

# Assessment Literacy Standards

A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE



BRIEF // SPRING 2015

 Michigan  
Assessment  
Consortium  
Improve learning.  
Increase success.

“Assessment literacy is the set of beliefs, knowledge and practices about assessment that lead a teacher, administrator, policymaker or student to use assessment to improve student learning and achievement.”



## PURPOSE

Student assessment has become increasingly important to educators, students, their parents or guardians, and the public. Yet, despite the link between instruction and assessment—and the proliferation of large-scale and classroom assessment programs—most of those affected by student assessment (students, parents/guardians, teachers, school administrators, and local and state policymakers) may not understand the assessment tools and strategies used, their purposes, the types of assessment that can best match purposes for assessment, and the strengths and shortcomings of the various types of measures. They are also not prepared to use the results from these assessments to benefit students—to improve their learning and their achievement.

Because of these issues, the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) has undertaken an effort to create “Assessment Literacy Standards” for various individuals who are affected by student assessments. Assessment literacy standards for teachers, administrators and policymakers will serve as the foundation from which the field comes to understand what assessment literacy means and the role and purpose of comprehensive, balanced, quality assessment systems. This set of assessment literacy standards intends to lead teachers, administrators and policymakers, as well as those who work with them, to understand what each group needs to value, to know and do. The ultimate goal of the MAC is that the assessment literacy standards will be used to inform policy and program development and decisions regarding assessment practices, teacher preparation, administrative certification, educator evaluation, and school accreditation.

The purpose of the standards is driven by both the users and uses of assessment. Assessment literacy is essential in this era where important decisions are being made about students, educators, and educational systems based on the data collected from students. Understanding the appropriate roles that student assess-

ment can play to determine levels of student achievement and educational accomplishment, as well as to guide improved learning, is critical. Understanding what assessment can and cannot accomplish is important to ensure that such information is used in the most positive and accurate manner possible.

The standards are not intended to be technical in nature, nor should the standards be divorced from consideration of the various ways in which teachers instruct and students learn in classrooms and elsewhere. The emphasis of the standards is on assessment for learning. This includes student self-assessment and goal setting. Consequently, balance is a critical component of the standards: (a) Balance needs to exist between multiple measures, which may include formative assessment strategies, as well as interim and summative assessments, and (b) Balance of multiple uses of assessments such as diagnostic, placement, and progress, as well as users such as students, parents, educators and policymakers, is critical to the effective use of assessment results. It is the intention of the MAC that accomplishing these standards will improve curricula, instruction, and assessment, all leading to improved student achievement.

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## Assessment Literacy Standards

Local and State Policymakers

District Administrators

Building Administrators

Administrator Certification

Teachers

Pre-Service Teachers

Students and Parents

### DEVELOPMENT

The standards are intended for long-term use in the field of education as opposed to being a temporal topic that fades from importance with the rise of new issues. A number of documents were used in the development of the standards at the five levels. A list of these documents is also included. One of these documents, *Assessment Literacy in Michigan Education* (Roeber, 2011), provided the basic multifaceted framework of assessment literacy and was used to align the standards for these groups. A brief bibliography of resources is provided at the end of the document.

After the standards were drafted, they were sent to various authors and experts in order to solicit suggestions and support for the project. Revisions based on the feedback were completed in the spring of 2013. A protocol for review of the standards by Michigan educators was created and posted on the MAC website. Board members of the MAC and others hosted review sessions to obtain additional suggestions to the standards. Final revisions were made based on feedback received at the Michigan School Testing Conference in February 2014.

### GOALS

There are two primary goals for developing the Assessment Literacy Standards:

1. Create a set of standards that provides the dispositions, knowledge and skills various parties need to possess and use in order to maximize the benefits of student assessments, and reduce/eliminate the negative impacts or consequences of assessment.
2. Develop and implement activities and materials that can be used to increase the knowledge and skills of assessment users: educators, parents/guardians, and policymakers. The ultimate goal of this effort is to create a more assessment-literate population able to better use student assessments to improve student learning and achievement.

### FORMAT AND USE

The Assessment Literacy Standards were written for five groups of individuals:

- Students and Parents
- Classroom Teachers
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Policymakers

The standards for each group are separated into Dispositions, Knowledge, and Performance.

- **Dispositions:** standards address what the individual should believe regarding assessment.
- **Knowledge:** standards specify the particular vocabulary, processes and practices that individuals must comprehend.
- **Performance:** standards address the skills and competencies for which individuals must be proficient.

A purposeful decision was made to include all the relevant standards for each of the five groups, understanding that some redundancy would result. It was considered critical to include all the standards for each group in order that the standards of any of the five groups could stand alone, and yet remain comprehensive. In addition, understanding the standards for the different groups increases the overall understanding for individuals within a group.

The Glossary and Appendices provide definitions of the terms in the Assessment Literacy Standards as a tool for greater understanding of the intent and meaning of the standards.

The Appendices provide useful reference material about assessment practices.

The standards are intended for long-term use in the field of education as opposed to being a temporal topic that fades from importance with the rise of new issues.

Assessment Literacy Standards //

## ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



### DISPOSITIONS

Elementary students should believe that they:

- A. Learn best when they know the targets for their learning.
- B. Learn from taking quality assessments.
- C. Learn from effective feedback provided on their work from their teachers.
- D. Are responsible for their own learning.
- E. Need to use assessment results to learn more.

### KNOWLEDGE

Elementary students should know:

- A. That there are different reasons for taking assessments.
- B. That different types of assessments are used in the classroom.
- C. That different types of assessments provide different types of information about what they know and can do.
- D. How to use rubrics to assess their own work.
- E. How to use assessment results to reflect on their learning and to set goals for future learning.

### PERFORMANCE

Elementary students should know how to:

- A. Use feedback to improve their learning.
- B. Use rubrics to look at their work and that of their peers.
- C. Use assessment results to improve their achievement.
- D. Use assessments and assessment feedback to improve their attitude toward learning.
- E. Explain their assessment results to their teachers and their parents/guardians.
- F. Keep track of their own learning over time.



## SECONDARY STUDENTS

### DISPOSITIONS

Secondary students should believe that they:

- A. Learn best when they know the targets for their learning.
- B. Learn from taking quality assessments.
- C. Learn from effective feedback provided on their work from their teachers.
- D. Are responsible for their own learning.
- E. Can use self-monitoring to improve their achievement.
- F. Need to use their own assessment results to learn more.

### KNOWLEDGE

Secondary students should know:

- A. That there are different reasons for taking assessments.
  - 1. *Improving their achievement and learning*
  - 2. *Student accountability and grading*
  - 3. *Providing information that predicts their future performance/achievement*
- B. That different types of assessments are used in the classroom.
  - 1. *Selected response: Multiple-Choice, True-False, Matching*
  - 2. *Constructed response: Short or Extended Written Response*
  - 3. *Performance: Written responses, presentations or products*
  - 4. *Personal Communication: Observations and Interviews*
- C. That different types of assessments provide different types of information about what they know and can do.
- D. How to use rubrics to assess their own work.
- E. That feedback can be descriptive vs. evaluative.
- F. How to use assessment results to reflect on their learning and to set goals for future learning.

### PERFORMANCE

Secondary students should know how to:

- A. Use learning targets to understand the standards and to support their learning.
- B. Use feedback to decide on how to improve their achievement.
- C. Use different protocols for looking at their work with peers and teachers.
- D. Use assessment feedback to improve their attitudes, aspirations, mindsets and achievement.
- E. Interpret and explain their assessment results to their teachers and their parents/guardians.
- F. Use multiple sources of data over time to identify trends in their learning.

Assessment literacy standards for teachers, administrators and policymakers will serve as the foundation from which the field comes to understand what assessment literacy means and the role and purpose of comprehensive, balanced, quality assessment systems.



**DISPOSITIONS**

Teachers should believe that:

- A. Clear learning targets, understood by students, are necessary for learning and assessment.
- B. Quality assessments are a critical attribute of effective teaching and learning.
- C. Effective feedback is critical to support learning.
- D. Students should be active partners in learning how to use assessment results to improve their learning.
- E. Assessment results should be used to make instructional decisions to improve student learning.
- F. An effective assessment system must balance different purposes for different users and use varied methods of assessment and communication.
- G. Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are intricately linked to each other.
- H. Multiple measures can provide a more balanced picture of a student or a school.
- I. Grading is an exercise in professional judgment, not just a numerical, mechanical exercise.

**KNOWLEDGE**

Teachers should know:

- A. A balanced assessment system consists of both of the following:
  - 1. *Different users have different assessment purposes.*
  - 2. *Different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods.*
- B. There are different purposes for student assessment:
  - 1. *Student improvement*
  - 2. *Instructional program improvement*
  - 3. *Student, teacher or system accountability*
  - 4. *Program evaluation*
  - 5. *Prediction of future performance/achievement*
- C. The definitions of and uses for different types of assessments:
  - 1. *Summative assessment*
  - 2. *Interim benchmark assessment*
  - 3. *Formative-assessment practices*
  - 4. *Criterion vs. norm-referenced assessment interpretations*
- D. The differences between the types of assessment tools:
  - 1. *Achievement*
  - 2. *Aptitude*
  - 3. *Diagnostic*
  - 4. *Screening*
- E. The different types of assessment methods best matched to learning targets:
  - 1. *Selected response: Multiple-choice, True-False, Matching*
  - 2. *Constructed response: Short or Extended Written Response*
  - 3. *Performance: Written responses, presentations or products*
  - 4. *Personal Communication: Observations and interviews*



## KNOWLEDGE *continued*

- F. Non-technical understanding of statistical concepts associated with assessment:
  - 1. *Measures of central tendency*
  - 2. *Measures of variability*
  - 3. *Reliability*
  - 4. *Validity: A characteristic of the use of the assessment, not the assessment itself*
  - 5. *Bias/sensitivity*
  - 6. *Correlation vs. causation*
- G. How to translate standards into clear learning targets that are written in student-friendly language and used as the basis for the everyday curriculum.
- H. How to develop or select high quality assessments:
  - 1. *Determine the purpose for assessing*
  - 2. *Determine the standards or learning targets to be assessed*
  - 3. *Select the assessment methods appropriate to learning targets and assessment purpose(s)*
  - 4. *Design a test plan or blueprint that will permit confident conclusions about achievement*
  - 5. *Select or construct the necessary assessment items and scoring tools where needed*
  - 6. *Field test the items in advance or review them before reporting the results*
  - 7. *Improve the assessment through review and analysis to eliminate bias and distortion*
  - 8. *Assessments can be purchased or developed locally; each approach has advantages and challenges*
- I. What assessment accommodations are available and when to use them with students with disabilities and English Language Learners.
- J. How to provide effective feedback from assessments suitable for different audiences: descriptive vs. evaluative
- K. How to use and create scoring tools (guides, rubrics, checklists, scoring rules, standards)
- L. Sound grading and reporting practices
- M. How to engage students in using their own assessment results for reflection and goal setting
- N. What assessment data validly reflects a teacher's effectiveness
- O. There are two ways to report results, and specific circumstances when each is useful:
  - 1. *Normative interpretations*
  - 2. *Criterion-referenced interpretations*

## PERFORMANCE

Teachers should be able to:

- A. Self-assess their work and model this for students.
- B. Select and use various assessment methods appropriate to assessment purposes and learning targets.
- C. Use learning targets aligned to the standards and understood by students to guide instruction.
- D. Use learning progressions to guide instruction and assessment.
- E. Implement the 5-step process for assessment development:
  - 1. *Plan*
  - 2. *Develop*
  - 3. *Review and Critique*
  - 4. *Field Test*
  - 5. *Review and Revise*
- F. Use assessment data within appropriate, ethical and legal guidelines.
- G. Use a variety of protocols for looking at and scoring student work.
- H. Accurately determine and communicate levels of proficiency.
- I. Use assessment results to make appropriate instructional decisions for individual students and groups of students.
- J. Provide timely, descriptive and actionable feedback to students based on assessment results.
- K. Support student use of assessment feedback to improve attitudes, aspirations, mindsets and achievement.
- L. Use grading practices that result in grades that are accurate, consistent, meaningful and supportive of learning.
- M. Use assessment results appropriately to modify instruction to improve student achievement.
- N. Collaboratively analyze data and use data to improve instruction.
- O. Use multiple sources of data over time to identify trends in learning.
- P. Use data management systems to access and analyze data.
- Q. Communicate effectively with students, parents/guardians, other teachers, administrators and community stakeholders about student learning.
- R. Locate and appropriately use resources (local, state and national) to improve assessment literacy.

## BUILDING ADMINISTRATORS



### DISPOSITIONS

Building Administrators should believe that:

- A. All educators must be proficient in their understanding and use of assessment.
- B. An effective assessment system must balance different purposes for different users and use appropriate assessment methods to measure different learning targets.
- C. When assessment is done correctly, the resulting data can be used to make sound educational decisions.
- D. Multiple measures can provide a more balanced picture of a student or a school.
- E. Quality assessments are a critical attribute of effective teaching and learning.
- F. Assessment results should be used to make instructional decisions that impact learning.
- G. Clear learning targets, understood by students, are necessary for learning and assessment.
- H. Effective feedback is critical to support learning.
- I. Students should be active partners in their learning and assessment.
- J. Students can use assessment results to improve their learning.
- K. Time and resources are needed to:
  - 1. *Learn to select or develop assessments*
  - 2. *Administer assessments*
  - 3. *Use the assessment results appropriately*
- L. Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are intricately linked to each other.

### KNOWLEDGE

Building Administrators should know:

- A. A balanced assessment system consists of both of the following:
  - 1. *Different users have different assessment purposes*
  - 2. *Different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods*
- B. There are different purposes for student assessment:
  - 1. *Student improvement*
  - 2. *Instructional program improvement*
  - 3. *Student, teacher or system accountability*
  - 4. *Program evaluation*
  - 5. *Prediction of future performance/achievement*
- C. The definitions of and uses for different types of assessments:
  - 1. *Summative assessment*
  - 2. *Interim benchmark assessment*
  - 3. *Formative-assessment practices*
  - 4. *Criterion vs. norm-referenced assessment interpretations*
  - 5. *Difference between the types of assessment tools—achievement, aptitude, diagnostic, screening and placement*
- D. The differences between the types of assessment tools:
  - 1. *Achievement*
  - 2. *Aptitude*
  - 3. *Diagnostic*
  - 4. *Screening*
  - 5. *Placement and Selection*
- E. The different types of assessment methods and when teachers should use each:
  - 1. *Selected response: Multiple-choice, True-False, Matching*
  - 2. *Constructed response: Short or Extended written response*
  - 3. *Performance: Written responses, presentations or products*
  - 4. *Personal Communication: Observations and interviews*



## KNOWLEDGE *continued*

- F. Non-technical understanding of statistical concepts associated with assessment:
1. Measures of central tendency
  2. Measures of variability
  3. Reliability
  4. Validity: a characteristic of the use of the assessment, not the assessment itself
  5. Bias/sensitivity
  6. Correlation vs. causation
- G. How to develop or select high quality assessments:
1. Determine the purpose for assessment
  2. Determine the standards or learning targets to be assessed
  3. Select the assessment methods appropriate to learning targets and assessment purpose(s)
  4. Design a test plan or blueprint that will permit confident conclusions about achievement
  5. Select or construct the necessary assessment items with scoring guides where needed
  6. Field test the items in advance or review them before reporting the results
  7. Improve the assessment through review and analysis to eliminate bias and distortion
  8. Assessments can be purchased or developed locally; each approach has advantages and challenges
- H. There are two ways to report results, and specific circumstances when each is useful:
1. Normative interpretations
  2. Criterion-referenced interpretations
- I. Assessment data that validly reflects a teacher's effectiveness.

## PERFORMANCE

Building Administrators should promote a culture of appropriate assessment practice by:

- A. Promoting assessment literacy for self and staff through:
1. Professional Learning Communities
  2. Targeted and Differentiated Professional Development
  3. Walk-throughs (data collection – goal setting)
  4. Educator evaluation practices (i.e., program, teacher, and administrator)
- B. Providing time and support for staff to implement a balanced assessment system by providing opportunities to develop skills in:
1. Using instructionally embedded formative assessment
  2. Administering assessments
  3. Scoring/Analyzing results
  4. Developing instructional plans based on results
  5. Developing school improvement plans based on results

Building Administrators should promote the use of assessment data to improve student learning through the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment by:

- A. Implementing district-developed learning progressions.
- B. Assuring horizontally and vertically aligned curriculum, instruction and assessment in the building.
- C. Clearly explaining how to analyze and use assessment results.
- D. Leading dialogues with staff in interpreting results and creating goals for improvement.
- E. Assisting teachers in collaboratively analyzing and using data in a professional learning community.
- F. Using assessment results, including subgroup performance, to influence the school's curriculum and instructional program.
- G. Using multiple data sources over time to identify learning trends.
- H. Using assessment data to reflect on effectiveness of teachers' instructional strategies.
- I. Incorporating assessment knowledge in evaluation practices (i.e., program, teacher, and administrator).
- J. Clearly communicating results to various constituents through a coherent communication system that uses a variety of methods.
- K. Using data management systems to access and analyze data.

## DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS



### DISPOSITIONS

District Administrators should believe that:

- A. Quality assessments are a critical attribute of effective teaching and learning.
- B. There needs to be uniformity in assessment expectations and practices across buildings.
- C. Clear learning targets, understood by students, are necessary for learning and assessment.
- D. Students should be active partners in their learning and assessment.
- E. Students can use assessment results to improve their learning.
- F. When assessment is done correctly, the resulting data can be used to make sound educational decisions.
- G. All educators must be proficient in their understanding and use of assessment.
- H. Users of assessments require time to learn to select, develop, and administer the assessments, as well as use the assessment results appropriately, and resources are needed to carry out these activities.
- I. Assessment results should be used to make instructional decisions that impact learning.

### KNOWLEDGE

District-Level Administrators should know:

- A. A balanced assessment system consists of both of the following:
  - 1. *Different users have different assessment purposes*
  - 2. *Different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods*
- B. There are different purposes for student assessment:
  - 1. *Student improvement*
  - 2. *Instructional program improvement*
  - 3. *Student, teacher or system accountability*
  - 4. *Program evaluation*
  - 5. *Prediction of future performance/achievement*
- C. The definitions of and uses for different types of assessments:
  - 1. *Summative assessment*
  - 2. *Interim benchmark assessment*
  - 3. *Formative-assessment practices*
  - 4. *Criterion vs. norm-referenced assessment interpretations*
  - 5. *Differences between the types of assessment tools—achievement, aptitude, diagnostic, screening and placement.*
- D. The different types of assessment methods and when educators should use each:
  - 1. *Selected response: Multiple-choice, True-False, Matching*
  - 2. *Constructed response: Short or Extended written response*
  - 3. *Performance: Written responses, presentations or products*
  - 4. *Personal Communication: Observations and interviews*



### KNOWLEDGE *continued*

- E. Non-technical understanding of statistical concepts associated with assessment:
  - 1. Measures of central tendency
  - 2. Measures of variability
  - 3. Reliability
  - 4. Validity: a characteristic of the use of the assessment, not the assessment itself
  - 5. Bias/sensitivity
  - 6. Correlation vs. causation
- F. How to develop or select high quality assessments:
  - 1. Determine the purpose for assessment
  - 2. Determine the standards or learning targets to be assessed
  - 3. Select the assessment methods appropriate to learning targets and assessment purpose(s)
  - 4. Design a test plan or blueprint that will permit confident conclusions about achievement
  - 5. Select or construct the necessary assessment items with scoring guides where needed
  - 6. Field test the items in advance or review them before reporting the results
  - 7. Improve the assessment through review and analysis to eliminate bias and distortion
  - 8. Assessments can be purchased or developed locally; each approach has advantages and challenges
- G. There are two ways to report results, and specific circumstances when each is useful:
  - 1. Normative interpretations
  - 2. Criterion-referenced interpretations
- H. The multiple sources of assessment data that validly reflect a teacher's effectiveness.

### PERFORMANCE

District Administrators should promote a culture of appropriate assessment practice by:

- A. Instituting policies with supportive resources (time and budget) to implement a balanced system of assessment in the district.
- B. Promoting assessment literacy with staff through:
  - 1. Professional Learning Communities
  - 2. Targeted Professional Development
  - 3. Walk-throughs (data collection – goal setting)
  - 4. Educator evaluation practices (i.e., program, teacher, and administrator)
- C. Assuring that each and every staff member is:
  - 1. A confident, competent master themselves of the targets that they are responsible for teaching
  - 2. Sufficiently assessment literate to assess their assigned targets productively in both formative and summative ways.
- D. Providing time and support for staff to implement a balanced assessment system by providing opportunities to develop skills in:
  - 1. Selecting, creating, and developing assessments
  - 2. Administering assessments
  - 3. Scoring/Analyzing results
  - 4. Developing instructional plans based on results
- E. Holding building-level staff accountable for implementing high quality assessments.
- F. Promoting student engagement and involvement in assessment from the district level.

District Administrators promote the use of assessment data to improve student learning through the alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment by:

- A. Developing learning progressions to implement the district-wide standards. (Building Administrators ensure that these get implemented.)
- B. Clearly explaining how to analyze and use assessment results.
- C. Leading dialogues with staff in interpreting results and creating goals for improvement.
- D. Assisting teachers in collaboratively analyzing and using data in a professional learning community.
- E. Using assessment results, including subgroup performance, to influence the district's curriculum and instructional program.
- F. Using multiple data sources over time to identify learning trends.
- G. Using assessment data to reflect on effectiveness of principals' instructional leadership.
- H. Incorporating assessment knowledge in evaluation practices (i.e., program, administrator).
- I. Clearly communicating results to various constituents through a coherent system that uses a variety of methods.
- J. Using data management systems to access and analyze data.

Assessment Literacy Standards //  
**POLICYMAKERS**



**DISPOSITIONS**

Policymakers should believe that:

- A. Teacher and administrator certification standards should include competence in assessment as a criterion for licensing.
- B. A balanced assessment system is essential at the local school district level (using summative and interim assessments, as well as formative assessment practices).
- C. Assessments closer to the classroom usually have a greater impact on improving student achievement.
- D. Teachers and administrators need formal training in the development and use of assessments to increase student success.
- E. Important decisions about schools, educators or students should be made on the basis of accurate and multiple sources of data.

**KNOWLEDGE**

Policymakers should know:

- A. A balanced assessment system consists of both of the following:
  - 1. *Different users have different assessment purposes*
  - 2. *Different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods*
- B. There are different purposes for student assessment:
  - 1. *Student improvement*
  - 2. *Instructional program improvement*
  - 3. *Student, teacher or system accountability*
  - 4. *Program evaluation*
  - 5. *Prediction of future performance/achievement*
- C. The differences between the types of assessments in a balanced system of assessment:
  - 1. *Summative Assessments*
  - 2. *Interim Benchmark Assessments*
  - 3. *Formative Assessments*
- D. There are different ways to measure student achievement; each has advantages and challenges.

**KNOWLEDGE** *continued*

- E. There are two ways to report results, and specific circumstances when each is useful:
  - 1. *Norm-referenced interpretations*
  - 2. *Criterion-referenced interpretations*
- F. There are several essential technical standards for high quality assessments:
  - 1. *Reliability—Do the assessments produce replicable scores?*
  - 2. *Validity—Is there evidence that supports the intended uses of the assessment?*
- G. Assessments can be purchased or developed locally; each approach has advantages and challenges.
- H. There are a number of steps in the assessment development process to produce high quality assessments.
- I. There is little evidence to suggest that local, state, national and international summative assessments, in themselves, improve education or student learning.
- J. Users of assessments require time to learn to administer assessments and use the results appropriately, and resources may be needed to carry out these activities.
- K. Which student measures are appropriate for teacher and administrator evaluation.

**PERFORMANCE**

Policymakers should:

- A. Provide the necessary authorization and resources (time, money and staff) to create and implement quality balanced assessment systems.
- B. Ensure that only high-quality assessments will be selected/developed and used.
- C. Strive to learn more about how assessment can be used to improve student achievement.
- D. Support activities to improve their assessment literacy and that of their staff.



## POLICYMAKER AUDIENCES

### State-Level

- State Board of Education
- Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Legislature
  1. House Education Committee
  2. Senate Education Committee
  3. Legislative Staff
  4. House and Senate Fiscal Agencies
- Governor
  5. Governor's Education Staff
- Department of Management and Budget

### Local-Level

- Local Board of Education
- Local School Superintendents

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- Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA)
- Michigan Association of Intermediate School District Administrators (MAISA)
- Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals' Association (MEMPSA)
- Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (MAASP)
- Michigan Association of Supervision and Curriculum and Development (MIASCD)
- Michigan School Improvement Facilitator's Network (MSIFN)
- Michigan School Testing Conference (MSTC)
- Marquette Alger ISD
- Reeths-Puffer School District
- Wayne RESA
- Wexford-Missaukee ISD

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS USED FOR MAC ASSESSMENT LITERACY STANDARDS

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"Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students," American Federation of Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education, and the

National Education Association. Buros Institute of Mental Measurements. <http://www.unl.edu/buros/bimm/html/article3.html>

It is the intention of the MAC that accomplishing these standards will improve curricula, instruction, and assessment, all leading to improved student achievement.

## GLOSSARY

### **Accountability**

Holding educators or others responsible for the performance of students, educators, or school programs.

### **Achievement Level**

The standard of performance set through a standardsetting procedure. Also called a “performance standard.” Defines how well students need to do on an assessment to meet or exceed predefined targets for achievement, such as “proficient.”

### **Active Partner**

An individual who takes a substantial and ongoing role in an activity.

### **Alignment**

Refers to whether an assessment item measures any part (ideally, the most important part) of a content standard. Also refers to how much of a set of content standards that an assessment instrument measures.

Two-Way Alignment refers to how much of a set of content standards is measured by an assessment instrument, as well as, whether the assessment instrument covers most, if not all, of the set of content standards.

### **Aptitude**

A term to describe the ability of an individual to carry out a task or activity. Also indicates the extent to which an individual will be successful in a future activity.

### **Assessment: Development, Methods Purposes and Use of Tools**

See Appendix, page 18–19.

### **Balanced Assessment**

The use of different types of assessment for different purposes. Can also mean the use of assessments for learning (to guide it as it is occurring) and of learning (to measure how much students have learned at the end of instruction).

### **Bias/Sensitivity/Distortion**

*Bias* The manner in which a test question is posed that disadvantages some students (due to factors other than their knowledge of the topic being assessed.)

*Sensitivity* The use of a topic in an assessment item that some students may find troubling or offensive.

*Distortion* A factor in the assessment process that does not permit the accurate determination of student performance or that of a school or district.

### **Causation**

This is a demonstration that one variable has a direct and predictable impact on another variable.

### **Cognitive Complexity**

The type(s) of mental processing (i.e., thinking skills) required by an item or set of items. This may refer to the Depth of Knowledge (Webb), Bloom’s Taxonomy, or other definition of thinking skills.

### **Correlation**

This is a demonstration that two variables move in the same or opposite manner, although there is no proof that one causes the other.

### **Criteria**

A basis for making a judgment.

### **Criterion-referenced (and interpretation)**

Relating a test score to a pre-established absolute standard.

### **Data Management System**

A computer software system that is used to store educational data and to permit these data to be retrieved and analyzed.

### **Dispositions**

Attitudes or beliefs about something.

### **Feedback**

Information about performance provided by another person or an instrument.

### **Field Test**

Trying out of newly-created items in a formal manner on a representative sample of students.

### **Formative**

Information collected and used during instruction to improve learning as it is occurring.

### **Grading**

Rating an individual or program on the basis of external standards.

### **High Quality Assessment**

An assessment externally judged to be of superior quality.

### **Horizontally Aligned**

The alignment of instruction provided by multiple teachers teaching the same content at the same grade or in the same course.

### **Instructional Decisions**

The choices made by educators as they teach.

### **Instructionally Embedded**

Assessments or activities that occur while instruction is taking place.

### **Interim**

An assessment program that is administered periodically to students, such as at the conclusion of each marking period.

### **Item**

An assessment question, problem, or exercise. The individual measures used in a test.

### **Learning Progressions**

The sequence of learning topics that students may go through to learn an important topic.

### **Learning Targets**

The individual learning skills for teaching and/or testing.

### **Levels of Proficiency**

The different levels of performance on an assessment.

**Measures of Central Tendency:  
Mean, Mode and Median**

*Mean* The arithmetic average of a set of data, calculated by adding up all the scores and dividing by the number of scores.

*Mode* The most frequently occurring score in a set of scores.

*Median* The score at the middle point in a set of scores.

**Measures of Variability: Variance and Standard Deviation**

*Variance* The deviation of each score in a set of scores from the mean score of the set, squared.

*Standard Deviation* The square root of the variance of each score in a set of scores, divided by the number of scores.

**Multiple Measures**

The use of different types of measures to assess students or programs from somewhat different perspectives in order to obtain a broader picture of students or a program.

**Norm-Referenced (and /interpretation)**

The comparison of a student or school score to a representative sample of students or schools – the norm group. Scores are interpreted as above or below the average (mean score) of the norm group.

**Performance**

Assessments that require the student to perform some activity.

**Pilot Testing**

A preliminary use of assessment items to see if they work. If they don't, they may be discarded or revised. If they do work, the next step is to field test them.

**Professional Development**

(Targeted and Differentiated) The learning programs and experiences provided to in-service educators to improve their knowledge and skills, and thus, their performance on the job.

**Professional Learning Communities**

Small groups of educators who work on a common issue or program over a period of time for the purposes of increasing educator effectiveness and student results.

**Program Evaluation**

The use of test results to determine the success of a program and perhaps to suggest improvements to it.

**Protocols**

Protocols are an agreed upon set of guidelines for conversation; a code of behavior for groups to use when exploring ideas.

**Quality Assessment**

A judgment that an assessment is of high quality.

**Reflection**

The process occurs when students think about how their work meets established criteria; they analyze the effectiveness of their efforts, and plan for improvement.

**Reliability**

A determination of the internal consistency, comparability or stability of an assessment. A necessary but not sufficient condition for an assessment to be useful.

**Reporting**

Describing the performance of a student on an assessment in written or verbal terms.

**Scoring**

The process of determining how well a student did on an assessment.

**Scoring Tools**

See Appendices, page 19.

**Standard**

The specific skill to be assessed. Other terms used can be expectation, competency, learning target or other terms as well (e.g., goal, skill, objective, outcome).

**Student-Friendly Language**

Writing of some educational language in a jargon-free manner understandable to students.

**Subgroup Performance**

The performance of a subset of the students in a larger group, examined to assure that all groups of students in a school are doing well academically.

**Summative Assessment**

As assessment of performance, conducted at the conclusion of a course or program completion.

**Test Blueprint**

A document that describes the key attributes of a new assessment, such as standards to be assessed, the types and numbers of items to be written, and how the results of the assessment will be reported to different audiences.

**Types of Assessments**

Different ways of assessing students or programs.

**Unpacking Standards**

To determine the key attributes and aspects of a content standard.

**Validity**

The collection of evidence to support the intended uses of an assessment. Note: The test itself is not "valid" or "not valid." It is the uses of the assessment that are or are not valid.

**Vertically Aligned**

The alignment of instruction provided by multiple teachers teaching in the same content area across two or more grades.

**Walk-Through**

A dry-run of a process or a procedure. Also can mean a school administrator who periodically observes teachers in their classrooms.

## **ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT, FIVE-STEP PROCESS**

### **Plan**

Determine what skills will be measured, how many measures of which types will be created, by whom, on what schedule and with what resources.

### **Develop**

This is the process of actually developing the needed assessments.

### **Review and Critique**

After the items are drafted, they should be reviewed for content alignment and to avoid bias. After this critique, the items should be revised.

### **Field Test**

This is the process of trying out the items to see if they actually work.

### **Review and Revise**

Based on the field test results, the items should be updated.

## **ASSESSMENT PURPOSES**

### **Student Improvement**

The use of test results to review past instruction or to alter future instruction provided to the student, due to performance on the test.

### **Instructional Program Improvement**

The use of the test results to determine areas of the instructional program that need to be modified and improved.

### **Accountability**

The use of the test results to hold educators or others responsible for the performance of students, educators, or school programs.

### **Program Evaluation**

The use of test results to determine the success of a program and perhaps to suggest improvements to it.

### **Prediction**

The use of test results to determine the likelihood of success of an individual in some future activity.

## **ASSESSMENT METHODS**

### **Selected-Response Item**

In this type of item, students select a correct answer from among several answer choices. This item type includes multiple-choice, true/false items, and matching items. The multiple-choice item format is the selected-response format most used in a large-scale assessment program.

### **Constructed-Response/Item**

This item type requires the individual to create their own answer(s) rather than select from prewritten options. There are usually several ways in which these items can be answered correctly. These items are scored using a standardized scoring rubric that is objective and clearly defined.

### **Performance Assessment**

These are types of assessments that require the student to perform some activity. There are two types, distinguished by their complexity and the length of time students have to respond to them.

#### ***Performance Task***

On this assessment, students have days, weeks, or months to compose a response. Thus, these assessments may involve multiple responses of different types to multiple prompts. The resultant work may be lengthy and comprised of multiple parts. Embedded in the Task may be written response items, presentations, papers, student self reflections, and so forth.

#### ***Performance Event***

This is an on-demand performance assessment on which students are given little or no time to rehearse their performance nor limited opportunities to improve their initial performance. Such assessments may take a class period or less to administer.

### **Personal Communication**

An assessment conducted one-on-one between an adult and a student—sometimes an observation or interview.

## USES OF ASSESSMENT/ASSESSMENT TOOLS

### Achievement

To determine the current level of knowledge and skills of an individual.

### Diagnostic

To determine the areas of strength and weakness of an individual.

### Placement

To determine the best program or treatment for an individual.

### Selection

To determine which individuals will most likely be successful in a program.

### Progress

To gauge the improvement in performance of an individual or a program.

### Aptitude

The ability of an individual to carry out a task or activity. Also indicates the extent to which an individual will be successful in a future activity.

### Screening

To determine eligibility of an individual for a program or activity.

## SCORING TOOLS

### Guides

A scoring guide is composed of a rationale for the correct or preferred responses to the assessment. A guide might include one or more scoring rubrics, examples of student responses for each score level of each rubric, and sets of student papers used to train and certify the scorers. A guide might also include checklists.

### Rubrics

Often used to score constructed response items, and performance tasks and performance events. A rubric establishes the expectations for performance and delineates what a response must include. Performance levels are described for each dimension or criteria of the performance task, performance event, or constructed response item. Sample student work drawn from actual responses used to illustrate performance levels for each dimension/criteria are sometimes attached to a rubric.

### Checklists

This might be a series of steps used to remind students about a complete performance or used to score the responses of students.

### Scoring Rules

The criteria used to judge student work.

**The mission** of the Michigan Assessment Consortium is to improve student learning and achievement through a coherent system of curriculum, balanced assessment and effective instruction. We do this by collaboratively promoting assessment knowledge and practice; providing professional learning opportunities; and providing and sharing assessment tools, products and resources.



**Michigan Assessment Consortium** is a professional association of educators who believe quality education depends on accurate, balanced, meaningful assessment. MAC members work together with educators to advance assessment literacy and advocate for assessment education and excellence.

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To learn more about the Michigan Assessment Consortium and the resources it has created:

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