



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

SHEILA A. ALLES  
INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 14, 2019

**TO:** Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents  
Public School Academy Directors

**FROM:** Sheila A. Alles  
Interim State Superintendent 

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment System Definitions

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has defined terminology for Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment Systems. This terminology appears in the state ESSA plan and Top 10 in 10 Goals and Strategies and is used in multiple projects and initiatives such as Whole Child and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). A discussion of the role of assessments to support the whole child is available as the [January 2019 Top 10 in 10 video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1D1uwzBseU) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1D1uwzBseU>).

The definition of "Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment System" and its components are:

### **Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment System - Definition**

A Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment System is a coordinated system of assessments aligned to standards and success criteria for the whole child. The assessments and assessment processes are used to inform instruction, measure progress, specify additional learner needs, guide in depth supports, indicate growth toward competencies, and provide information regarding outcomes.

### **Comprehensive and Balanced Student Assessment System – Components**

The components are:

- Formative Assessment
- Progress Monitoring
- Universal Screeners
- Diagnostic Assessments
- Interim/Benchmark Assessments
- Summative Assessments
- Special Education Evaluations

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The definition and definitions of each component may be found on the MDE website: [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-80635\\_86000---,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-80635_86000---,00.html). The definitions are accompanied by links to additional resources. Local education agencies, public school academies, intermediate school districts, and educational programs are encouraged to adopt and/or align to the definitions.

These state-level definitions, along with [Michigan's assessment literacy standards](#), will establish and model consistency and alignment. Additionally, sharing these definitions will support and reinforce a consistent application of the definitions, along with approaching assessment as a *system* rather than a single *thing* or *product*. The definitions of each component are intended to provide a shared vocabulary for discussing assessment, not a prescriptive or comprehensive guide to implementing an assessment system. Defining these terms aligns to Goal 7 of Michigan's Top 10 in 10 Strategic Plan: *Further develop an innovative and cohesive state education agency that supports an aligned, coherent education system at all levels (state, ISD, district, and school)*.

For additional information, please email or call the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability help desk at [mde-oeaa@michigan.gov](mailto:mde-oeaa@michigan.gov) or 877-560-8378.

cc: Education Alliance