

A recent editorial gave a critical review of the upcoming changes to the Los Angeles public school accountability system. I believe it is an unfair look at a very promising tool.

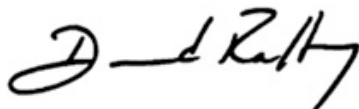
Instead of a single score number under the old system, the new model will use a variety of measures that rate overall school and district performance. Imagine your car's dashboard – a clear indicator of all items that will make your car run smoothly and safely. Likewise, this dashboard for schools will allow individuals to see the complete picture of a school and make determinations based on what matters to them.

Yes, the new system will most likely involve a period of adjustment since it moves away from one indicator to many. The point here is not to confuse, but instead provide a holistic view. Receiving feedback and working closely with the school districts will be vital to ensuring an effective tool. As such, California's new school accountability system will start with the 2017-18 school year. During 2016-17, the state will work through a pilot year with districts, schools and the public to make sure this system is easier to use and provides a broader picture of school performance.

Additionally, the Editorial Board wondered how certain factors assessed could reveal how well students are learning (e.g. parent involvement, suspension rates and graduation rates). While it is vitally important to assess how students are learning, which this system does, the standards will also show what schools are doing well, where they might need improvement and how to help educators and students keep improving every day. It also allows the individual reading the accountability report to determine what matters to him or her. For example, some parents may very well want to compare graduation rates of schools in their district.

Ultimately, the changes to the accountability report will help us reach a common goal whereby students not only learn the necessary subject matter, but they are also prepared to be effective, productive and successful members of the future workforce. Business leaders need employees who can implement what they learn, and this system would allow the state to have a clear view as to whether students are applying knowledge in a way that will keep students on a path to be workforce ready.

We cannot have an accountability tool that only addresses a few layers in a multi-layered environment. We need to fully capture the abilities of our students and the competencies of the schools they attend. This new accountability system not only provides a mirrored reflection of Los Angeles public education but also opens a window to progress.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Rattray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Rattray
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Commerce
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