
Teacher Reflections

Teachers share shifts in their and their students practice and mindsets as they learn to incorporate formative assessment in their teaching and learning.

Introduction

This presentation includes quotes from various teachers, grades K-12, in a range of subjects. Each slides includes the voice of a different teacher. They share their experiences learning formative assessment, including what's shifted for them and their students from the beginning to the end of a school year.

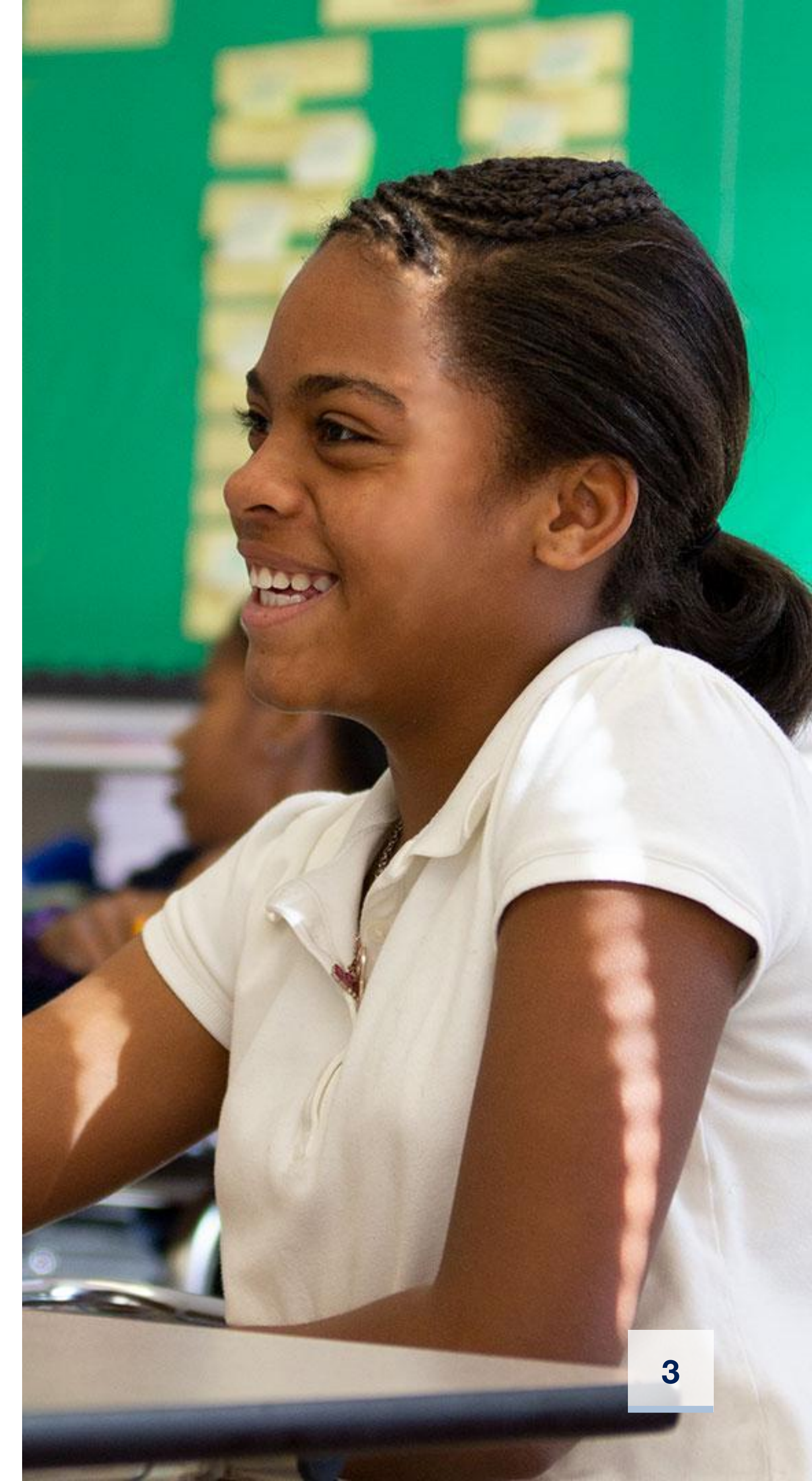
When reading the quotes, consider:

Where do I see my own and my students' views and practices in these teachers' words?

How can I support others as they embark on this formative assessment journey?

What are key phrases and ideas that resonate with me the most?

“My instructional coach helped me realize how much more my students were capable of and that I was doing way too much ‘hand holding.’ I let go a lot and let my students swim on their own, and they did so well and much better than I initially thought they would. They became more independent and I was able to conference more with the students.”



“At first, I really honed in on a small group of emergent readers. They grew to accept the daily practice of ascertaining the Learning Goal and Success Criteria. It was quite satisfying to watch this group grow in skill based on what they knew they needed to learn. I think the biggest change that occurred was how I addressed students who were very far behind their peers. Those students ended up with the greatest agency because they could confidently guide discussions within the larger whole-group experience. When I saw the shift in that particular group, I knew we were on to something BIG!”

“Student perspective is half of this dance called learning. As a teacher, I am but one voice of many and most of the students are really leaning into this shift. I can see that they understand they're responsible, not just for themselves, but for the community of learners. I am so motivated to build upon this realization that eight year old children can be true teachers and companions on a peer's path toward success.”





“At the beginning of the school year, there wasn't much student agency. I was the ‘keeper of information’ and students were the ‘vessels’ that I poured information into. There wasn't much buy in or opportunity for creativity in student work. I feel that there is more buy-in from students now. They create the Success Criteria and know what's expected. Learning is more of a shared responsibility and students have improved their talk about work and their ability to give each other meaningful feedback.”

“In the beginning of the year my classroom was very procedural and one-size-fits-all. The activities were chosen and directed by me, and although we were doing Learning Targets and Success Criteria, I wasn't comfortable with co-creating yet, so a lot of the lifting came from my end. Now, my room has become so much more focused, with students at the center of everything. My students are able to co-create Success Criteria and use it to progress their own learning, really showing their agency. I have done more to address student identity, where student choice is at the forefront and students can choose how they want to showcase their learning. This has helped me so much with formative assessment and being able to elicit evidence of student learning as they work towards what they think will show their learning.”



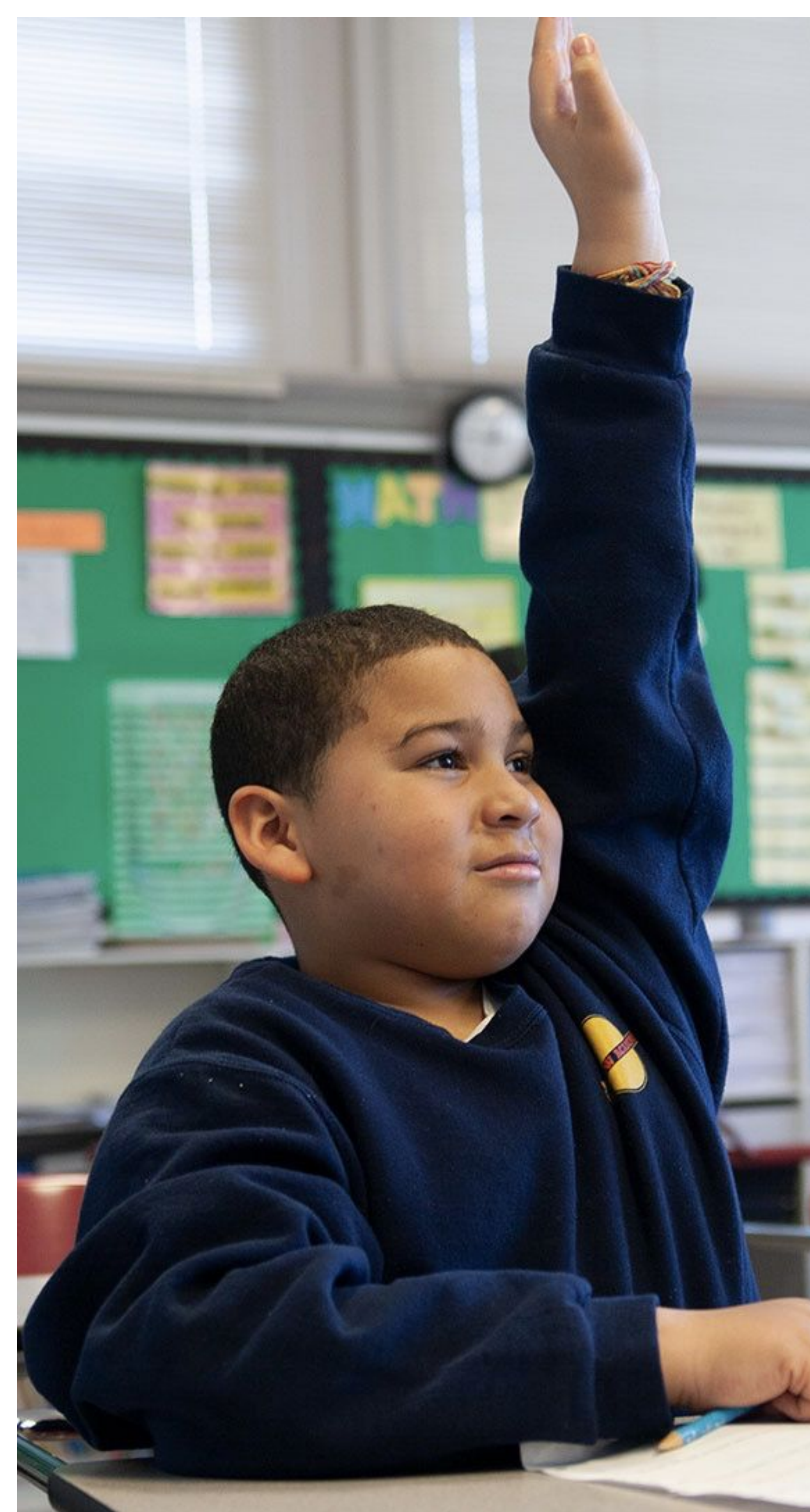
“Many of the students didn't understand and/or didn't believe that they could be successful. They were shy and were not eager to share. It is very different now, the students are outgoing and excited about learning and sharing. They praise others without having to be told to praise. They appreciate and care for others and themselves.”

“At the beginning, I think I was the one with the answers and the students looked to me for those answers and feedback. Even when I had them give each other feedback, it was written with no discussion and who knows if it was read or considered for improving. I wrote the rubrics, students had little to no say in what I was grading. Now the students know that they too have the answers and can give excellent feedback. Now that they discuss the feedback and have to follow up with a goal based on that feedback, self evaluation feedback has a whole different feel. Students are empowered by writing their own Success Criteria and by being able to discuss it in depth.”

“My outlook throughout the year has changed, where at first it was more frustration in trying to understand and help, there was finally an understanding and acceptance that small steps are great and some things take a little bit longer than others. Today my classroom is completely transformed. My students lead their own learning and are able to make choices in their learning that are best for them. I am better at assessing on the spot and using that to help students and adjust the lesson.”



“In the beginning, my classroom was more teacher directed. Students rarely gave feedback to each other. Now, the students are well aware of the Success Criteria. They completely understand what is expected of them each and every day. Students are getting better at giving and receiving feedback. They are also becoming more confident in voicing what they know and what they need to work on. Once the students started seeing the benefits of me stepping back a little more, they became leaders. That was really exciting to watch!”



“If we are willing to go with the process, and students are willing to go with us, we both are going to benefit longer than if suddenly I do whatever is the latest and greatest fad, versus doing something that’s a bit longer to do, a bit harder, but has better results in the end.”

“This is about honoring emerging learner, as it’s emerging. Even if we [teachers] had a plan for what we wanted to talk about today, there were times when we would come in and say, ‘Well, actually we just need to come in and talk about evidence, or maybe we just need to talk about what learning activities are there.’ So, we had a chance to think about where are we right now and what do we need as a group [of teachers] right now. We know the ultimate goal, but what, in this moment, do we actually need? And that is different from a lot of PLCs.”

“A shift for me was a sense of transparency in the classroom and how having learning goals and success criteria have really brought transparency to be a really central part of the classroom. It shows the students more of what goes on in our side of planning so that they understand a lot of the why behind what we’re having them do.”



“It builds on community in the classroom. If you bring up what you’ve noticed about the kids, specific individuals, they feel seen and loved by you, and they think, ‘Oh, I actually have someone who cares about my learning, so now today I want to try to build on that too since he or she has built on this for me in the classroom, maybe I can reciprocate that.’ It builds a stronger culture.”

“Centering everything in the classroom around learning, with having a learning goal, really provided a better culture in general. It changed the dynamic between teacher and student. Before it may have been ‘Here, do this because I am telling you’ or students are doing it because they are used to doing what they’re told, now it’s a, ‘Why are we doing this? Let’s point back to the success criteria and learning goal.’ It helped challenge me to actually have a reason for everything that we’re doing. It challenged me to think through that. It changed my dynamic with students. It gave a reason for everything we are doing in class.”