## 2016-17 ALN Highlights

ALN events in 2016-17 featured the following nationally-recognized speakers and topics:

### Event 1, December 16, 2016

**JAMES PELLEGRINO, Ph.D.**Liberal Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor, Distinguished Professor of Education, and Co-director of the Learning Sciences Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Chicago

This presentation considered a set of critical issues related to understanding educational assessment and the potential it has to support (or hinder) teaching and learning.

1. Part one considered the **nature of educational assessment** including the various contexts in which it is used, the purposes served including formative, summative and program evaluation functions, as well as how these functions can and should relate to each other.
2. Part two addressed **issues related to federal law, college and career readiness standards, and the nature of high quality assessment.** The focus was on how policy mandates impact the nature of assessment practice and how this interacts with changing conceptions of what is to be assessed such as college and career readiness standards, and the criteria by which we should judge the quality of the assessments that are then put into practice.
3. Part three introduced the **components of a balanced and comprehensive assessment system** and how states and districts can move forward in the design and implementation of such systems.

#### Framing Questions

The following questions and others are answered in a set of short video “Learning Moments” and additional print resources archived on the ALN member website at [*aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org*](http://aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/)

1. What are the conceptions of assessment that most people you know, including policy makers, educators, parents, and the general public, have about educational assessment?
2. To what extent do those conceptions help or hinder the process of designing and implementing high quality assessments as part of normal educational practice?
3. What would it take for a state like Michigan to design and implement a coherent and balanced assessment system tied to college and career readiness standards? What are the opportunities as well as the barriers?

### Event 2, February 13, 2017

MARGARET HERITAGE, Ph. D.  
Senior Scientist, WestEd

This presentation explored the purpose of formative assessment: to inform ongoing teaching and learning in everyday classroom practice rather than to measure it or sum it up. Formative assessment was considered within the framework of a comprehensive assessment system as a means to ensure the learning needs of all students are continuously and consistently addressed.

The presentation explored:

* What formative assessment is, what it is not, and why educators and other stakeholders should care about it
* The distinctive yet complementary roles of teachers and students in formative assessment and how these are operationalized in the classroom
* The optimal classroom culture for formative assessment.

The presenter also described the status of formative assessment implementation in the United States. Drawing on cross-national policy contexts, the presentation addressed how formative assessment can be promoted through policy and professional learning.

#### Framing Questions

The following questions and others are answered in a set of short video “Learning Moments” and additional print resources archived on the ALN member website at [*aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org*](http://aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/)

1. How does the use of formative assessment practices improve students’ learning?
2. Why do students need to be partners in the assessment process?
3. How do assessment practices in the U.S. compare to those in other countries?

### Event 3, May 9, 2017

SUSAN M. BROOKHART, Ph.D.  
Professor Emerita in the School of Education at Duquesne University

In this session, Sue Brookhart tied together the previous ALN presentations on balanced assessment systems (by Jim Pellegrino) and formative assessment (by Margaret Heritage) and added insights to help the Assessment Learning Network take action, based on these understandings, to build assessment literacy in Michigan. Specifically, she prioritized key learning needs for different role groups (e.g., students and their families, teachers, building and central office administrators, and local and state policymakers) and identied key assessment learning resources that already exist.

The presentation closed with recommendations for some actions ALN members might consider to take advantage of resources that currently exist and to build local resources to fill gaps.

#### Framing Questions

The following questions and others are answered in a set of short video “Learning Moments” and additional print resources archived on the ALN member website at [*aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org*](http://aln.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/)

1. Why is assessment important and worth all the attention we’re giving it?
2. What are the components of a balanced assessment system?
3. What one or two critical understandings or behaviors for each role group would begin to improve assessment practices in the interest of better serving students?
4. What are some small steps that you and your organization can take now to improve assessment literacy in Michigan?
5. What successful implementation strategy have you experienced or observed in use by any role group or system-wide?