

Why microschools should proactively determine their own measures of success

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Defining success

- Microschools are characterized by innovation and distinctiveness.
- However, as the micro schooling movement grows, the need for credible assessments of performance is likely to increase.
- To evaluate performance, it is arguably important for micro schools to determine what success is on their own terms.

Measuring Your Priorities

- By deciding on school priorities and rigorously measuring those priorities, micro schools can retain authority over how they are evaluated rather than having external entities decide what success is for them.
- The charter school and homeschool movements offer a cautionary tale of what can go wrong.
- Many charters became enmeshed in test score debates that failed to capture the ways they served students while homeschool family have rarely been evaluated on the measures most families value.

Determining Evaluative Metrics

Achievement growth on nationally normed tests is certainly important, but a combination of other credible measures may be needed for certain types of micro schools.

Potential measures to consider:

- Instructional efficiency and fiscal savings
- Learning opportunities
- Physical and mental health outcomes
- Cultural and social capital
- Academic progression
- Post-secondary and educational attainment

Perceptual measures (e.g., parent surveys) are useful but can be misleading if they are the only metrics used to assess school performance