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**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

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# Blended Learning Initiative (BLI) Convening

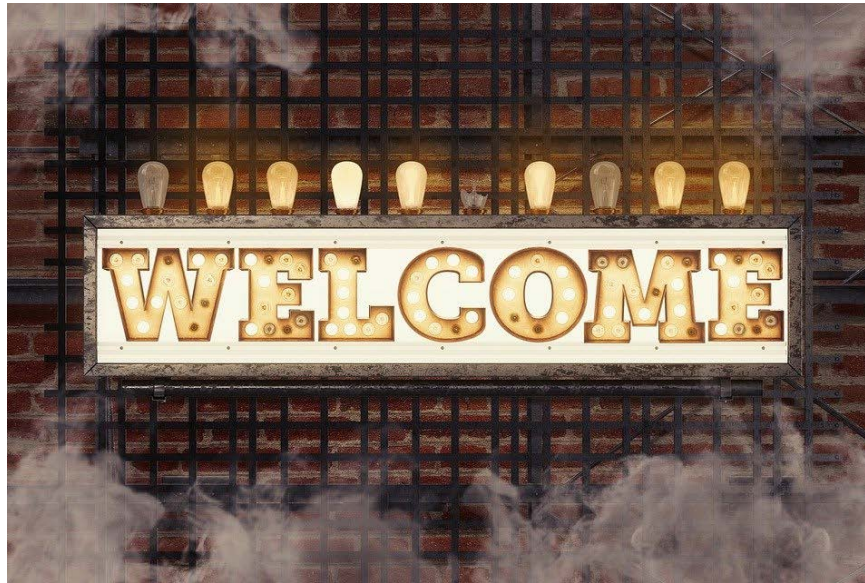
November 30, 2021

# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Norm Setting and Key Terms
- BLI Background and Goal Overview Presentation
- **Break 10:35-10:50**
- Discussion - Promising and emerging practices
- Discussion wrap-up and summarization of key themes
- **Lunch break 12:00-12:30**
- REL Central Presentation
- Discussion - REL Central findings
- **Break 2:15-2:30**
- Discussion wrap-up and summarization of key themes
- Task for next convening
- Closing and Next Steps

# Welcome and Introductions

- CDE Staff introductions
- Mentimeter link: <https://www.menti.com/smqjh6ewzz>
- Jamboard link:  
[https://jamboard.google.com/d/1UVQ8fv9ZShkj\\_yROZz\\_sZSt0o\\_AM49NbsHXjRm3C1nc/edit?usp=sharing](https://jamboard.google.com/d/1UVQ8fv9ZShkj_yROZz_sZSt0o_AM49NbsHXjRm3C1nc/edit?usp=sharing)



# Meeting Ground Rules & Norms

**The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.**

- **Good Faith:** Act in good faith in all aspects of group discussion with the intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.
- **Openness:** Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and to the outcome of discussions.
- **Focus:** Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.
- **Listening:** Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.



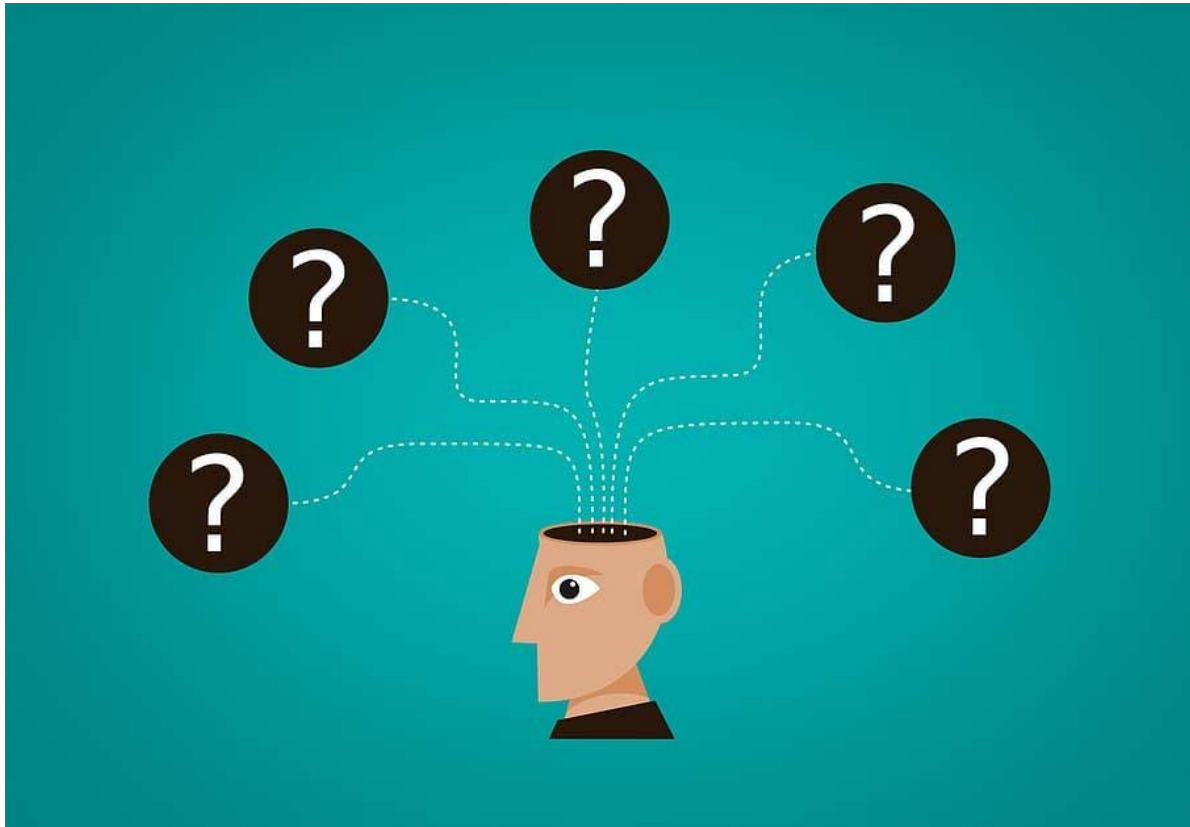
# Meeting Ground Rules & Norms (cont.)

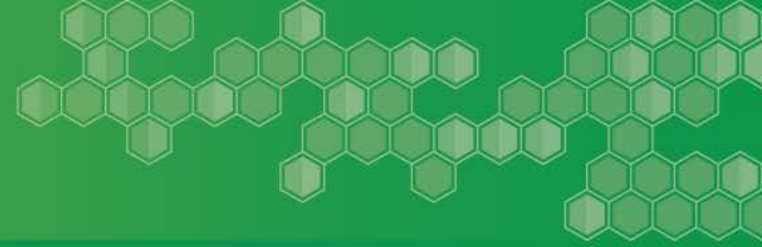
- **Participation:** Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.
- **Respect:** Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.
- **Preparedness & Commitment:** Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

***FACILITATION:*** *Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.*



- ***Are these the right norms?***
- ***Is there anything we want to add or adjust?***



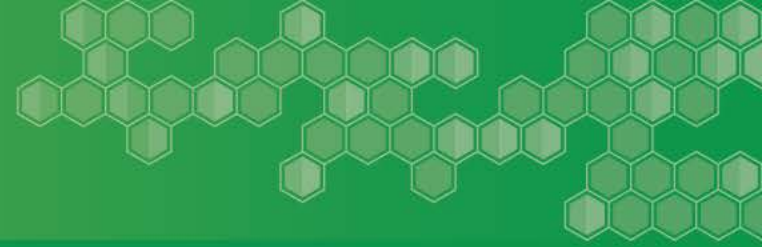


## Working Definitions:

- **Asynchronous learning** - teacher-to-student instruction that does not occur in real-time.
- **Blended learning** - a formal education program through which a student learns at least in part through digital content with some element of student control and at least in part at a supervised physical location that is not the student's home<sup>1</sup>
- **Brick and Mortar School** – general term used to refer to an in-person school. Brick and mortar schools are not online schools and operate with certain expectations for calendar days, physical attendance, and bell schedules for the calculation of seat time.
- **Online learning** – for today's purposes, this term will be used to refer to learning that is provided by an approved online school or program.

1 Term is used as applied to the statewide supplemental online and blended learning program as outlined in 22-5-119, C.R.S.



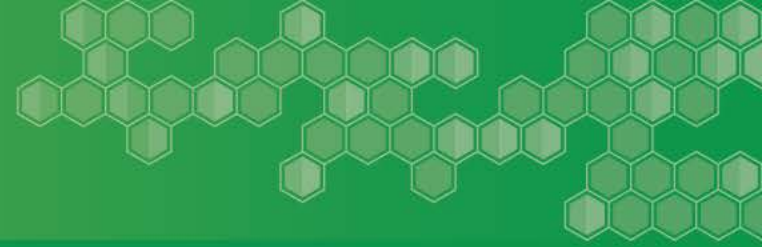


## Working Definitions:

- **Online program** - a full-time education program that delivers a sequential program of synchronous or asynchronous instruction, directed by a teacher, primarily through online digital learning strategies that provide students choice over time, place, path, and teacher-guided modality of learning. "Online program" does not include a supplemental program. Accountability for each student in an online program is attributed to a designated school that houses the online program. An online program with one hundred or more students is an online school and not an online program.<sup>2</sup>
- **Online school** - a full-time education school that delivers a sequential program of synchronous or asynchronous instruction, directed by a teacher, primarily through online digital learning strategies that provide students choice over time, place, and path, and teacher-guided modality, of learning. An online school has an assigned school code and operates with its own administrator, a separate budget, and a complete instructional program. An online school is responsible for fulfilling all reporting requirements and is held to state and federally mandated accountability processes.<sup>3</sup>

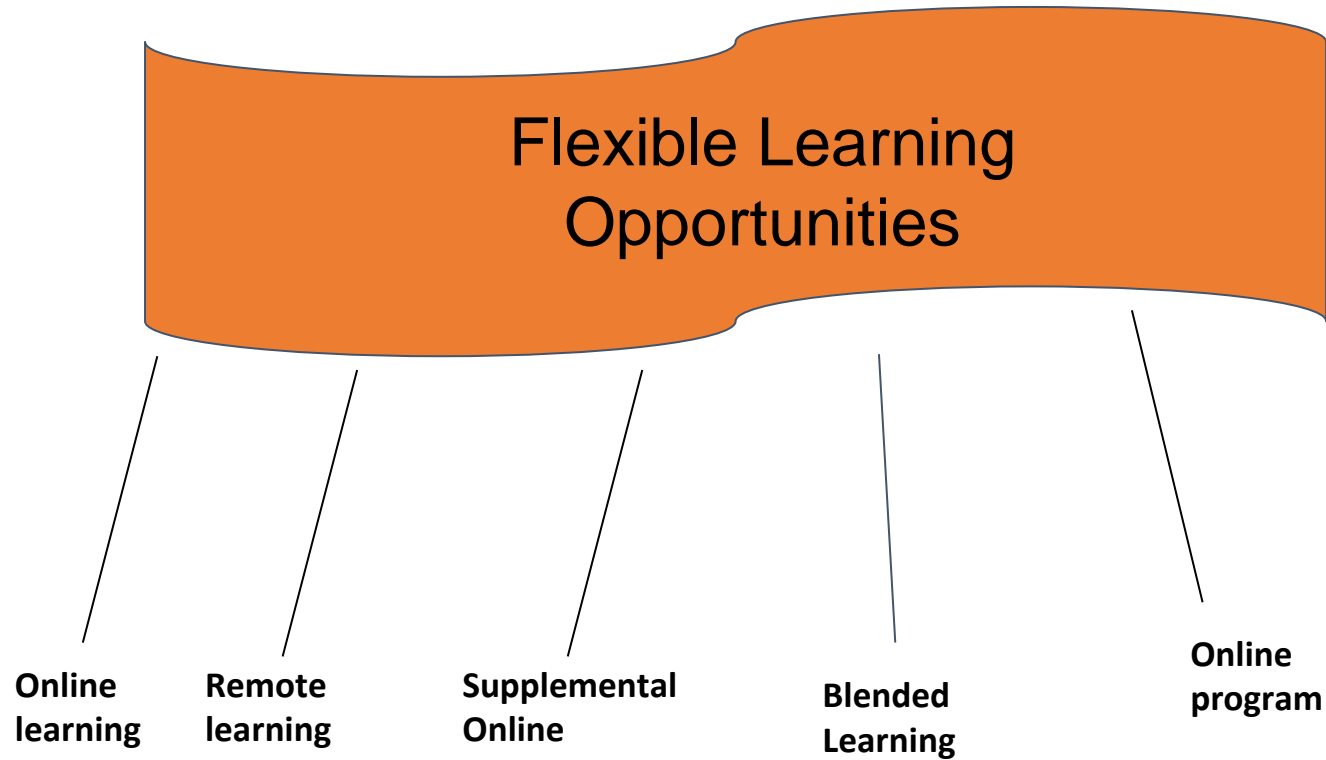
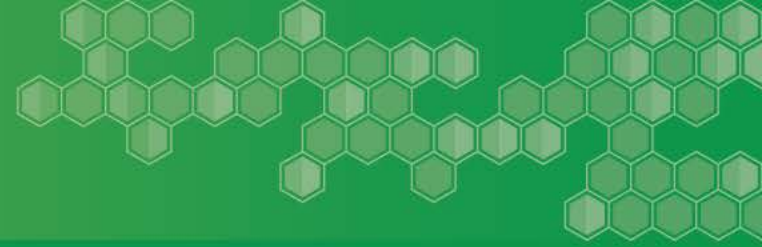
• 2 See 22-30.7-102 (9), C.R.S.  
• 3 See 22-30.7-102 (9.5), C.R.S.





## Working Definitions:

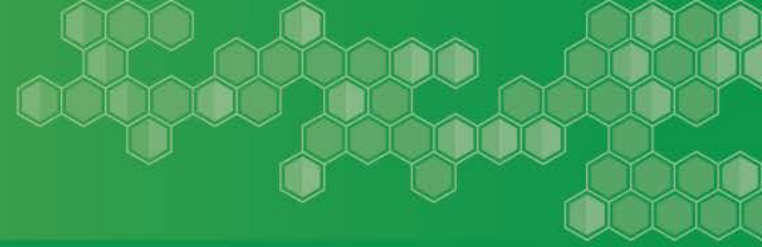
- **Remote learning** - teacher-pupil instruction and contact time that would normally occur in person (on-site) in a brick and mortar school but is instead occurring remotely (off-site) for a defined period of time due to public health and safety measures or instructional needs of students/districts resulting from a public health emergency.
- **Supplemental online course** - an education course that is:
  - Taught by a teacher who is licensed;
  - Delivered via a technologically enhanced format to one or more students at a location that is remote from the delivery point; and
  - Developed by a school district, charter school, or BOCES or obtained from a provider to augment the education program provided by the school district, charter school, or BOCES
- **Synchronous learning** - real-time teacher-to-student instruction.



# Blended Learning Initiative Background and Goals

# Background and Context

- Over the last 20 years, public education has been shaped by advances in online/digital learning technologies
- First, there was either online schools or brick and mortar schools.
  - Online Schools Act (Article 30.7 of Title 22) creates single-district and multi-district online schools and single district online programs.
- Next, there was state recognition of supplemental online and blended learning for brick and mortar schools (22-5-119, C.R.S.).
- Informally, schools and districts have also incorporated various educational technologies that facilitate digital learning.
  - These have been incorporated in many different ways.
- Then, the COVID-19 Pandemic arrived...



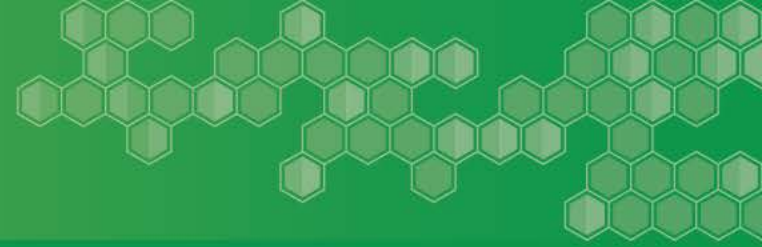
## COVID Impact:

- In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic called on brick and mortar schools to immediately implement remote learning in response to an executive order suspending in-person learning.

## CDE Guidance for 2020-21 School Year:

- The guidance outlined steps for schools/districts to follow to ensure remote learning was eligible for funding.
- The guidance aligned with a definition change of “Independent Study” (found in State Board Rule) to include off-site learning.
- The changed definition of “Independent Study” in rule allowed for remote (i.e. “off-site”) learning to be counted for teacher-pupil contact during public health emergencies.

# Background and Context: Timeline



## Traditional Models

Brick and mortar schools

Blended and  
Supplemental courses

Online Schools and  
Programs



## COVID Impact

Brick and mortar  
schools pivoted to  
100% remote learning

Growth and  
innovation of  
blended/online



## Developing Blended Models

Brick and mortar  
application of  
blended and hybrid  
learning models at  
scale

Fully remote,  
Blended,  
Temporary,  
Hybrid

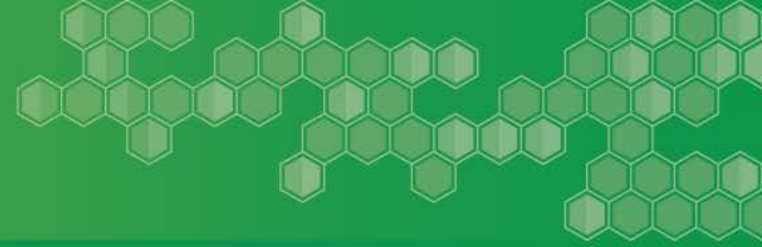


## Learning and Evolving

From crisis response to  
long-term

Learning loss and  
equitable learning  
opportunities

“Unbundling”



## Post-COVID (School Year 2021-22 and beyond)

- Ongoing COVID-related needs:
  - There are remaining challenges presented by COVID-19 that will require some families to seek out a fully-remote option for their students.
  - Potential need for temporary remote programming based on changing local circumstances.
- New programs that are not COVID-related
  - Some will implement blended/supplemental online models more regularly.
  - Some want to carry blended/supplemental approaches forward that were implemented during COVID.
  - Strategies to address learning loss
  - Re-thinking education delivery strategies
- Guidance for 2020-21 updated to adapt to changing circumstances.



The School Finance Act specifies that districts should be funded based on student enrollment

State Board Rule clarifies:

- Attendance requirements
- Instructional hours necessary for part-time and full-time funding

Within this construct, districts have local control to define

- “Educational process” with certain constraints. For example:
  - Passing time counts, lunch does not
  - Independent study does not count, with the exception of “actual teacher-pupil” instruction time

For brick and mortar students, the practical assumptions underlying both the School Finance Act and State Board Rule have ***historically*** been:

- 1) Students come to school,
- 2) Number of students x per pupil revenue provides the district or school an operating budget in the form of formula funding,
- 3) The district or school uses its operating budget, in majority, to hire teachers and other staff,
- 4) Teachers provide teacher-pupil contact time, or instruction, that is measured by in-person seat time or a reasonable proxy for it.

***These assumptions are increasingly being challenged by new instructional models, and by the pandemic.***



# Brick and Mortar Online Options: Blended and Supplemental Courses

Brick and Mortar  
Students

Remote  
Learning due to  
COVID health  
concerns

Blended/Supplemental

- Blended learning courses
- Supplemental online courses

Online Students

- Single district online program
- Single district online school (SDOL)
- Multi-district online school (MDOL)

# Current Exceptions to Traditional Model

There are limited exceptions to the traditional model:

- School Finance Rules allow for work-study or work-based learning experience
  - CDE has historically deferred to local policies to determine the instructional hour equivalency (e.g. 100 hours work hours = 1 credit = 75 instructional hours)
  - Work-based learning experience contract may outline the scheduled work hours/transcript can demonstrate credit hours earned
- Statutes and Rules allow for Post-secondary Courses
  - Extended High School (Concurrent Enrollment, ASCENT, P-TECH) and Early College (based upon college credit hours)
- Online Rules allow for the approval of online schools and programs
  - Instructional hours are based upon an instructional hour equivalency
  - Attendance is defined through assurances

# Students Enrolled in Brick and Mortar: Access to Online Learning

Brick and Mortar  
Students

## Prior to COVID:

- ❖ May access online learning via blended learning and supplemental online courses off-site as defined by the local board's educational process.
- ❖ May enroll in an unlimited number of blended and supplemental courses if the student accesses them at a school site.

## During COVID:

- ❖ May access online learning via an approved online school or program, and still be enrolled in their brick and mortar school (due to COVID guidance flexibility).
- ❖ May access online learning via a district/school designed remote learning option, including the use of Colorado Digital Learning Solutions (CDLS) or other provider (due to COVID guidance flexibility).

# Brick and Mortar Online Options: Blended and Supplemental Courses

**2007 through 2020:**

Blended Learning Courses

Supplemental Online Courses

**2020:**

Blended Learning Courses

Supplemental Online Courses

100% Remote Learning Due  
to COVID

Temporary Remote  
Learning due to COVID

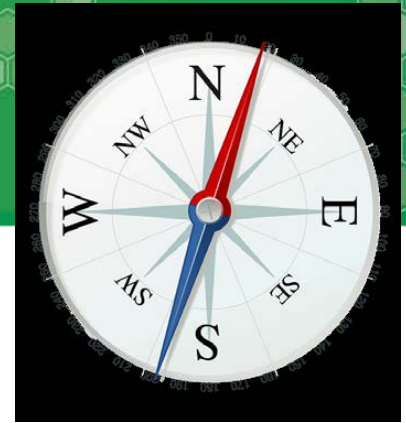
***The pandemic significantly expanded access to online learning by brick and mortar students.***

# Growth of Flexible Learning Opportunities

- Schools and districts have implemented much more online learning - whether full-time, supplemental, or blended - rapidly, due to COVID.
- Pupil count audits have surfaced demonstrating that, even pre-COVID, some districts/schools were using varied forms of blended learning and supplemental online approaches, including versions of off-site independent study, in different configurations, than was fully understood or (perhaps) intended.
- The reality on the ground in schools and districts has laid bare that old assumptions about teacher-pupil instruction and contact, and funding do not apply as neatly or cleanly as they might have even in the recent past.



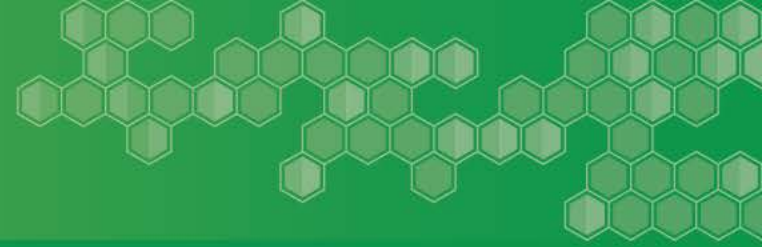
# Learning and Innovating - our goal



- Desire to learn from schools and districts using blended learning and supplemental courses
- Innovate with schools and districts to inform potential future policy
- Improve learning experiences for all students engaged in flexible learning opportunities such as remote and online learning models

# Break

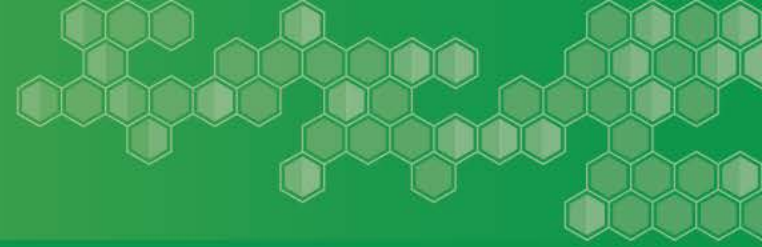




As we begin the discussion, please use the hand raising feature to speak.



Jamboard (link in chat) can be utilized to share thoughts as well.



Consider the following statement:

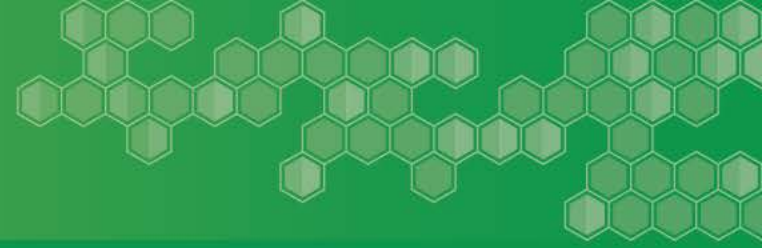
*The general thinking about flexible learning opportunities (online, blended, supplemental online learning, remote, etc.) is out of date. Practices have emerged far beyond where they were 10-15 years ago and our institutions have not adapted.*

Do you agree with this statement?

- ***What are some promising/emerging practices that you are aware of?***
- ***Which ones are fine in the current environment? Which ones struggle?***
- ***In what ways do you disagree with the statement?***

# Discussion Wrap-up and Summarization of Key Themes

Lunch break  
12:00-12:30



Trudy Cherasaro, PhD.

Joshua Stewart



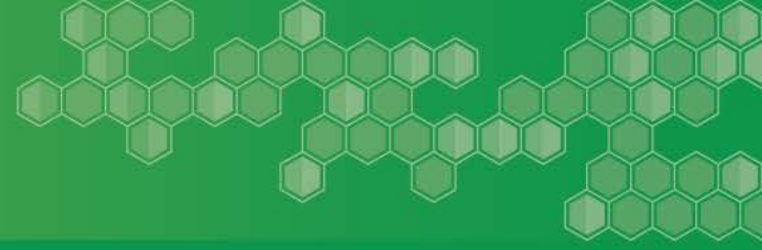
- ***What is your reaction to the findings?***
- ***What surprised you?***
- ***What confirmed your current thinking?***



# Break



# Discussion Wrap-up and Summarization of Key Themes



- How success is defined in your model(s) and how you know that you have achieved it?
- For those who are not operating flexible learning models, how would you define success and how could success be demonstrated in flexible learning models?
- Be prepared to share at the January convening.

- Next convening-January 28, 2022 from 9:00-1:00
- Meeting notes will be sent to all attendees and posted on the BLI website
- Jamboard will be available for additional thoughts
- Be prepared to share at January convening
- Thank you for your time and participation!