School develops more than mathematics and English language arts skills. Social-emotional and self-management skills, or character skills, are also important. We see evidence of their importance in discussions of grit and growth mindsets, in state legislation with standards for social emotional learning, in federal legislation with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) extending accountability to include student engagement and post-secondary readiness, and in OECD’s new international longitudinal study of social and emotional skill development. Dr. Kyllonen will make the case for measuring character skills, then review limitations to current rating-scale assessment, particularly reference group effects, response style bias, and limitations in comparability across nations, schools, and demographic subgroups. Dr. Kyllonen will suggest a variety of solutions including forced-choice measurement, anchoring vignettes, situational judgment testing, and performance tasks, and further discuss measurement models for these assessments. He will conclude with a discussion of prospects and priorities for moving the science of character assessment forward.

Patrick Kyllonen is Senior Research Director of the Center for Academic and Workforce Readiness and Success at Educational Testing Service (ETS). His work focuses on non-cognitive assessment in K-12 and higher education, workforce readiness assessment, and international large scale assessment. He is the author of several books and National Academy of Sciences reports on these topics, is a fellow of APA and AERA, and was instrumental in the development of the Trait-Self Description (TSD) Personality Inventory.