



Performance-Based Learning and Assessment in Middle & High School

Thursday – April 30, 2026

9:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Eastern Suffolk BOCES



Performance-Based Learning and Assessment in Middle and High School

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Agenda

- 9:00-9:15 Welcoming Remarks**
Dr. Betty A. Rosa, Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York
- 9:15-9:50 Opening Presentation: Transforming Education in NYS with Performance-Based Learning and Assessment**
- 9:50-9:55** 5 Minute Break
- 9:55-11:00 Session 1**
Utilizing Performance-Driven Instructional Approaches to Engage Students & Build Their Competencies
- Johnson City Senior High School
 - Thomas Edison CTE High School
- 11:00-12:00 Lunch Break**
- 12:00-12:45 Keynote Speaker**
Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Chief Knowledge Officer, Learning Policy Institute, and Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education Emeritus, Stanford University
- 12:45-1:50 Session 2**
Performance-Based Assessment: Purpose & Use in a System of Multiple Measures
- Brentwood High School
 - Tech Valley High School
- 1:50-2:00 Closing Remarks**
Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr., Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents



Performance-Based Learning and Assessment in Middle and High School

Resources

Please use a laptop or tablet to access these sources and materials.

Click the title or scan the code to access.



[PBLA Resources](#)



[PLAN Pilot](#)



[NYS Portrait of a Graduate](#)



[NYS's Educational Assessment Strategy](#)



Materials



[Materials for Participants](#)

Guiding Discussion Questions
(You will receive printed copies at the conference.)

Materials for Participants

Guiding Discussion Questions: Opening Presentation

Transforming Education in New York State with Performance-Based Learning and Assessment (PBLA)

Questions	Reflection/Notes
<p>PBLA in Your Local Context</p> <p>In what ways does your school already use performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) practices? How do you encourage the use of PBLA among your teachers?</p>	
<p>Unpacking the Portrait</p> <p>What are some steps your school has taken to begin unpacking the NYS Portrait of a Graduate? How are you communicating its adoption with your staff, students, families, and/or community?</p>	
<p>Developing Local Assessment Strategies</p> <p>What are some steps your school has taken to begin developing an assessment strategy? How are you communicating this work with your staff, students, families, and/or community?</p>	

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Guiding Discussion Questions: Session 1

Utilizing Performance-Driven Instructional Approaches to Engage Students & Build Their Competencies

Questions	Reflection/Notes
<p>Insights & Surprises</p> <p>What key insight or surprising idea stood out to you from today's session or presentations?</p>	
<p>Application to Your Context</p> <p>How might you apply this insight in your own work or school setting, and what is one thing you feel ready to begin doing now?</p>	
<p>Anticipated Challenges</p> <p>What challenges or concerns came to mind as you listened to the presentations and considered leading this work in your own setting?</p>	
<p>Supports & Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities, strategies, or resources might help you address these challenges and successfully move this work forward?</p>	

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Guiding Discussion Questions: Keynote Address

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, Learning Policy Institute

Questions	Reflection/Notes
<p>Insights & Surprises</p> <p>What key insight or surprising idea stood out to you from today's session or presentations?</p>	
<p>Application to Your Context</p> <p>How might you apply this insight in your own work or school setting, and what is one thing you feel ready to begin doing now?</p>	
<p>Anticipated Challenges</p> <p>What challenges or concerns came to mind as you listened to the presentations and considered leading this work in your own setting?</p>	
<p>Supports & Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities, strategies, or resources might help you address these challenges and successfully move this work forward?</p>	

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Guiding Discussion Questions: Session 2

Performance-Based Assessment: Purpose & Use in a System of Multiple Measures

Questions	Reflection/Notes
<p>Insights & Surprises</p> <p>What key insight or surprising idea stood out to you from today's session or presentations?</p>	
<p>Application to Your Context</p> <p>How might you apply this insight in your own work or school setting, and what is one thing you feel ready to begin doing now?</p>	
<p>Anticipated Challenges</p> <p>What challenges or concerns came to mind as you listened to the presentations and considered leading this work in your own setting?</p>	
<p>Supports & Opportunities</p> <p>What opportunities, strategies, or resources might help you address these challenges and successfully move this work forward?</p>	

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

QR Code for Post-Event Survey

Performance-Based Learning and Assessment in Middle and High School

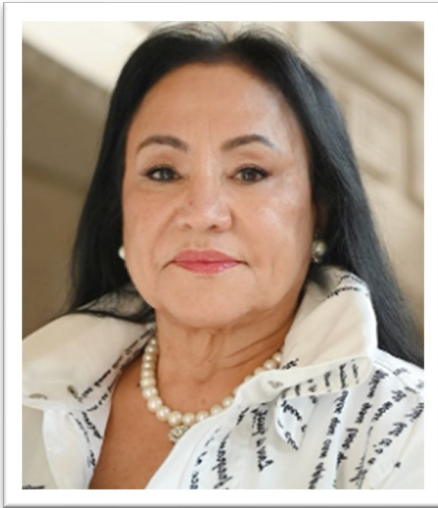


Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Speaker Biographies (in order of appearance)

Dr. Betty A. Rosa

Commissioner of Education, New York State



Dr. Betty A. Rosa is the Commissioner of Education and President of the University of the State of New York. Dr. Rosa was appointed as permanent Commissioner on February 8, 2021, by the Board of Regents. She is the first Latina woman to serve in the position.

Previously, Dr. Rosa served as Interim Commissioner since August 2020. Prior to that, she served as Chancellor of the Board of Regents since 2016. Dr. Rosa was elected by her Board of Regents colleagues as Chancellor in March 2016 and re-elected for a second term in 2019. She was first elected to the Board of Regents for a five-year term in 2008, as the Regent for the Twelfth Judicial District (Bronx County), then re-elected for a second term in 2013 and a third term in 2018.

Dr. Rosa is a nationally recognized education leader and received an Ed. M. and Ed. D. in Administration, Planning and Social Policy from Harvard University. She also holds two other Master of Science in Education degrees, one in Administration and Supervision and the other in Bilingual Education from the City College of New York and Lehman College, respectively, and a B.A. in psychology from the City College of New York. She has more than 30 years of instructional and administrative experience with an expertise in inclusive education, cooperative teaching models, student achievement, and policy implementation.

Read Commissioner Rosa's [full bio](#) on NYSED's website.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Dr. Alan Cheng

**Senior Supervising Superintendent of High Schools and District 79,
New York City Public School**



Alan Y. Cheng, Ed.D., is Senior Supervising Superintendent of High Schools and District 79 for New York City Public Schools. He oversees high school leadership development and performance across the city, working closely with academic, pathways, policy, and planning teams to ensure coherence, rigor, and equitable access for students.

Dr. Cheng began his career as a teacher and has served as a principal, deputy superintendent, and superintendent. His work focuses on advancing deeper learning, student agency, and future-ready pathways at scale. He holds a doctorate from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Joseph Guccia

**Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning & Accountability,
Johnson City Senior High School**



Joseph Guccia is in his 27th year in the field of education, including two decades of leadership at the building and district levels. Currently serving as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching, Learning, and Accountability in the Johnson City CSD, Joseph is a dedicated advocate for reimagining the secondary experience. Having served as a teacher, coach, and principal at both the middle and high school levels, his experiences have shaped his understanding of the challenges facing today's educators. A staunch supporter of the PLAN Pilot program, Joseph is currently leading district-wide efforts to bridge the gap between academic content and real-world skill acquisition. From expanding apprenticeships and work-based learning programs in his district to defining "skills for success" aligned with the NYS Portrait of a Graduate, his work is centered on

ensuring every student graduates with a clear, viable pathway to their future.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Kerri Amato

Assistant Principal, Johnson City Senior High School



Kerri Amato has over 15 years of experience in education and eight years as a school leader. She is currently an assistant principal at Johnson City High School in New York, where she works with educators through the New York State PLAN Pilot to advance performance-driven instruction through inquiry and project-based learning. Drawing on a background in the visual arts and graduate study in special education, she believes in supporting authentic learning experiences and skills competency development through the Portrait of a Graduate in secondary classrooms. Kerri is passionate about moving learning beyond compliance and toward engagement and real-world application, helping educators design hands-on, inquiry-based learning experiences that allow students to demonstrate understanding through meaningful performance tasks. She is

deeply committed to preparing students for a rapidly evolving world by fostering critical thinking and the skills needed to thrive both in school and in life.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Moses Ojeda

Principal, Thomas A. Edison CTE High School



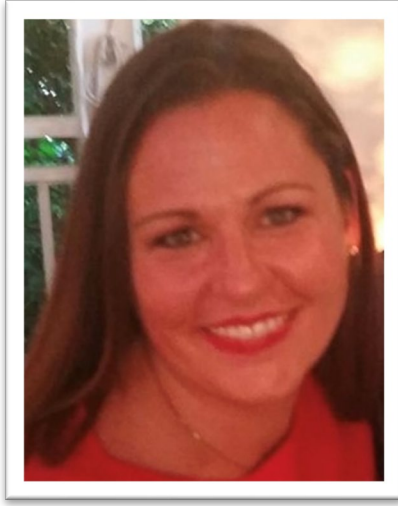
Moses Ojeda is a lifelong champion of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and an experienced education leader who has dedicated more than 30 years to transforming Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School in New York City. A former Edison student turned Principal, his leadership has expanded the school to include 13 industry-aligned programs while achieving among the highest student industry certification rates in the city.

As a New York City Public Schools Master and Model Principal, Principal Ojeda supports the development and strengthening of future-ready programs across the city. He has also mentored assistant principals aspiring to the principalship, helping to build leadership capacity and sustain instructional innovation beyond his own school community. Principal Ojeda's work centers on designing future-ready educational systems that integrate emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, with workforce-aligned learning and intentional program design. Through expanding career pathways and embedding durable skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, he continues to redefine college and career readiness while preparing students to thrive in an evolving global economy.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Danielle Ragavanis

Master Teacher, Thomas A. Edison CTE High School



Danielle Ragavanis is a Master Teacher at Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Education High School, where she focuses on research and development to design innovative learning experiences that transform student engagement. Her work centers on building user-driven classroom environments that mirror real-world challenges, empowering students to take ownership of their learning.

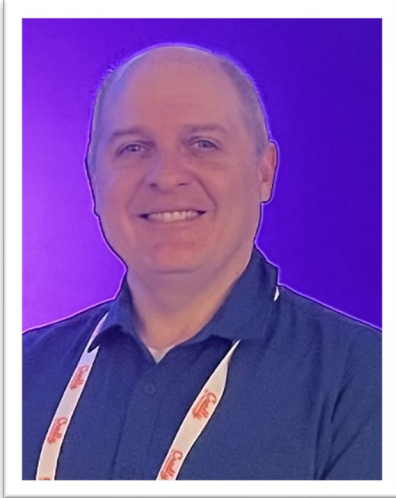
Danielle is passionate about creating authentic learning experiences that bridge the gap between school and life beyond graduation. By blending career and technical education with human-centered design, she develops systems and strategies that position students as active participants rather than passive learners. Her approach reframes the classroom as a space where students can experiment, collaborate, and build the skills they need for adulthood.

Danielle has shared her work in reimagining education through a research-based lens—designing “school as a playground for adulting,” where engagement is driven by relevance, purpose, and real-world application. Her insights highlight how intentional design can unlock deeper learning and prepare students for meaningful futures.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Philip Baker

Master Teacher, Thomas A. Edison CTE High School



Philip Baker is a master teacher at Thomas A Edison CTE High School in Jamaica NY. He is a co-designer of the Thomas A Edison CTE research and development program through which educational innovation is prototyped and beta tested. Coordinates the UI interface the team is developing, with a particular emphasis on infusing essential career skills into academic classes, with a focus on ensuring that students graduate with an explicit portfolio of research backed and industry desired skills expertise.

Philip is also co-designer of the student designer team, which is trained in working with teachers to embed student centered and culturally responsive performance-based assessment tasks into units.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond

**Founding President & Chief Knowledge Officer,
Learning Policy Institute**



Linda Darling-Hammond is Founding President and Chief Knowledge Officer of the Learning Policy Institute, created to provide high-quality research for policies that enable equitable and empowering education for every child. She is also the Ducommun Professor Emeritus at Stanford University and past president of the American Educational Research Association. She led the Obama education policy transition team in 2008, the Biden education transition team in 2020, and was appointed President of the California State Board of Education in 2019. Darling-Hammond is author of more than 30 books and 600 other publications on teaching quality, school reform, and equity, including the award-winning book: *The Flat World and Education: How America's Commitment to Equity Will Determine Our Future*. In 2022, Darling-

Hammond received the Yidan Prize for Education Research in recognition of her work that has shaped education policy and practice around the most equitable and effective ways to teach and learn.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Dr. Amy Hawrylchak

Chief Academic Officer & Principal, Tech Valley High School



Dr. Amy Hawrylchak has served as principal of Tech Valley High School since January 2021. She began her career in education as a Spanish and French teacher before transitioning into school leadership, serving as an assistant principal in the Boston area and later at Guilderland High School.

Dr. Hawrylchak holds a bachelor's degree from University at Albany, a master's degree from Harvard University, and a doctorate in educational leadership from The Sage Colleges. In addition to her work as a principal, she has served as an adjunct instructor in curriculum and instruction and as a leadership coach, supporting educators in strengthening their practice and impact.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Dr. Vincent Leone

Director of Programs & Policy, Brentwood High School



Dr. Vincent Leone is a visionary educational leader, recently appointed as the Director of Programs & Policy for the Brentwood Union Free School District. With a distinguished career spanning over two decades, Dr. Leone brings a profound commitment to innovation and strategic excellence in public education. Since joining Brentwood in 2019, Dr. Leone has been instrumental in cultivating the conceptual framework and shared vision of Graduation PLUS+, the foundation of the district’s 5-year core strategic plan. As a champion for continuous improvement, he has provided dynamic leadership in areas ranging from federal grant procurement—securing and managing over \$85 million annually—to compliance, data systems, professional development, and community engagement. Dr. Leone is

widely recognized as a collaborative policymaker and the visionary behind Brentwood’s personal identity and belonging initiatives. His leadership was pivotal in developing and implementing new district policies, such as the revised Dress Code, and in establishing innovative systems for monitoring the impact of grant-funded programs on student outcomes.

Beyond Brentwood, Dr. Leone’s influence extends across Long Island and New York State. As the former Program Coordinator of the Regional Special Education – Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC), he led a region-wide team in transforming services for students with disabilities and English Language Learners. His work has consistently emphasized culturally responsive practices, data-driven decision-making, and capacity-building among educators, school leaders, and families.

Dr. Leone started his career in the classroom, serving as a special education teacher before being named to several specialized administrative roles. With a vested interest in education, he remains an adjunct professor for the Center for Integrated Teacher Education at Russell Sage College.

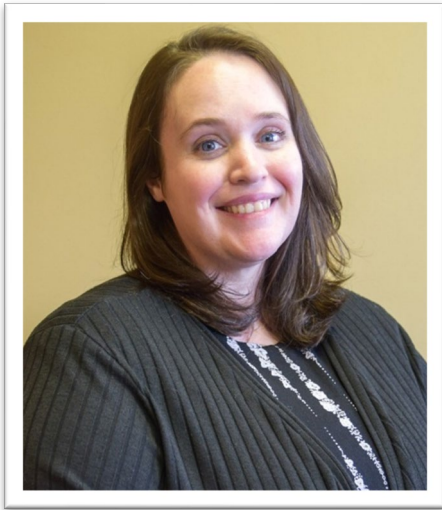
Dr. Leone earned his Doctorate in Education from St. John’s University, where his research explored the extent to which Long Island superintendents apply the principles of Improvement Science to their practice. He also holds advanced degrees in School Supervision, Special Education, and Public Relations.

With an unwavering belief in the power of education to transform lives, Dr. Leone continues to dedicate his career to empowering students, educators, and communities through thoughtful policy, strategic vision, and compassionate leadership.

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Mary Fullshire Taibi

**Assistant Coordinator for English Language Arts & Social Studies,
Brentwood High School**



Mary Fullshire Taibi is the Assistant Coordinator for ELA and Social Studies in the Brentwood Union Free School District, where she has served for over two years. In this role, she supports the development of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices across the district with a recent focus on performance-based learning and assessment (PBLA) and project-based learning (PBL). She works closely with teachers and school leaders to design authentic learning experiences across the district. Mary also serves as the assessment lead for Brentwood's PLAN Pilot initiative, where she has helped guide the development and implementation of performance-based pathways aligned to the NYS Portrait of a Graduate competencies. Her work includes supporting teachers in designing meaningful assessments, facilitating professional learning, and ensuring alignment between instruction, assessments, and standards.

Prior to her current role, Mary spent over a decade as a middle school teacher in three different states, where she focused on integrating PBLA and PBL to increase student engagement and ownership of learning. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at St. John's university, where her research is focused on improving student engagement in middle school through increased opportunities for choice in reading

Materials for Participants (Cont.)

Dr. Lester W. Young, Jr.

Chancellor, New York State Board of Regents



Lester W. Young, Jr. has made creating opportunities “where every student can be successful” the guiding principle of his more than 50 years of public service. Dr. Young currently serves as Chancellor, Board of Regents, University of the State of New York. His unanimous election on January 11, 2021, made him the first African American Chancellor in the 237-year history of the Board of Regents.

He began his career with the New York City (NYC) Department of Education, holding positions as a Teacher, Guidance Counselor, Supervisor of Special Education and Principal. During his tenure as Principal, PS 183 Brooklyn (Ocean-Hill Brownsville) was recognized as a School of Excellence by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

In March 2008, the New York State Legislature elected Lester W. Young, Jr. as Regent At Large, The University of the State of New York. During his four terms as Regent At Large, Dr. Young has served as Co-Chair of the P-12 Committee and Chair of the Higher Education Committee. He also Co-Chaired the Workgroup on Early Learning and Early Childhood Education and chaired the Workgroup to Improve Outcomes for Boys and Young Men of Color. His leadership in this area led to the establishment of the NYS My Brother’s Keeper initiative. Also, due to actions by the NYS Legislature, New York remains the only state in the nation to have the My Brother’s Keeper enacted into state law.

Read Chancellor Young’s [full bio](#) on NYSED’s website.