on  
22          where each state is of, say, incorporating this

1 into teacher evaluations or incorporating this  
2 into, you know, high-quality reports for parents  
3 on where their children are relative to college  
4 readiness. And so there I don't think you -- I do  
5 think you want to have funds released associated  
6 with achieving some of those milestones.

7           Again, legal issues aside, I don't know  
8 if you can or not. If you could, I think it would  
9 be a very good thing to do. But I don't think it  
10 would -- you would peg it to the cost of those  
11 reports, per se, as to the point about it being a  
12 grant, not a contract.

13           And I do think you would align it as  
14 closely as you could to the state. So if you had  
15 10 states and state A had accomplished that  
16 objective, I think you would release a set of  
17 funds associated with that to the benefit of state  
18 A, right. And when states B, C, and D accomplish  
19 that you would do -- I think as much as possible,  
20 you would align it there because I don't think the  
21 consortium, when you talk about, say, professional  
22 development, I don't think the consortium will be

1       able to drive that. The states will actually have  
2       to drive it. So you don't want one state, you  
3       know, to be able to hold back all the others in  
4       terms of funding for it.

5               MR. COHEN: No, there is a question  
6       here, though. I assumed, right, that there's a  
7       lead state in there -- you're going to make a  
8       grant to a single state, right? In which case,  
9       there's a more complex mechanism for accomplishing  
10      what you just described.

11              That is, if state A is the prime  
12      grantee, the money's all going to them at whatever  
13      pace it is. And if state B is dragging its feet,  
14      there's got to be some mechanism, either for the  
15      lead state to withhold money -- which sounds like  
16      a challenge as I say it -- or for the department  
17      to have enough involvement just for accountability  
18      -- I really want to keep the department out of  
19      getting anything done besides giving the money in  
20      the right way. But you want --

21              MS. WEISS: Thanks for the vote of  
22      confidence.

1 (Laughter)

2 MR. COHEN: That comes from direct  
3 experience having been in your shoes.

4 I think you want -- somehow, if a  
5 state's got to say to another state we can't  
6 release your money, they have no experience in  
7 doing that and will not be able to do it well, so  
8 they need your backing on that. So I'm not sure  
9 how to set that up, but I think that's pretty  
10 important.

11 MR. TUCKER: A lot depends on the model  
12 that's in your head about how all this money's  
13 going to be used. Mike made the point earlier  
14 with which I agreed. A very simple model is you  
15 give the money to a lead state, the lead state  
16 gives the money to a management organization, the  
17 management organization contracts with one or more  
18 outfits to produce the product, period, full stop.  
19 In that -- I'm not suggesting this ought to be the  
20 model, but I'm suggesting it's a perfectly  
21 plausible model. And in that model, no money goes  
22 to the other states, or very little money goes to

1 the other states. So I would not predicate your  
2 approach on the assumption that a lot of money is  
3 going to the states.

4 In my experience, maybe it's different  
5 from yours, if you come back to a consortium and  
6 say, from our point of view, federal government's  
7 point of view, things are going pretty darn well,  
8 but there's a problem in three states, and  
9 everybody's sitting around the table, they're a  
10 bit embarrassed.

11 There may be small amounts of money  
12 going to that state and you might withhold that,  
13 but there is a fair amount of value in a public  
14 statement that there are 3 of your 20 members that  
15 are causing a problem and we hope you guys will be  
16 able to do something about it.

17 I don't think you need to predicate this  
18 on withholding large sums from states. I don't  
19 think that's necessarily realistic.

20 MR. BOALS: I would add that that's  
21 exactly the way it worked for our consortium.  
22 Very little money went to the state partners. In

1 fact, without naming any names, I'll say that once  
2 we first got our grant, I got a phone call from  
3 one of the states saying when is the check coming?  
4 And I said, well, I don't think you read the grant  
5 very closely because the money is going to the  
6 contractors to build the standards and assessments  
7 that are going to benefit you.

8 MR. MILLER: So, it sounds like  
9 (inaudible) introduces a level of -- I'm just  
10 trying to align the earlier point that says your  
11 core accountably mechanism at the end of the day  
12 is funding. And so, I'm just trying to reconcile  
13 the two models.

14 Yes, I have it. But then if it's just  
15 two alien states, how do you then without being  
16 into the co- administrator, right, in terms of how  
17 do you actually decide what portion of funds don't  
18 get released by what date based on --

19 MR. TUCKER: But when I was responding  
20 to your question, Tony, I thought you were asking  
21 about the relationship between the federal  
22 government and the consortium as a whole.

1                   And I do believe that's true. I believe  
2                   in the last analysis that the big weapon which is  
3                   usually kept in the closet, but everybody knows  
4                   that it's there, is that if things get bad, we can  
5                   take your money away. It doesn't often happen --

6                   MR. MILLER: But I was just --

7                   MR. TUCKER: I'm not saying that you  
8                   thought necessarily to think about passing that  
9                   down through the consortium.

10                  MR. MILLER: But I was just trying to  
11                  say what's the mechanism? Because I was just --

12                  MR. TUCKER: Right.

13                  MR. MILLER: I thought we said it's less  
14                  about taking it away, it's more about not  
15                  releasing it. And so, there's semantics, but it's  
16                  entirely different, as you know --

17                  MR. TUCKER: (inaudible) in my view,  
18                  that's the same thing. I mean, you're --

19                  MS. WEISS: Okay, I'm going to move us  
20                  on because I think we know that this is a tough  
21                  thing and we've got to go have conversations with  
22                  people who aren't in this room at the moment to

1 figure some of this out in terms of what we can  
2 and can't do. But let's get back to this  
3 differentiation of roles question because it  
4 touches at some of the other problems and we've  
5 even gotten a couple of questions that touch on  
6 this.

7           So, I think there's a lot of confusion  
8 out there about whether the department has said  
9 there's one consortium that's going to win this  
10 and it's a 50 state solution or whether multiple  
11 consortia can win. And even around this table,  
12 people walked up to the mike and said I know what  
13 you think, you think there should be multiple.  
14 And I know what you think, you think there should  
15 be one.

16           So, this confusion is partly the outcome  
17 of a meeting like -- of a forum like this where  
18 we're deciding at the back end what we think the  
19 answer should be and getting input at the front  
20 end, and we have, indeed, gotten people who told  
21 us both of those things.

22           I would say we've gotten a lot of people

1 because of the risk level of this project advising  
2 us to do multiple consortia not because of -- and  
3 then figure out comparability issues through  
4 psychometric methods, like the ones you guys were  
5 talking about.

6 But we haven't decided that yet. That's  
7 one of the things that we'll be deciding over the  
8 next month or so as we finalize the notice.

9 So, given that, I think the other thing  
10 that we've been hearing from you guys is smaller  
11 consortia are a lot easier to work with. And, in  
12 fact, all three of you started with pretty small  
13 consortia that grew over time, which is the  
14 opposite of the incentives that we have created  
15 here for better or not.

16 So, the question that occurs to me is  
17 we've talked a bunch this morning about  
18 differentiation of roles around an executive  
19 director-type firm or a management entity that's  
20 helping to do project management convening and  
21 moving the work forward for the consortium. We've  
22 talked a little bit, though not a lot, about the

1 technical experts that you might want to bring in  
2 to help with this work. And then we've talked  
3 about the role of the states as if states are one  
4 big monolithic entity.

5           And one of the things that I guess was  
6 in our heads when we talked about larger groups of  
7 states wasn't a monolithic entity of states, it  
8 was that the states themselves had differentiation  
9 of roles. And I'd love to hear you guys talk a  
10 little bit about that and what that might look  
11 like. What levels of commitment states might  
12 have, what workloads states might -- what  
13 categories of workloads it might be reasonable for  
14 states to take on or not, and that kind of thing.  
15 And what the ideal group of sort of the working at  
16 the table -- what the ideal number of these are  
17 the ones willing to roll up their sleeves and sit  
18 at the table, what the ideal number of those might  
19 look like.

20           MR. COHEN: The answer to all those is  
21 I'm not sure.

22           But with that as a preface, at least

1 from our experience -- first of all, the folks you  
2 most want at the table are the states that are  
3 most committed to using the product. So, I'm  
4 going to speak just for simplicity purposes as  
5 though all that was being discussed now was a  
6 summative assessment as opposed to a more complex  
7 system. Only because that just adds to the  
8 complexity of the statement.

9 But if you think about this as producing  
10 a summative assessment, if there are -- and if  
11 there are lots of states interested in a  
12 particular approach, if some of them are prepared  
13 to commit up front that the test that gets the  
14 volunteer is the one we're going to use in our  
15 state, while there are others that think this  
16 might be interesting, but I'm not quite sure yet.

17 But I want the first group of states  
18 around the table making the largest number of  
19 decisions that get made, some of which, by the  
20 way, you might think of as major decision the way  
21 we talked before about, you know, you have a  
22 governance body just making the major decisions.

1 But, again, depending on how this plays out,  
2 seemingly minor decisions, test windows, how the  
3 tests get sent to the states, et cetera, et  
4 cetera, those things actually turn out -- those  
5 operational decisions turn out to be pretty major  
6 when it's time to implement.

7           So, you got to think hard about the  
8 class of decisions. But I want the states that  
9 are going to be most likely to use this test,  
10 driving those decisions. Because, again,  
11 compromise is around every one of them. And so,  
12 the ones that are most likely to have to live with  
13 the results are to be the ones that are making the  
14 biggest decisions there.

15           The ones that are hanging back and  
16 waiting to see how this works, you'd like them to  
17 be involved as well. But you want them involved  
18 in a more limited manner. You might want them in  
19 an advisory capacity, you might want to run  
20 certain kinds of decisions past them to see if the  
21 way in which a certain decision was, you know --  
22 if a particular decision would increase or

1 decrease the likelihood that they would  
2 participate, whether they've got some ideas, et  
3 cetera. But you don't want them with the same  
4 level of decision making power.

5 Different issue in terms differentiating  
6 the role of states. There are some states that  
7 are going to have really strong technical  
8 capabilities compared to others. They'll either  
9 have more people or people with more experience or  
10 whatever and you want to find a way to give them  
11 more of a leadership role on the issues that they  
12 have greater expertise on. And I'm not sure how  
13 these two dimensions will line up, but you want to  
14 at least take advantage of both of those.

15 MR. TUCKER: So, we have said you get to  
16 sit around our governance table and make the big  
17 policy decisions if you sign our MOU. And the MOU  
18 lists a set of quite key features of the system  
19 that we have in mind and they're all non-  
20 negotiable. You either sign them or you don't.

21 When states have said to us, well, I  
22 like A, B, D, and F, but I'm not so sure about --

1 we've said to them, look, the other folks around  
2 the table will have signed all of them. If they  
3 ask us why you haven't signed all of them and  
4 you're sitting at the table, we're not going to  
5 have a really good answer.

6 MS. WEISS: But is there another place  
7 they can sit?

8 MR. TUCKER: Yes. So, we will be saying  
9 to them -- we haven't yet said it, but we're about  
10 to say it --

11 MS. WEISS: You're saying it now.

12 MR. TUCKER: We'll be saying to them  
13 we'd like to have you at the table. You don't get  
14 a vote. You can participate in the conversation,  
15 you can have people sitting at the meeting, but  
16 you don't get a vote.

17 The people who decide what the rules  
18 are, are the people who have joined this club by  
19 virtue of signing the MOU.

20 More broadly, I think what probably  
21 ought to happen is that as these consortia are put  
22 together and states sign up for them, and some --

1 and enough is demanded of them so that it's not  
2 costless to sign up for them. This is -- that's a  
3 key proviso, right? Doesn't have to be money, but  
4 it has to be commitments to real things that they  
5 are really going to do. I think when that  
6 happens, and when these start to unfold, we're  
7 going to find what we always find: It's some that  
8 looked very promising just don't end up going  
9 anywhere, and others that people weren't quite so  
10 sure about take off and fly.

11           There will be a market that develops out  
12 there. And some states will get more -- some  
13 consortia will get more and more folks who have  
14 been sitting at the table without a vote deciding  
15 they want a vote. And it's what happened to you,  
16 basically, and you and it's happened to us in  
17 various ways. And those who weren't sitting at  
18 the table without a vote will say, oh, I want to  
19 sit at the table without a vote and maybe I'll  
20 want a vote eventually. That's what's going to  
21 happen.

22           I think that Tammy is right, that

1 eventually what we're going to want to do is move  
2 toward a system with common cut points, so we can  
3 say that an A is an A is an A, not just across our  
4 system, but across the whole system. In my  
5 personal view, she has over-engineered what you  
6 ought to do at the outset.

7 I don't think you have to do that. I  
8 think from my point of view, what you need to do  
9 is to keep that issue in the back of your mind.  
10 When I say "you," I mean the government, right?  
11 So that when you know what you actually have in  
12 front of you, that is what the consortia look  
13 like, what their plans are, what capacities they  
14 have, what tools they bring to the table, you can  
15 then come back and ask now can we start to put in  
16 place some processes so that ultimately we will  
17 get to a system which we can start to tie  
18 together?

19 But I don't think it would be wise for  
20 you to at the outset put in a multilayered  
21 structure to do that. I don't think you need it,  
22 and I -- the technical tools are available, and

1 the technical people know what they are to do this  
2 work.

3 MS. WEISS: So, Byron, are there things  
4 that we can learn from other consortia in --  
5 across the world that are doing this? Or are  
6 there different sort of like, lead, do, sit back  
7 and use later? Are there things like that that we  
8 can learn from?

9 MR. AUGUSTE: Yes, I think so. I think  
10 in most of the successful consortia do have some  
11 division of labor, so there would be a -- by the  
12 way, it's not necessarily a tiering, although it  
13 can be. I mean, in the Star Alliance, for  
14 example, Lufthansa was the clear driver of the  
15 process and there were benefits to everyone, but  
16 they were sort of the default player, much like  
17 Saudi Arabia and OPEC, right. I mean, if Saudi  
18 Arabia didn't play the lead role, OPEC wouldn't  
19 work as its sort of consortium. And so I think  
20 there's a possibility, though, also, and Mike  
21 implied it, sort of division of labor. So if you  
22 have three or four technical working groups that

1 are critical, you could have a different state in  
2 the lead of each depending on their technical  
3 expertise and so forth. That sort of model could  
4 potentially work.

5 But the other thing I just wanted to --  
6 I wanted to question an assumption that seemed to  
7 be in your question, Joanne, and maybe I don't  
8 understand it. You said that all here of these  
9 consortia have been -- you know, started small and  
10 grew. That's actually true of most of the  
11 successful consortia. Star Alliance, again,  
12 started with 5; it's now at 26 because of the  
13 actual success. And you said that this program  
14 was structured in a way that would create  
15 incentives for the opposite. I wonder is it not  
16 possible to create incentives for just that sort  
17 of dynamic?

18 MS. WEISS: It's that the main Race to  
19 the Top competition already created the other  
20 incentive by having people --

21 MR. COHEN: Sign up.

22 MS. WEISS: -- sign up before we had

1 this figured out.

2 MR. AUGUSTE: But it would be one thing  
3 to -- right.

4 MS. WEISS: And so that we're trying to  
5 -- like, are there different -- can sign-up just  
6 be --

7 MR. AUGUSTE: Well --

8 MS. WEISS: -- have a different -- now  
9 we'll get into -- in this competition we'll get  
10 into the details of what is the actual work that  
11 who will be doing and can we have levels of -- as  
12 you said, sit at the table and watch and maybe  
13 (inaudible).

14 MR. AUGUSTE: Well, I think it's  
15 interesting to think, though, about whether -- I  
16 mean, as people have mentioned, I mean, funding  
17 and the flow of funding and the way that's  
18 structured and awarded as your main lever.

19 MS. WEISS: Yes.

20 MR. AUGUSTE: What could you do to make  
21 that structure more replicate the dynamics of a  
22 market in which successful consortium, you know,

1 play and grow? So --

2 MS. WEISS: So say more about that.

3 MR. AUGUSTE: So what happens? So let's  
4 take Star Alliance for the airline situation. As  
5 that -- as they made that alliance work and have  
6 benefit to its members, more people wanted to join  
7 the network, more entities wanted to join the  
8 network. Whenever another entity join the  
9 network, the benefits of the network were greater  
10 to everyone already existing in the network as  
11 opposed to the dynamic when someone else joined  
12 the network that it was a zero sum game. So there  
13 wasn't a fixed pool of value in the network that  
14 whenever you added a new player they had to split  
15 it into finer and finer pieces. Right?

16 So, for example, a grant that went to a  
17 consortium that said the grant was for this much  
18 to do what you're saying, and then there's a  
19 disincentive actually to add members. No, the way  
20 it worked is that whenever a new member joined,  
21 the benefits accrued to all and the -- so what if  
22 there were a grant where there was a high premium

1 on defining and plan and capacity that would  
2 actually work even for a small core, but there was  
3 also a funding structure so that if you attracted  
4 additional members on those same very robust terms  
5 there would be additional funding, and that  
6 funding would be proportional or better than  
7 proportional to, you know, what was added so that  
8 it would reflect that?

9 So I don't know if that's possible, but  
10 that would be the kind of funding structure that  
11 would reflect a -- set a very high bar for how  
12 this is really going to work with a small group  
13 and then -- but have tremendous incentives for  
14 that group to expand to anyone else who was  
15 willing to join in those high standards.

16 MR. COHEN: Can I piggyback a couple of  
17 comments on that?

18 MS. WEISS: Mm-hmm.

19 MR. COHEN: Two very different kinds.  
20 One is it is right, the current -- you know, the  
21 current signals from the department, right, around  
22 the 350 million was a loud signal that everyone

1 should join some consortium.

2 MR. TUCKER: Some particular consortium.  
3 If only you could figure out which one it was.

4 MR. COHEN: Right. But at the same --

5 MS. WEISS: No, no, actually I don't  
6 think that's true. There's nothing particular --  
7 I mean --

8 MR. TUCKER: No, no, no. I don't mean  
9 that you had a particular one in mind. What I  
10 meant was that it looked as though there was a  
11 very high premium on being associated with a  
12 consortium that had most of the states in it, but  
13 nobody knew which one that was going to be, so  
14 you're all trying to figure it out.

15 MR. COHEN: So at the same time you sent  
16 a signal that said a lot of states should play,  
17 you've also done a very good job through the use  
18 of the bully pulpit in telling states that when  
19 they apply for the much larger pot of money,  
20 right, the 4 billion, that they should not expect  
21 that every state is going to win. The point here  
22 is don't underestimate the value of the bully

1       pulpit between now and when you put the RFP out to  
2       talk about your expectations of whether everyone's  
3       going to participate in this or whether there'll  
4       be smaller numbers of states participating. So  
5       that's one point I want to make.

6                 Second, we didn't necessarily plan it  
7       this way, but in the ADP Consortia we wound up  
8       building what was looking like a pretty good sort  
9       of inherent incentive for more states to join.  
10       This will get to procurement issues; I don't want  
11       to go too far down that road. But the way we --  
12       the contract we have with Pearson basically  
13       reduces the unit cost per test as the number of  
14       test takers increases. So if more states joined,  
15       they will lower the price for themselves and for  
16       the states that are already in the consortium.  
17       And that --

18                MR. AUGUSTE: Yeah, exactly.

19                MR. COHEN: Figuring out to build that  
20       kind of incentive into the design of the cost  
21       structure, right, could be a way to accomplish  
22       what Byron was talking about.

1           MR. BOALS: We did a very similar thing  
2 to that. Basically in our bid process for our  
3 commercial companies we encouraged them to tell us  
4 how prices would go down as more assessments were  
5 used. So that has been a big incentive to our  
6 existing states to say to their neighbors, hey,  
7 you know, these guys are doing good things. Why  
8 don't you consider joining?

9           MR. TUCKER: On that point, and coming  
10 back to the viability of the business plan,  
11 there's clearly -- at least in my mind -- a  
12 contradiction between the idea that the people of  
13 the United States, that is the government, will  
14 own all the products, e.g., intellectual property  
15 created on the one hand and a viable business  
16 model for the consortia on the other. That is to  
17 say the only way you're ultimately going to have a  
18 viable business model is if the schools are buying  
19 something that is something that somebody is  
20 selling. And in order for them to sell it, they  
21 have to own the property rights or at least have a  
22 long-term lease on the property rights or they

1 won't have anything to sell. That's kind of a  
2 fundamental reality. And schools buy what  
3 somebody sells. They use what somebody sells.  
4 They don't use anything else.

5           So I think it's going to be very  
6 important for this effort to take a leaf from a  
7 set of policies that were developed originally by  
8 the National Science Foundation beginning in the  
9 late 1950s when they had the same problem. They,  
10 too, declared that the curriculum development  
11 products that were supported by that work in  
12 science and mathematics were going to belong to  
13 the government. And as soon as the publishing  
14 companies heard that, they were not interested, so  
15 they never got into the schools. And I think it's  
16 going to be very important for you to either adopt  
17 their policies or policies like them which enable  
18 you to, in effect, convey to the developers the  
19 temporary ownership of the intellectual property  
20 rights and enable them to make contracts with  
21 publishers or other commercial entities to get all  
22 of -- everything that you want to get to the

1 schools in there and used properly or invent an  
2 entirely different mechanism currently unknown to  
3 American education to do that.

4 MS. WEISS: Sounds like a poorer choice.

5 MR. TUCKER: The latter choice, I  
6 believe, is a poorer choice, right.

7 MS. WEISS: Okay. How about if --  
8 struggling with the time to think about -- let's  
9 spend a few more models on this business model --  
10 a few more minutes on the business model long-term  
11 sustainability question and just talk a little bit  
12 more about what you think we should be asking  
13 states to tell us up front, assuming that we have  
14 given clear direction about ownership and IP in  
15 the notice itself.

16 MR. AUGUSTE: Right.

17 MS. WEISS: What should -- what kinds of  
18 business -- what should we be asking people about  
19 their business plan at the time of application?  
20 You had the idea that we need to make sure -- and  
21 business plan is sort of the -- maybe that's not  
22 the right word, but your long-term sustainability

1 plan. You had a notion that we shouldn't allow --  
2 that people should tell us how they're going to be  
3 able to administer for no greater cost.

4 MR. AUGUSTE: Yeah.

5 MS. WEISS: And when Marc talked, he  
6 disagreed with that. Let's just talk a little bit  
7 more about --

8 MR. TUCKER: But you don't know why I  
9 disagreed with it --

10 MS. WEISS: -- what those issues are.

11 MR. TUCKER: -- because you weren't  
12 here.

13 MR. AUGUSTE: Yeah. No, I'd love to  
14 hear why. I mean, my point was not so much a  
15 specific price point, but the view is I do think  
16 that economic sustainability of the whole system  
17 and all the actors in the system is critical.  
18 Marc just made a very interesting point about the  
19 providers of the IP and their economic  
20 sustainability. I do think that's important to  
21 look at. But I think from the standpoint of the  
22 states and the implementation, I'm sure there are

1 a number of factors to take into account, but one  
2 enormous one, I think, is the cost of test  
3 administration. And to the extent -- I think just  
4 fundamentally in the economics of this, to the  
5 extent that we're using the scale of the consortia  
6 to invest in higher fixed costs of test  
7 development in order to get, you know, better  
8 tests from the standpoint of college readiness,  
9 that's a fantastic thing. To the point that it is  
10 -- that it raises the variable cost of  
11 administering the tests, that's a problematic  
12 thing because someone's going to have to pay for  
13 that and it's not the consortium itself. It's  
14 either the participating states or someone else  
15 will have to subsidize that. So it's the states  
16 and going to state legislatures to say that we'd  
17 like to increase our budget for test  
18 administration seems to me not a very viable  
19 proposition. So there's also the possibility that  
20 there's some additional subsidy from the federal  
21 government. That's another way you could do it.  
22 But I think there just needs to be an answer to

1 that question because I think that the answer is  
2 just it's going to be twice as expensive to do  
3 your state tests. I think that's a -- I think  
4 that will kill most of these things (inaudible).

5 MR. TUCKER: You actually just made a  
6 point that I'd like to use to make another point  
7 and then come back to your point. And the point  
8 I'd like to make here is one that I learned a long  
9 time ago from Lewis Branscomb, who when I met him  
10 was a vice president of IBM for research, but had  
11 previously been the director of what was then  
12 called the National Bureau of Standards. And he  
13 said the following to me about standards, which I  
14 think has a real application here.

15 He said there are two ways -- when a  
16 city decides it wants a new bridge, it can specify  
17 the new bridge in two ways: It can get its  
18 engineer to design a bridge and then bid it out to  
19 the lowest contractor; the other thing that it can  
20 do is to specify what load it wants to be able to  
21 carry, what wind speeds it wants it in order to be  
22 able to deflect, and all the rest of it. In other

1 words, a set of performance characteristics. He  
2 said, hands down, the latter way to do it is the  
3 best way. And the reason is if you have the  
4 engineer specify the design of the bridge, you're  
5 never going to get a better bridge than that.  
6 You'll never get a more innovative bridge than  
7 that. The way you get much higher performance at  
8 lower cost is to specify the objectives, the  
9 goals, and let the bidders figure out how to solve  
10 the problem in a way you never thought of.

11 The application in this instance to me  
12 is I would urge you at every point to be clear  
13 about your goals and to try wherever you can not  
14 to specify the means; to leave as much as possible  
15 to the proposers as to how they get there. The  
16 reason I think this is related to what Byron just  
17 said is that I totally agree that you ought to  
18 insist that the folks who are sending you  
19 proposals tell you how they are going to fund the  
20 costs of the system they propose to create over  
21 time and long after your money is gone, hands  
22 down. I would not tell them your tests can't cost

1 any more than the current tests.

2 We have a way, our own organization, we  
3 think, of actually lowering the cost of the total  
4 system while actually increasing the cost of the  
5 test. It shouldn't matter, right? What matters  
6 is that the cost of the entire system is kept in  
7 check because the country doesn't have any more  
8 money. That's the sort of thing I have in mind.

9 So I strongly urge you to figure out  
10 what are your bottom line performance  
11 requirements. Leave as much room as possible for  
12 people to figure out how to get there.

13 MR. COHEN: I think Marc's right on  
14 that. I want to suggest ways you could build on  
15 that as you think about managing this effort.  
16 Because what matters is not just the cost per --  
17 you know, the annual cost of the test, but the  
18 annual costs of the system for improvement. And  
19 so you could imagine a very robust, comprehensive  
20 assessment system that costs more than just the  
21 summative tests; or you could imagine a way of  
22 having performance assessments whose

1 administration and scoring cost more than what we  
2 do now, but a lot of it turns out to be  
3 professional development costs, for example. So  
4 you want the consortia and the states within it to  
5 be able to think their way through that, but you  
6 don't want them to just say we got it covered in  
7 here somehow.

8           So I think, number one, you want to ask  
9 them not just once at the front end, but on a  
10 regular basis, whether it's every year or every  
11 two years, I'm not sure, but let's come back and  
12 talk about that, right. Tell us what you've  
13 learned, what you -- how you are changing your  
14 budgeting system or how you're changing your  
15 fiscal reporting system so that the legislature is  
16 going to understand what's going on here.  
17 Because, otherwise, you're still going to look  
18 like you've doubled the cost of the test and  
19 you're going to lose that political (inaudible).

20           MR. AUGUSTE: And I really agree with  
21 the combination of Marc and Mike's last comments  
22 because I completely agree that it should be the

1 total system cost that you look at, but I also --  
2 I think we all recognize that that's not the way,  
3 you know, budgeting at the state happens.

4 MR. COHEN: That's right. Right.

5 MR. AUGUSTE: So I think you do need to  
6 be able to demonstrate those economics on paper,  
7 but you also need to be able to demonstrate an  
8 existence proof of some number of states who have  
9 signed MOUs with you saying --

10 MR. TUCKER: That's exactly right.

11 MR. AUGUSTE: -- we accept this logic  
12 and we will act on it --

13 MR. TUCKER: That's --

14 MR. AUGUSTE: -- and we will appropriate  
15 accordingly.

16 MR. TUCKER: That's precisely right.

17 MR. AUGUSTE: So that is essential.

18 MR. TUCKER: That's precisely right.

19 MR. COHEN: I also want to --

20 MR. TUCKER: I think that's what we both  
21 meant by system design.

22 MR. AUGUSTE: Yes, that's right.

1           MR. TUCKER:  It's more than testing  
2           system design.

3           MR. AUGUSTE:  Agreed.

4           MR. COHEN:  But it is also likely the  
5           case, if this work is done well, that states will  
6           discover tests that are being used now and have  
7           been used forever that maybe they could stop or  
8           their districts can stop.  So locally administered  
9           tests, for states that go to an end of course  
10          model at the high school level, for example,  
11          perhaps they can convince districts that they  
12          don't also need to give their own final exam.  For  
13          states that get a good college-ready measure at  
14          the secondary level there ought to be a discussion  
15          with the postsecondary system about how they're  
16          using placement exams and where they can stop  
17          using some of those.  So there's lots of room for  
18          cost savings in here.  They won't all be evident  
19          at the front end or -- and they will certainly not  
20          be politically easy to commit to at the front end,  
21          but there's a lot that you can do by your  
22          leadership of this overall effort that will keep

1 shining a spotlight on where money can be saved in  
2 this.

3 And so, again, throughout this there's a  
4 hugely important bully pulpit role for the  
5 department that will keep people focused on issues  
6 that are difficult to deal with. And you don't  
7 have to figure out the solutions, but you sure can  
8 keep pushing them to deal with it.

9 MS. BATTAGLINO: Well, and Mike that  
10 might even be something where up front we ask the  
11 states to really quantify what is all that we're  
12 spending currently related to these types of tests  
13 as well. And not to over-engineer that, but to  
14 get them thinking along those lines so that you  
15 then can begin that conversation of what are some  
16 of the related costs, what are some of the  
17 opportunities for potential for reallocation. And  
18 again, we wouldn't expect the answers in that  
19 up-front stage, but getting the states to be  
20 thinking that way I would think would be critical.

21 MR. COHEN: Yeah, I'd, quite frankly, be  
22 cautious about that, at least before the states

1 win, right. The last thing you want is something  
2 that shows what could appear to be an exorbitant  
3 cost of testing, although, you know, as a fraction  
4 of per-pupil expenditures it's miniscule, but  
5 politically it's huge. So you really need to be  
6 careful with it.

7 MR. BOALS: I think the consortium needs  
8 to -- and the applicants need to distinguish  
9 between the core costs and you're talking systems.  
10 These are what we call the auxiliary pieces.

11 To give you an example, the WIDA example  
12 is we started with one summative assessment and a  
13 set of standards. And that the MOU that the state  
14 signed, that's what they sign on for. And that  
15 actually -- we have been able to offer at a fairly  
16 competitive price and keep it low because as we  
17 start building the next pieces of the system,  
18 which I showed you in that last slide, we will be  
19 looking -- we look to fund those through other  
20 means to develop them, but then once we implement  
21 them, that's going to be on a voluntary basis.  
22 And depending upon what the project is, either

1 districts' schools themselves would be paying for  
2 those elements of the system or the state would  
3 say, hey, we really want a formative assessment  
4 statewide. We're going to come and sign up for  
5 that. But that's not part of the core -- what we  
6 call the base price of being a member of the  
7 consortium. So keeping those pieces separate, I  
8 think, allows you to see the value that you're  
9 getting. And if people add additional things it's  
10 because they see additional value and they want to  
11 add it.

12 MS. WEISS: Okay. Let's turn then to  
13 the other big question that came up this morning  
14 that you brought up, Bryon, actually around  
15 indices or indicators of end user value. I think  
16 that language is not that accessible to educators,  
17 so one of the things I'd like to do is see if  
18 maybe we can make clearer, maybe through examples,  
19 what kinds of things we're thinking about there  
20 and then segue from there into the issue of what  
21 questions we might want to ask in our application  
22 in order to capture the concept that you brought

1 up.

2 MR. AUGUSTE: So what I meant by that, I  
3 mean, there's a core product that clearly is, you  
4 know, a set of summative assessments that fit into  
5 the accountability model, right, that that is sort  
6 of the sort of job one and well defined. So I'm  
7 talking about the ancillary sort of products or  
8 information tools sort of off of that that --  
9 well, so -- or the characteristics of that that  
10 help, for example, educators. So take if you want  
11 to incorporate this data as part of a system of  
12 value-added measures that would be a component in  
13 multiple measures in teacher evaluation, say,  
14 that's a use for an educational system in the  
15 career path and for teachers and so forth. Well,  
16 then you need to have that data at a certain point  
17 in time, for example. So end user value -- if you  
18 just have the data, you know, five months later,  
19 then that doesn't actually create that kind of  
20 value for the system. So if that's central to  
21 your theory of action to have it, then it doesn't  
22 meet those characteristics. So partly I'm talking

1 about defining the characteristics that allow  
2 systems to -- that allow this summative assessment  
3 to be used for specific purposes in the theory of  
4 action.

5           But then I take it a step further to say  
6 that you should measure then the effect of these,  
7 not just by do they have summative assessments,  
8 but are they being used. Because if they are, if  
9 they're solving all the problems to make them  
10 usable, then the answer is they should be being  
11 used. So are they being used, in that case around  
12 the sort of teacher professional development  
13 career path?

14           Another example would be for parents.  
15 One of the things that is very striking, we have a  
16 -- a lot of what this is about is to really have a  
17 measure of college and career readiness. That  
18 concept should be very important to parents. And  
19 I think it is very important, but I think we  
20 haven't systematically found a way of  
21 communicating to parents the information from  
22 these assessments. What does that actually mean

1 for my child? So having sort of an actual report  
2 that goes to parents, that is useful to them, that  
3 would be another example of, you know, end user  
4 value. You can find some other word for it, but  
5 that's what I'm talking about.

6 MR. COHEN: I think it's both much more  
7 simple than what you just described and much more  
8 complicated as well. Let me give you two examples  
9 from our own experience with this Algebra II exam.

10 One in the -- it's much more simple. In  
11 the first year or two of its administration there  
12 were a lot of states that were either piloting  
13 this in a number of districts, but not giving it  
14 statewide, or had not adopted policies for the --  
15 for who had to take it and what the uses of it  
16 were. So they were recruiting volunteer districts  
17 to participate in this.

18 It turns out in one of the states, one  
19 of the districts that had volunteered, my brother  
20 happened to be the assistant superintendent. And  
21 he was always used to giving me very direct  
22 feedback on how I could improve things in my life,

1 and this turned out to be one of those examples  
2 when he called me and basically said what the hell  
3 were you people doing? And what became clear was  
4 that he had gotten this set of test booklets the  
5 same way he got every other set of test booklets  
6 from the state. And implicitly, the communication  
7 from the state about why these tests were  
8 important is because we sent it to you, you have  
9 to do this.

10 Well, that worked for the NCLB 3 to 8  
11 testing because everyone understood that. It  
12 didn't work for a new test, right, where it turns  
13 out an explanation for why this test is important  
14 and how you could benefit from it and how you  
15 could use the results was essential. But that's  
16 not the way states think about communicating about  
17 the tests that they give because they haven't had  
18 to do that for a long time.

19 So I would say your statement about  
20 explaining the end user value applies not only to  
21 the non-summative tests, but I would start there.  
22 We could gain a lot of -- it'd be quite helpful to

1 start explaining to people why they have to use a  
2 test besides "because we told you to." So that's  
3 one place where it's more simple than what you  
4 described.

5 More complicated is on the college  
6 readiness side where, again, in our case, what we  
7 learned is that if you set a rigorous, honest  
8 measure of, you know, a bar for college readiness,  
9 you will find the vast majority of kids who take  
10 the test don't meet it. Well, it's really hard to  
11 explain to the parents, right, of kids who are  
12 about to go off to college that really, in our  
13 judgment, your kid's not ready for college just  
14 yet, right. If the colleges were being honest,  
15 they'd tell you that your kid's going to be in a  
16 remedial course even while they got admitted to  
17 the flagship campus. So that turns out to be an  
18 extraordinarily difficult concept to explain if  
19 you're trying to raise the bar for college  
20 readiness or define it accurately at the same  
21 time. So that's -- simply to say that's pretty  
22 (inaudible).

1           MR. AUGUSTE: And I think I can  
2 completely agree with that, but I guess what I'm  
3 saying is so how can we get information on that to  
4 them in eighth grade along in a context in which  
5 there's also usable information on what can you do  
6 about this.

7           MR. COHEN: Well, two things. One is  
8 this is where it's important to have the  
9 postsecondary system involved from the front end  
10 because of the postsecondary system says, judging  
11 from this report, your kid's going to need some  
12 extra work. Whether they say he needs remediation  
13 or not is going to be a more complicated issue.  
14 But if the feedback about college readiness comes  
15 from the higher ed system in the state, that's  
16 meaningful in ways than it is if it comes from the  
17 K to 12 system. So it requires, again, their  
18 involvement up front to make this work.

19           MS. WEISS: Other thoughts on these end  
20 user metrics?

21           MR. TUCKER: Not yet.

22           MR. AUGUSTE: My only point is that that

1 metrics point matters. These are complicated  
2 issues. You have to think them through. But if  
3 the only milestones you take into account are the  
4 milestones of the technical creation of the  
5 summative assessments, then you can be guaranteed  
6 that you're not going to see the attention on  
7 these end user initiatives. So whatever the  
8 thought process that's required to get there,  
9 making sure that that is part of what is being  
10 judged in the applications and ideally on what is  
11 being judged in the -- you know, in the progress  
12 and release of funds.

13 MR. TUCKER: But then you have to put  
14 all the pieces together. You're absolutely right.  
15 If -- as Byron said, which particular metrics you  
16 offer depends on what your theory of action is,  
17 right?

18 MR. AUGUSTE: Absolutely.

19 MR. TUCKER: So you ask for the theory  
20 of action, you ask for the end user metrics, you  
21 ask for the process by which the product is going  
22 to be produced, and then you ask what is it

1 actually going to take besides the test to produce  
2 progress on the metrics, which is how you find out  
3 what these other things are that you have to do,  
4 which are actually not ancillary in order to get  
5 progress on the metrics beside produce the test.  
6 I mean, all of these pieces fit together in a  
7 system.

8 MS. WEISS: Right. I'm just worried  
9 that if we say and what are the metrics that go  
10 with it, people won't know what that means. So  
11 I'm still like struggling to get more color so  
12 that we can ask a question that's actually  
13 understandable and answerable in a consistent way.  
14 So let me -- do you have a -- go ahead, Tony.

15 MR. MILLER: Well, it's more of a  
16 facilitation. I mean, could you say what is the  
17 value to students and how would you measure it?  
18 What is the value to educators?

19 MS. WEISS: Right, that's what I was --  
20 that's exactly where I was going to go.

21 MR. MILLER: And what is the value to  
22 the state?

1 MS. WEISS: So is it like for each  
2 audience --

3 MR. MILLER: (inaudible) the benefits --

4 MR. AUGUSTE: Right, for each audience.

5 MS. WEISS: -- tell us --

6 MR. MILLER: -- and how you would  
7 quantify and measure it, right.

8 MS. WEISS: Mm-hmm, what are they going  
9 -- why do they care about this and how are you  
10 going to produce the information that's going to  
11 help -- or tools or whatever that are going to  
12 help them delivery on that?

13 MR. AUGUSTE: And -- exactly. And then  
14 for how many of them will you deliver that value  
15 --

16 MS. WEISS: Oh, okay.

17 MR. AUGUSTE: -- over time?

18 MR. COHEN: Well, but in the grant  
19 period, if this is basically for development,  
20 piloting, and field testing, then the answer to  
21 how many may be -- the question of how many may be  
22 premature. But you ought -- on the other hand,

1       you ought to have a pretty robust piloting and  
2       field testing effort that would enable to get  
3       feedback from the end users who could at least  
4       tell you what value they saw or potential value  
5       they see in the various components of a system  
6       that you're developing. So there ought to be a  
7       way to do that, but I think it's not quite how  
8       many just yet.

9               MS. WEISS: Go ahead.

10              MR. MILLER: I'm curious, it's a little  
11      philosophical, but we've talked a lot about all  
12      the criteria, right, that we should ultimately  
13      apply. I guess I'd be interested in your view on  
14      we could be -- we could strive to be exhaustive,  
15      right? And here's -- and how -- and you need to  
16      be very specific and -- right?

17              SPEAKER: No.

18              MR. MILLER: And then now we're just  
19      comparing answers, right, and assessing that?

20              MR. COHEN: Right.

21              MR. MILLER: Or we could be looser, if  
22      you will, looking for those things, but then

1       evaluating on the backend and looking for the  
2       level of creativity, thought -- it's always the  
3       tension that -- as you know having sat on the  
4       other side of the table. How do you think about  
5       what things we should be very specific on in terms  
6       of this is exactly how we're going to assess you  
7       and here's what we're -- exactly what we're  
8       looking for? Or should we actually characterize  
9       it at a little higher level and allow for the  
10       application to bring out the level of specificity?

11               MR. TUCKER: Well, I was arguing earlier  
12       that you'd be -- that you focus on the outcomes  
13       you want, not on the characteristics of the  
14       design. That is you do as little designing of the  
15       system to ask your questions as possible and you  
16       ask the sharpest questions you can about what  
17       makes you, dear offeror, think this is going to be  
18       valuable to anybody with respect to, A, B, C, and  
19       D.

20               Again, the whole point of what Lew  
21       Branscomb was telling me -- I'll just illustrate  
22       the story to make the point. The story he told

1 was of the town in Northern New England that was  
2 trying to get an electric line across a lake in a  
3 rural area of New Hampshire. And they got bids  
4 from a big utility company and then they got a bid  
5 from a local farmer, and the local farmer won the  
6 bid. How did he win the bid? He decided that  
7 what he was going to do was get his horse and  
8 wagon and the electric line and lay it out when  
9 the pond was frozen, which never occurred to the  
10 big electric company which built all these poles  
11 around the lake, right. Now, if the RFP that went  
12 out was an RFP that --

13 MS. WEISS: Struggling for the analogy,  
14 but I think there is one.

15 MR. TUCKER: But if the RFP that went  
16 out was for sinking poles around the lake, then  
17 the farmer's idea would have been irrelevant. So  
18 what they were specifying was the end in view, not  
19 the method to which (inaudible).

20 MR. MILLER: So if I could just -- the  
21 example then given this morning's conversation, to  
22 see if we fully understand it, so you could say

1       how will the governance -- your approach to  
2       governance allow for expedited and timely decision  
3       making versus saying do you have a decision making  
4       process? Do you have (inaudible)?

5               MR. TUCKER: That involves A, B, C, D,  
6       and so many of these and so many of these.

7               MS. WEISS: Right.

8               MR. MILLER: So a lot of those things,  
9       it's more of abstracting to the goal that we want  
10       and not at all trying to profile (inaudible).

11               MR. TUCKER: You got it precisely.  
12       That's exactly what I'm saying. What are you  
13       trying to accomplish in the governance? Don't  
14       tell them how to do it.

15               MR. COHEN: A slightly different way to  
16       think about that, I don't think it's inconsistent,  
17       is I think back to my experience in reviewing  
18       plans and proposals. The first question I  
19       generally ask myself when I finish reading it is,  
20       is this coherent? Does this hang together? But  
21       more so than did they earn points in every  
22       category? And to the extent that you could find a

1 fair way of asking the question, if they did all  
2 the things they said they would do here, do they  
3 hang together? Can this thing work? Right? You  
4 know, you need some way to get at that. That's --  
5 that is a little bit different than the farmer's  
6 analogy, but it basically gets at the --

7 SPEAKER: Same thing.

8 MR. COHEN: It gets at the same thing.  
9 It is if you go down the -- also, if you go down  
10 the road of site visits and interactions with the  
11 key players in the consortia, you will begin to  
12 get an even richer picture of that.

13 MR. TUCKER: You win if your best  
14 proposal is a non-conforming proposal. If  
15 somebody came up with a way of accomplishing the  
16 end you have in view that is so far away from  
17 anything you ever thought of, but it actually gets  
18 there in a more effective way than the way you did  
19 think of, that's the point of the farmer's story.  
20 And I've seen it play out in federal procurement  
21 over and over again.

22 MR. AUGUSTE: And so I agree with that,

1 that sort of very sharp specification of the  
2 outcomes that you're looking for and not sharp  
3 specification of the way to get there. I  
4 completely agree with that. I will say there are  
5 some things, and I think this is consistent with  
6 what the discussion's been, that you do need to  
7 look for. Coherence is clearly one.

8 MR. TUCKER: Absolutely.

9 MR. AUGUSTE: Hard to judge, but, I  
10 mean, I think that's -- because it is a -- the  
11 system has to cohere or else this won't work.

12 MR. TUCKER: Yeah.

13 MR. AUGUSTE: Alignment is clearly  
14 another and having really some very serious test  
15 of alignment around sort of the way. So, in other  
16 words, it's not that you need to have thought of  
17 the way they're going to do it, but whatever way  
18 they're going to do it the participating states  
19 really have to understand it, have to buy into it,  
20 have to be committed to making the changes  
21 required to do it in this new and innovative way.  
22 And that, I think, is extremely important.

1           And then on governance, I do think there  
2           are some things -- there's some tangible things in  
3           governance that are clear. So, for example, how  
4           are you going to actually separate operational  
5           decision making from sort of policy/political  
6           decision making? How are you going to have some  
7           kind of operating -- real operating capacity that  
8           is -- that has some real authority to get things  
9           -- I think that is actually critical. And there's  
10          not a large number of those kinds of things, but I  
11          think there are some that if you don't have it, if  
12          you don't have those, you -- it'll be very hard to  
13          succeed.

14                 MS. WEISS: Any last questions from you  
15                 guys? Any last thoughts from any of you?

16                 MR. TUCKER: I don't think so.

17                 MS. WEISS: Well, this has been  
18                 fascinating. We didn't get to a number of the  
19                 questions that we had, but I think we actually  
20                 touched on the most important ones and you  
21                 certainly gave us a big to-do list of things to go  
22                 back and really think about and think through. So

1 I want to just thank all of you really sincerely.  
2 I thought this was a terrific meeting. I have  
3 pages and pages of notes to show for it that I  
4 will undoubtedly be going back through and hope to  
5 remember what I meant by the scrawls that I made.

6 But thank you very, very much for  
7 spending your time with us today and for sharing  
8 your lessons learned and your wisdom and your  
9 advice. I think it will help us do a much better  
10 job of thinking through this competition than we  
11 would have done otherwise. So thank you very  
12 much. Let's give a round of applause to all of  
13 the experts who came to help us today.

14 And we are, if you don't mind, going to  
15 take a quick break, more like a five-minute break.  
16 And all of the people who are scheduled for public  
17 comment, if you would come over here there'll be  
18 -- there's Anya waving to you. Go see Anya over  
19 here. She'll get you all set up. If you're doing  
20 public comment, go see her first. Everybody else,  
21 if you could be back in here by about 3:45 or so,  
22 that would be terrific.

1           And again, thank you all for coming and  
2           thanks again to all of our experts for their help  
3           today.

4                           (Recess)

5           MS. WEISS: Folks, we're just about  
6           ready to get going again, so let me ask you all to  
7           come take your seats.

8           All right. In a minute we're going to  
9           start the public speaking portion. I think we  
10          have five speakers, so we should be done in about  
11          a half an hour. Let me just remind the folks who  
12          are doing public speaking, you've got five  
13          minutes. And up on your podium you'll see the  
14          countdown clock and it'll go to yellow when you  
15          have two minutes left and red when you're out of  
16          time. And we will ask you, please, to stop when  
17          it goes to red.

18          The other thing is that this isn't an  
19          interactive session. We don't respond to  
20          comments. This is where we're really just  
21          listening to things that the public has to tell us  
22          and also accepting written input.

1           And so with that, let me turn it over to  
2           you. Please start -- everyone start by  
3           introducing yourselves to us.

4           MR. DONOHUE: Good afternoon. My name  
5           is Nicholas Donohue. I'm the president and CEO of  
6           the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. I'm also a  
7           proud founder of the New England Comprehensive  
8           Assessment Program, and it's really great to hear  
9           everybody talking about consortia given that  
10          experience. I also represent a small informal  
11          network of funders, other funders: The Hewlett  
12          Foundation, Ford Sandler Foundation. You'll be  
13          hearing from some others as we try to support this  
14          process.

15          I'd been hoping to cheerlead Mary Ann  
16          Schneider and her comments as an experienced  
17          participants in NECAP. I'll lead -- use that as a  
18          lead-in to my first comment about SEA capacity.  
19          There's a little irony there that Mary Ann was  
20          called back to a task that was a priority that  
21          kept her from speaking at this important moment.

22          I'd encourage you to follow the comments

1 made by the presenters. I would never  
2 underestimate the capacity and strength of  
3 individuals in individual departments, but I would  
4 be very careful not to overestimate the capacity  
5 that exists in the departments to carry out  
6 complex tasks. I say that as a former chief.

7 I want to echo, and for the group of  
8 funders I represent say this in their name also,  
9 that the notions that Marc Tucker put forward  
10 being very clear about goals and leaving  
11 specifications open so that you can find the  
12 farmers to drag the -- I know that lake. I've  
13 swum across that lake in New Hampshire when I was  
14 chief, and that's a good analogy. Be very clear  
15 about the goals, but do not over-specify the  
16 means.

17 On some much more sort of specific  
18 pieces about experience with running and  
19 participating in a complex collaborative, I would  
20 suggest that while you are specifying your  
21 principles without over-specifying the exact  
22 products that people should deliver, you'd be very

1 careful to avoid contradictions in the principles  
2 that you prioritize. For example, it's one thing  
3 to ask for interesting, complex, and varied  
4 assessment systems that allow and promote broad  
5 and different notions of where and when learning  
6 can happen. That's a noble goal. Doing that at  
7 the same time that you ask for very quick  
8 turnaround or a primary principle around  
9 comparability around states could be seen as a  
10 contradiction. So contradictions of principles  
11 erode and infest in collaboratives and they weaken  
12 them, and they weaken them at their weakest spots.

13 I would ask for clarity of definitions  
14 in any application. Most of the collaboratives  
15 that state participate in they only really  
16 discover what they've agreed to sometime down the  
17 road. You actually demanding that they specify  
18 examples and illustrations of what a performance  
19 assessment might mean or curriculum frameworks and  
20 to provide illustrations will force the issue in  
21 terms of building shared understanding around --  
22 among perspective partners.

1           The notion of tiered roles came up. I  
2           support this completely. The idea -- I would  
3           never confuse collaboration with a need for equal  
4           participation. There are people with more  
5           expertise and more commitment at the table. They  
6           should play a different role than some others  
7           while expecting a shared commitment to the  
8           process.

9           This next comment is that it's hard and  
10          exciting to recruit partners, and that's going on  
11          all around the country today. What's even harder,  
12          though, is to talk early about what the  
13          expectations are that would lead to a member of  
14          the consortium to have to depart. So I would ask  
15          you to ask the consortia applicants to specify  
16          what it would take to get kicked out of their  
17          club. There is nothing like a non- participating  
18          member to drag the process down, and having high  
19          expectations for participation is essential.

20          And the last comment I'd make is that  
21          the endgame of this effort is going to come and  
22          overlap with the reauthorization of ESEA. It's

1 obvious that the public has great questions about  
2 testing in general because of our recent  
3 experience. This has never really been accounted  
4 for in terms of rolling out assets. So ask  
5 yourselves a question: What will the public  
6 context be like at the exact time that the highest  
7 stakes of these collaboratives are going to come  
8 due? So protecting these consortia and expecting  
9 a dimension of their work to be about public  
10 reporting and engagement from the start will  
11 accelerate the process of the weaker members  
12 needing to depart and will secure the sustained  
13 commitment of participants who are serious.

14 So I wish you luck. These are great  
15 hearings. You're doing a great job and we look  
16 forward to supporting the process as it moves  
17 forward.

18 MS. WEISS: Thank you.

19 MR. DONOHUE: Can I cede my 27 seconds  
20 to someone else?

21 MS. WEISS: Absolutely. Thank you so  
22 much. That was terrific.

1           MR. KAHL: Hi. I'm Stuart Kahl. I'm  
2 the CEO of Measured Progress and co-founder. I  
3 appreciate the opportunity to talk today.

4           Measured Progress has been doing  
5 statewide testing for 26 years. And currently,  
6 we're in 20 states with either alternate or  
7 general assessments or a combination of both. And  
8 we're also and we have been the contractor for  
9 NECAP from the very beginning.

10           At the Denver meeting, I spoke a little  
11 bit about economic benefits of consortia. I made  
12 the point that the economic benefits are very  
13 different for small states versus large states.  
14 Large states' fixed costs for program management  
15 and test development are a very minor part of the  
16 larger budget, so sharing that isn't necessarily a  
17 tremendous savings. With respect to the variable  
18 costs that are on a per student basis, the large  
19 states already have the economies of scale that  
20 the small states achieve by banding together. So  
21 that was the point there.

22           But another point I made had to do with

1 the size of consortia, and I think this is really  
2 important. I, too, am -- I'm concerned about the  
3 idea that if consortia are good, then the bigger  
4 the better, and that doesn't follow.

5 I'm sorry that Mary Ann wasn't here  
6 because I know she was going to talk about  
7 different purposes and different types of  
8 consortia, and she was going to use three -- two  
9 that were represented here and NECAP to talk about  
10 them: WIDA, Achieve, and NECAP. And the other  
11 two, we're dealing with fairly specialized tests,  
12 dealing with smaller populations. And, in fact, I  
13 would argue that they were doing a favor for the  
14 states. It might be a favor because of capacity  
15 issues or whatever, but to take on another testing  
16 program. In the case of WIDA language proficiency  
17 testing, the English language learner folks in the  
18 states had no experience with assessment and let  
19 alone an assessment that was supposed to be very  
20 different from traditional language proficiency  
21 testing. So very different situations. Hence  
22 what I heard today was a tremendous focus on the

1 leadership within the states and their  
2 involvement, and not the followers in the state.  
3 And so I want to emphasize that a little bit more  
4 in my comments.

5 Major difference, in my mind, between  
6 NECAP and the others is the role that the state  
7 representatives play at different levels. In  
8 terms of influence and decision making, we're kind  
9 of at the leadership level. I'll just make one  
10 comment and that is being one of a few is very  
11 different being one of many, and let it go at  
12 that.

13 In terms of the followers in assessment  
14 program I think there's a big difference between  
15 accepting the work of an outside group versus  
16 having teams of educators from your own state  
17 heavily involved in any activity involving test  
18 development, benchmarking, review of items,  
19 standards setting, things like that. And these  
20 are critical. The lesson I think is this:  
21 Influence and involvement leads to ownership and  
22 credibility, and these are critical if longevity

1 and impact are of concern. And I would say that  
2 based on my 30 years in statewide testing these  
3 are absolutely critical. It's very important that  
4 the field, the educators buy in and feel that  
5 sense of ownership, and that means involvement.

6 I would argue that an assessment program  
7 is more than test development and test  
8 administration. It's all the policies and  
9 procedures surrounding the testing. And any  
10 conversation on consortium, as was the case today,  
11 deals with the things that states have to agree  
12 on, the things they don't have to agree on, the  
13 things that have to be common, things that don't  
14 have to be common. I would say for the full  
15 benefit in terms of data quality and in terms of  
16 economics the states have to agree on an awful lot  
17 if you're going to get the full benefits of those.

18 The NECAP states were few. They were  
19 geographically close. They were like-minded small  
20 states. They were able to wade through their  
21 differences and made decisions, reach agreements.  
22 I won't say easily, but they were able to do it.

1           The management of group of states hoping  
2           to achieve countless number of agreements, maximum  
3           involvement of the constituents and that sense of  
4           ownership may not be impossible for a large  
5           consortia, but it'd be a lot more difficult. So  
6           consequently, our recommendation is for the  
7           department not to favor or encourage large  
8           consortia if NECAP's success is supposed to be  
9           replicated.

10           Thank you.

11           MS. WEISS: Thank you.

12           MS. LEOS: Good afternoon. Kathleen  
13           Leos, former assistant deputy secretary to the  
14           U.S. Department of Education, Title 3, and  
15           currently the president of the Global Institute  
16           for Language and Literacy Development, or GILLD.

17           It's a real honor to be able to have an  
18           opportunity to speak with all of you today because  
19           the amount of work that has taken place over the  
20           past eight years, especially in assessment  
21           development and the support of consortia for  
22           developing assessments for non-English-speaking

1 students or English language learners. And a lot  
2 of work has been done and done in the past and  
3 then to the present, and there's a lot of work  
4 left to do.

5 And I want to make a few remarks today  
6 thinking about some of the conceptual factors that  
7 would be important for groups of states to  
8 consider as we go into I would call the second  
9 generation of assessment development, especially  
10 that will include non-English-speaking students.  
11 And the premise starts with (inaudible) 1974 in  
12 the Supreme Court case *Lau v. Nichols*, where it  
13 states literally that language may not be a  
14 barrier to academic content knowledge.

15 In the first iteration of assessments  
16 that were developed -- and they were developed on  
17 the concept that now states had to create and  
18 develop and implement English language proficiency  
19 standards that were literally aligned to the  
20 academic content standards and covered the four  
21 area domains of reading, writing, speaking, and  
22 listening -- there was a lot of work done to

1 actually get standards in place that are English  
2 language proficiency standards and that covered  
3 the domains. But there was a lot of  
4 misunderstanding about the concept of alignment.  
5 And now as we move to the next generation of  
6 assessment I wanted everyone to consider shifting  
7 the paradigm from a real focus on assessment, but  
8 backing up a little bit and thinking about the  
9 initial focus for non-English-speaking students  
10 being on the standards themselves.

11           Because when you think about the  
12 importance of English language proficiency  
13 standards that cover these domains -- reading,  
14 writing, speaking, and listening -- and they're  
15 literally aligned to the academic content area at  
16 grade level in reading, language arts, math, and  
17 science, and certainly if there is a move for the  
18 development of national core academic standards,  
19 that there could be a corresponding emphasis on  
20 the development of national core common English  
21 language proficiency standards that literally  
22 align to the content standards. And the reason

1 being is we've been out now in the past two years  
2 working with states, district schools, and  
3 training of teachers.

4           And from my very real-world perspective  
5 or real- life perspective, there is a lack of  
6 understanding among teachers -- and these are  
7 academic content teachers -- of the linguistic  
8 factors and the language domains that are needed  
9 to effectively deliver core content to  
10 non-English-speaking students because of not  
11 understanding the structure, the confluence of  
12 language proficiency, language acquisition into  
13 the content area at that grade level.

14           So I would -- we are hoping -- and I say  
15 "I"; there's several of us in our new entity. But  
16 we are hoping that as the department moves forward  
17 on putting out an incentive really for the next  
18 iteration not only of assessments, but there's a  
19 serious consideration taken in the applications of  
20 how each group will consider what would be the  
21 alignment of standards and assessment for  
22 non-English- speaking students. Because what it

1 will do is then give the opportunity to change the  
2 accountability system.

3           And I know that that's not up for  
4 consideration right now and -- but when we think  
5 about how to adequately and accurately measure  
6 what ELLs know and can do on a content test, if we  
7 include the acquisition of language at the same  
8 time in a possible weighted index model in  
9 accountability, then you've got both worlds taken.  
10 And I call it hanging equally because we finally  
11 put a system around the students that says here's  
12 what you're learning in the language, here's how  
13 you express it, here are the standards, it's the  
14 same academic achievement targets, and here are  
15 the assessments, the new generation of assessments  
16 in the content area that don't need accommodations  
17 because you've already factored in the linguistic  
18 factors for students while they're learning  
19 content.

20           Thank you.

21           MS. WEISS: Thanks, Kathleen. Next.

22           MR. HOCK: Good afternoon. I'm Michael

1 Hock, the director of education assessment for the  
2 Vermont Department of Education. And as the  
3 director of testing in Vermont, I'm also part of  
4 the NECAP project and, for the last seven years  
5 have helped make that work and I'm very proud of  
6 that. In fact, you might imagine that last year  
7 about this time there was a lot of glee in New  
8 England when President Obama mentioned us in his  
9 first education speech. And so after I did my  
10 little happy dance about that, I also got a little  
11 afraid because I had this fear that folks might  
12 think because three or now four states as in New  
13 England could make this work, that bigger would be  
14 better and that we might see people encouraging  
15 huge assessment consortiums. And what I'd like to  
16 do today is just talk to you a little bit about  
17 the economics of consortium and what might be  
18 gained and what might be lost by encouraging very  
19 large consortia.

20 So let me just mention this, so, that  
21 New England Common Assessment Program is right now  
22 made up of four states: Rhode Island, Vermont,

1 New Hampshire, and Maine. And -- but we do all  
2 the full services working with our contractors for  
3 a statewide assessment program.

4 By the way, and I think this gives me a  
5 perspective on this that maybe others don't have,  
6 that we also are part of the WIDA Consortium and  
7 I'm on the WIDA Technical Advisory Committee and  
8 attend their Advisory Board meetings and so forth.  
9 And as you heard from Tim Boals today, WIDA now  
10 has 22 states and I believe is serving about  
11 840,000 English language learners. So what I can  
12 do is give you a perspective on how it works for 4  
13 states and how it works for 22.

14 But what I have to say about both of  
15 these consortium is that it allowed Vermont, a  
16 tiny state with meager resources, to do things we  
17 never could have done otherwise. And I think that  
18 when you're looking at consortia that might be one  
19 thing that you want to look at are you enabling  
20 through your grant funds states to do things they  
21 wouldn't have been able to do otherwise. I think  
22 that's an important point here.

1           But anyway, just to give you a quick  
2           sense of how well we believe NECAP worked, we  
3           hoped that you also noticed that when the NAEP  
4           math results came out a few months ago there were  
5           only five jurisdictions in the U.S. that made  
6           progress at both grade levels and three of those  
7           states were the original NECAP states, and I don't  
8           think that's an accident. But I believe a big  
9           part of that is because we're a small consortium  
10          and we're regionally located, we're able to bring  
11          teachers together.

12                 We've had some teachers who've worked on  
13          item review and that sort of things who have said  
14          we should issue merit badge sashes so that they  
15          can keep track of all the things they've done in  
16          our project. But I think what it's done for us is  
17          it's really given our educators an ownership of  
18          our state assessment that you might not have other  
19          places. And a lot of the disdain that I hear from  
20          some of my other colleagues that are happening in  
21          their states, we really aren't experiencing  
22          because teachers, to a certain extent, see it at

1 their own test.

2 A little bit WIDA -- well, actually let  
3 me back up a second. Economics, we hear a lot of  
4 talk about consortium and this notion about  
5 economy of scale. I think that there actually is  
6 another economic principle that applies to  
7 assessment consortia or consortia in general and  
8 that's this notion of diminishing returns. If you  
9 remember your Keynes from college, that's one that  
10 explains why if you eat one pint of Ben & Jerry's  
11 Cherry Garcia ice cream you're in heaven. If you  
12 eat two, it's good. But by the time you eat five,  
13 you can't remember what it was you liked about ice  
14 cream. And I know that from experience. But I  
15 also know from experience that larger is not  
16 necessarily better. So let me talk about this  
17 economy of scale that we hear all the time.

18 When Maine joined NECAP this year we  
19 actually saved a bunch of money. In fact, our  
20 vendor gave us money back. It was great. Thank  
21 you, Stuart. When -- with WIDA, arguably the cost  
22 of the access test from WIDA was cheap to begin

1 with, but as we saw them triple in size our costs  
2 really have not gone down. Now, some of that is  
3 because we keep adding things that we want them to  
4 do, but it's also because they had to grow as  
5 their consortium grew.

6           So I think it's a mistake to think that  
7 there would be great savings in a 50-state  
8 consortium, if that's where we're heading. And,  
9 in fact, one thing that concerns me is if we go to  
10 a very large consortium we're eliminating  
11 assessment vendors who can provide those kind of  
12 services and another economic principle goes to  
13 work, and that's the benefits of competition; that  
14 we would lose the kind of competition that saves  
15 money and causes innovation.

16           So I'm out of time now, but I guess I  
17 just want to end by saying that big is not  
18 necessarily better. And I'm hoping that you may  
19 find some way in these assessment grants to make  
20 room for, you know, that farmer in New England  
21 that laid the wire or a small group of states in  
22 the Pacific Northwest that have experience with

1 online testing or other places in the country  
2 where small groups can incubate ideas and then  
3 disseminate them largely.

4 Thanks a lot.

5 MS. WEISS: Thank you.

6 MR. BRANNUM: I haven't said a word and  
7 the clock is running.

8 MS. WEISS: I guess just walking up  
9 there triggers it. Go ahead and start.

10 MR. BRANNUM: Okay. My name is Robert  
11 Vinson Brannum and I'm president of the D.C.  
12 Federation of Civic Associations here in  
13 Washington. And for the sake of time I'm going to  
14 incorporate all the comments that the previous  
15 public commenters have addressed and come from a  
16 different angle, and that is the perspective of  
17 stakeholders at the community neighborhood level  
18 and the value and reform and assessment of public  
19 education.

20 There's several things I want to -- in  
21 forms of questions that I want to leave with you  
22 that the public needs to be central in this

1 process, the public community, and not those who  
2 have a clear financial interest in these -- in the  
3 assessments. And the questions that I have are in  
4 the era of reform, what is the level of capacity  
5 that the state should have before entering the  
6 consortium? And what are you bringing to the  
7 table? What are your strengths?

8 And as I said before, how can parents  
9 and the community have trust that the assessment's  
10 not going to be -- is merely being developed for  
11 -- to advance a political purpose rather than to  
12 improve education in the classroom?

13 And it was brought out earlier about  
14 kicking states out of the consortia. My question  
15 is can other states expel a state from the  
16 consortia for -- and what would be the reasons for  
17 that? And also, how do you assess a state's being  
18 able to stay in the consortia? What are they  
19 doing to carry out the purpose of the consortia?

20 And as it relates to the District of  
21 Columbia, will D.C. enter a consortia as a state,  
22 but have its assessments as a local school

1 district? And there's always the overarching  
2 congressional influence in the District of  
3 Columbia as opposed to the other members of the  
4 consortium. One congressman can nullify an  
5 agreement or an MOU that the District enters into  
6 with other states in the consortium.

7           And clearly, I feel the consortium  
8 should quantify how it's going to measure public  
9 engagement and public buy- in. How do you -- from  
10 the start, how are you going to measure that and  
11 how are you going to bring that about?

12           And finally, I just want to reiterate  
13 something that Secretary Duncan said some time  
14 ago, that there should be honesty in the  
15 assessments that come about and they should not be  
16 used to placate public officials or to advance a  
17 theory. They should be done to improve education  
18 in the classroom, and that's critical. And a lot  
19 of analyses have been to merely support and backup  
20 individuals as opposed to going down to a  
21 classroom and to helping the teacher in the  
22 classroom.

1 MS. WEISS: Thank you so much. Okay. I  
2 think that was our last public speaker.

3 We're giving you back a little time at  
4 the end of your day, which I know you all need  
5 badly.

6 So for those of you who are coming  
7 tomorrow morning, we will see you back in this  
8 room at 9 o'clock. Others who are not going to be  
9 with us tomorrow, thank you again for spending  
10 your day with us today. We really appreciate it  
11 and hope that you learned something that you  
12 didn't know yesterday. So thank you and we hope  
13 to see you tomorrow. Bye.

14 (Whereupon, at 4:12 p.m., the  
15 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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## 1 CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

2 I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby  
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