



# Nevada's Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education



National Center on Education and the Economy  
March 5, 2025



# How Will We Know We are Successful?: Thinking about Measurement and Evaluation in Complex Systems



Thinking  
differently:  
New  
definitions of  
evaluation



Building  
momentum:  
How can  
evaluation  
spark ongoing  
learning and  
innovation?



Looking  
around:  
Promising  
practices in  
Maryland and  
Indiana



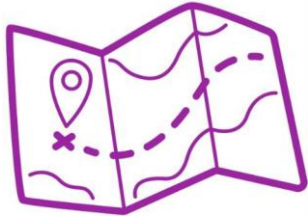
Looking  
ahead:  
Reflecting on  
our role in  
getting  
started?

# Defining Evaluation & Accountability

	Evaluation	Accountability
Goal	Investigating causes and solutions through analysis	Ensuring public investments lead to results by measuring performance and informing decision makers
Key Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What's working, for whom, and in what context?</li><li>• How can we use evidence to refine and improve results over time?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are we delivering on our commitments?</li><li>• Are we using resources effectively?</li></ul>
Methods	Uses multiple data sources and methods to uncover anticipated and unanticipated insights	Uses key indicators and metrics to measure progress against predetermined outcomes
Example	<i>Investigating absenteeism by examining factors like transportation barriers, health issues, and in-school engagement drivers ensures policy responses are effective and informed by the complex dynamics of school</i>	<i>Tracking student attendance rates helps to identify locations for evidence-based interventions to reduce chronic absenteeism</i>

# A Caution

Asking the wrong questions limits our ability to...



Identify key levers for change (e.g., budget, policy barriers)


Refine our approach based on evidence

Build structures for continuous improvement





# How can evaluation spark ongoing learning?

- ▶▶ **Policymakers are active actors** in understanding the system, instead of just reading a final evaluation report
  - ▶▶ Collaboration with evaluators results in **real-time insights** to:
    - ◆ Inform decision making
    - ◆ Communicate progress with constituents
    - ◆ Build system capacity to sustain the work
  - ▶▶ Systems evaluation **opens up the “black box,”** allowing decision makers to set new targets and redirect resources in an evidence-based way
- 

# Systems Evaluation in Maryland



## Evaluation Goals

- 1) Determining whether current strategies are working
- 2) Proposing different uses of existing funding to better meet Blueprint goals



## Ongoing Collaboration

Leading systems evaluators will conduct initial analysis—including reviewing key data and conducting discovery interviews—to create an evaluation plan in collaboration with AIB, refining the plan as needed



## Systems-Focused Approach

The evaluators will use a mixed methods approach to look for impacts at different levels of the system



## Emphasis on Communication

The deliverables will include findings that are understandable, actionable, and reach the right audiences

# Systems Evaluation in Indiana

---



## **Dedicated to the future of accountability**

Operationalizing 2021 Graduate Profile to redesigned diploma pathways, and stakeholder engagement focused accountability rooted in design principles of student-centered, data-driven, increased transparency, and actionable feedback.



## **Ongoing stakeholder engagement**

Building deep understanding of current data with continued collaboration across core stakeholder groups for shared ownership of interventions.



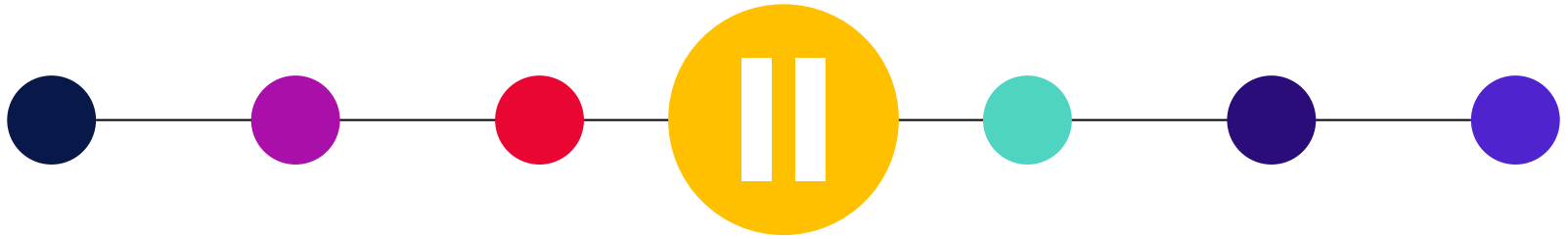
## **Collaboration across grade levels**

Indiana GPS (Graduates Prepared to Succeed) measures PreK enrollment, reading and STEM fundamentals in elementary school, and focuses on employability skills and postsecondary competencies for high school.



## **Emphasis on student growth**

Outcomes and growth-based measurements include student attendance, improved chronic absenteeism, work-based learning, and credentials of value, balanced with academic mastery.



Reflect & Connect