# Assessment Literacy Standards
## A NATIONAL IMPERATIVE

**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 students and their families to use assessment to improve student learning and achievement.

## PURPOSE

Student assessment has become increasingly important to educators, students, their families, 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, their families, 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 and promulgate "Assessment Literacy Standards" for various individuals who are affected by student assessments.

Assessment literacy standards for students and their families, 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 shows what assessment literate students and their families, teachers, administrators, and policymakers value, know, and can do. The ultimate goal of the MAC is that the assessment literacy standards are 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 assessment 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 standards emphasize assessment for learning, which includes student self-assessment and goal setting. Consequently, balance is a critical component of the standards:

a)  Balance must exist between multiple measures, which may include formative assessment strategies, as well as interim and summative assessments; and

b)  Balance is critical to the effective use of assessment results across multiple purposes for assessment (such as diagnostic, placement, and progress) by multiple users of assessments (such as students and their families, educators, and policymakers).

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

> 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.

MAC

## Assessment Literacy Standards

**Local and State Policymakers**

**District Administrators**

*Administrator Certification*

**Building Administrators**

*Pre-Service Teachers*

**Teachers**

**Students and Their Families**

## DEVELOPMENT

The standards are intended for long-term use in 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 for each group. 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 is provided at the end of the document.

The Assessment Literacy Standards (ALS) have undergone extensive review by state and national experts, the MAC Board of Directors, and educators throughout Michigan. Their feedback helped shape the standards and inform their quality and utility. In 2016, the Michigan State Board of Education endorsed the MAC Assessment Literacy Standards for the State of Michigan.

## GOALS

There were two primary goals for promoting the Assessment Literacy Standards:

1. Create a set of standards that provides the dispositions, knowledge, and skills various parties who are assessment literate 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, students and their families, 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 their families
• Classroom teachers
• Building administrators
• District administrators
• Policymakers

The standards for each group are organized around Dispositions, Knowledge, and Performance.

• **Dispositions:** standards address what individuals who are assessment literate believe regarding assessment.

• **Knowledge:** standards specify the particular vocabulary, processes, and practices that assessment literate individuals understand.

• **Performance:** standards address the skills and competencies by individuals who are able to demonstrate proficiency.

A purposeful decision was made to include all relevant standards for each of the five groups, despite the redundancy it created.

The standards for any of the five groups, as a result, can stand alone, and yet remain comprehensive. In addition, understanding the standards for groups increases the overall understanding for individuals within a group.

The Glossary and Acknowledgements and References 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 Acknowledgements and References provide useful reference material about assessment practices.

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

Assessment Literacy Standards //

# ELEMENTARY STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

## DISPOSITIONS

Elementary students and their families who are assessment literate believe that students:

A. Learn best when they know the targets for their learning.

B. Learn from taking quality assessments.

C. Learn from effective feedback on their work provided by their teachers.

D. Are responsible for their own learning.

E. Need to use assessment results to learn more.

## KNOWLEDGE

Elementary students and their families who are assessment literate know:

A. 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. 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. 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 and their families who are assessment literate:

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.

Assessment Literacy Standards //

# SECONDARY STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

## DISPOSITIONS

### Secondary students and their families who are assessment literate believe that students:

A. Learn best when they know the targets for their learning.

B. Learn from taking quality assessments.

C. Learn from effective feedback on their work provided by 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 and their families who are assessment literate know:

A. 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. 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. 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. Feedback can be descriptive versus evaluative.

F. How to use assessment results to reflect on their learning and to set goals for future learning.

## PERFORMANCE

### Secondary students and their families who are assessment literate:

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 students and their families, 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.

## Assessment Literacy Standards //
# TEACHERS

### DISPOSITIONS

#### Teachers who are assessment literate believe:

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 varied methods of assessment and communication.

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 to improve student 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 learning how to use assessment results to improve their learning.

J. Students can use instructionally sensitive assessment results to improve their learning.

K. Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are intricately linked to each other.

L. Grading is an exercise in professional judgment, not just a numerical, mechanical exercise.

### KNOWLEDGE

#### Teachers who are assessment literate know:

A. A balanced assessment system respects that:
   1. *Different users have different assessment purposes*
   2. *Different assessment purposes may require different assessment methods*

B. Student assessment addresses a variety of purposes:
   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*

F. Non-technical, statistical concepts associated with assessment:
   1. *Measures of central tendency*
   2. *Measures of variability*
   3. *Reliability*
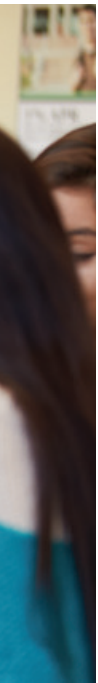
## KNOWLEDGE *continued*

    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 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*

H. There are different ways to report results:

    1. *Normative interpretations*

    2. *Criterion-referenced interpretations*

I. The multiple sources of assessment data that validly reflect a teacher's effectiveness.

J. How to translate standards into clear learning targets that are written in student-friendly language.

K. Assessment accommodations that are available and when to use them with students with disabilities and English Language Learners.

L. How to provide effective feedback from assessments suitable for different audiences: descriptive versus evaluative.

M. How to use and create scoring tools (guides, rubrics, checklists, scoring rules, standards).

N. Sound grading and reporting practices.

O. How to engage students in using their own assessment results for reflection and goal setting.

## PERFORMANCE
## I. Teachers who are assessment literate:

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.

## PERFORMANCE *continued*

E. Implement the 5-step process for assessment development:

    1. *Plan the assessment*

    2. *Develop assessment items*

    3. *Review and critique assessment items*

    4. *Field test items to see if they work*

    5. *Review and revise items*

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 about student learning with students, parents/guardians, other teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders.

R. Seek to increase their knowledge and skills in assessment.

## II. Teachers who are assessment literate 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. Clearly explaining how to analyze and use assessment results.

C. Using assessment results, including subgroup performance, to influence the classroom's curriculum and instructional program.

D. Using multiple sources of data over time to identify trends in learning.

E. Using assessment results to reflect on their own effectiveness.

Assessment Literacy Standards //

# BUILDING ADMINSTRATORS

## DISPOSITIONS

### Building Administrators who are assessment literate believe:

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 instructionally sensitive 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.

M. Grading is an exercise in professional judgment, not just a numerical, mechanical exercise.

N. Appropriate, high-quality assessment practices should be used in all classrooms.

## KNOWLEDGE

### Building Administrators who are assessment literate know:

A. A balanced assessment system respects that:
  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. 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. Differences between the types of assessment tools:
  1. *Achievement*
  2. *Aptitude*
  3. *Diagnostic*
  4. *Screening*

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*

F. Non-technical, 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. The multiple sources of assessment data that validly reflect a teacher's effectiveness.

## PERFORMANCE
## I. Building Administrators who are assessment literate:

A. Use assessment data within appropriate, ethical, and legal guidelines.

B. Understand and communicate levels of proficiency accurately.

C. Use assessment results to make appropriate instructional decisions for groups of students.

D. Collaboratively analyze data and use data to improve instruction.

E. Use multiple sources of data over time to identify trends in learning.

F. Use data management systems to access and analyze data.

G. Communicate effectively with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders about student learning.

H. Seek to increase their knowledge and skills in assessment.

## II. Building Administrators who are assessment literate 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*

C. Assuring that each and every staff member is:
1. *A confident, competent master of the targets*
2. *Sufficiently assessment literate to assess their assigned targets, productively in both formative and summative ways.*

D. Holding building-level staff accountable for implementing formative assessment practices.

## III. Building Administrators who are assessment literate 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.

L. Using assessment data within appropriate, ethical, and legal guidelines.

## Assessment Literacy Standards //
# DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

## DISPOSITIONS

### District Administrators who are assessment literate believe:

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 varied methods of assessment and communication.

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. Students should be active partners in their learning and assessment.

I. Students can use instructionally sensitive assessment results to improve their learning.

J. Users of assessments require time to learn to select, develop, and administer the assessments, as well as use the assessment results appropriately; resources are needed to carry out these activities.

K. Good classroom assessment and quality instruction are intricately linked to each other.

L. Grading is an exercise in professional judgment, not just a numerical, mechanical exercise.

M. Appropriate, high-quality assessment practices should be used in all buildings.

## KNOWLEDGE

### District Administrators who are assessment literate know:

A. A balanced assessment system respects that:
   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. 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 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*

F. Non-technical, 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*

**KNOWLEDGE** *continued*

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. The multiple sources of assessment data that validly reflect a teacher's effectiveness.

## PERFORMANCE

## I. District Administrators who are assessment literate:

A. Use assessment data within appropriate, ethical, and legal guidelines.

B. Understand and communicate levels of proficiency accurately.

C. Use assessment results to make appropriate instructional decisions for groups of students.

D. Collaboratively analyze data and use data to improve instruction.

E. Use multiple sources of data over time to identify trends in learning.

F. Use data management systems to access and analyze data.

G. Communicate effectively with students, parents, teachers, administrators, and community stakeholders about student learning.

H. Seek to increase their knowledge and skills in assessment.

## II. District Administrators who are assessment literate 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)*

**PERFORMANCE** *continued*

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. *Selecting, creating, and developing assessments*
   3. *Administering assessments*
   4. *Scoring/analyzing results*
   5. *Developing instructional plans based on results*
   6. *Developing school improvement plans based on results*

C. Instituting policies with supportive resources (time and budget) to implement a balanced system of assessment in the district.

D. Assuring that each and every staff member is:
   1. *A confident, competent master 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*

E. Holding building-level staff accountable for implementing high quality assessments.

## III. District Administrators who are assessment literate 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.

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 district'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 principals' instructional leadership.

I. Incorporating assessment knowledge in evaluation practices (i.e., program, administrator).

J. Clearly communicating results to various constituents through a coherent system that uses a variety of methods.

K. Using data management systems to access and analyze data.

Assessment Literacy Standards //

# POLICYMAKERS

## DISPOSITIONS
### Policymakers who are assessment literate believe:

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 and formative assessment practice to increase student success.

E. Important decisions about schools, educators, or students should be made on the basis of multiple sources of accurate data.

## KNOWLEDGE
### Policymakers who are assessment literate know:

A. A balanced assessment system respects that:
   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 assessment*

D. There are different ways to measure student achievement; each has advantages and challenges.

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 select, develop, and administer assessments, as well as use the results appropriately; resources are needed to carry out these activities.

K. Which student measures are appropriate for teacher and administrator evaluation.

## PERFORMANCE
### Policymakers who are assessment literate:

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 own assessment literacy and that of their staff.

*We at the MAC believe that when all users of assessment accomplish these standards, we will collectively improve curricula, instruction, and assessment, leading to improved student achievement.*

## REFERENCE DOCUMENTS USED FOR MAC ASSESSMENT LITERACY STANDARDS

Brookhart, Susan M. "Educational Assessment Knowledge and Skills for Teachers," Educational Measurement: Issues and Practices, Spring 2011, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 3-12.

Chappuis, Jan Learning Team Facilitator Handbook: A Resource for Collaborative Study of Classroom Assessment for Student Learning. Pearson, 2007. pp. 55-59.

Chappuis, Steve, Stiggins, Rick., Arter, Judith, and Chappuis, Jan. Assessment FOR Learning: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Pearson, Second Ed., 2009, p. 99.

Chappuis, Steve, Commodore, Carol, and Stiggins, Rick. Assessment Balance and Quality: An Action Guide for School Leaders. Pearson, Third Edition, 2010.

O'Connor, Ken. How to Grade for Learning K-12. Corwin, 2009.

Popham, James. Everything School Leaders Need to Know About Assessment, Corwin, 2010.

Roeber, Edward. "Assessment Literacy in Michigan Education" and "Preparing Michigan Educators in Assessment," East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Presentation, 2011.

Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008, Appendix 2: ISLLC 2008 at a Glance. National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), adopted December 12, 2007.

"Model Core Teaching Standards: A Resource for Dialogue," CCSSO's Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC), Council of Chief State School Officers, July 2010. https://ccsso.org

"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, 1990. https://buros.org/standards-teacher-competence-educational-assessment-students

## 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

**In 2016, the Michigan State Board of Education endorsed the MAC Assessment Literacy Standards for the State of Michigan.**

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

**Achievement Level**
The standard of performance set through a standard-setting 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."

**Achievement Test**
A test used to determine the current level of knowledge and skills of an individual.

**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.

**Aptitude Test**
A test used to determine 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 Administration Procedures**
The set of policies, guidelines, and/or procedures in place to help ensure that the administration of an assessment provides valid results consistent with the designed purpose of the assessment.

**Assessment Methods**
*Selected-response Item*—In this item type, students select a correct answer from among several answer choices. This item type includes multiple-choice, true-false, 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 pre-written 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*—Requires the student to perform some activity. There are two types—performance task and performance event, distinguished by their complexity and the length of time students have to respond to them.

*Performance Task*—In this type of 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 compromise 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 and 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.

**Assessment Purposes**
*Student Improvement*–Using test results to review past instruction or to alter future instruction provided to the student, due to performance on the test.

*Accountability*–Using test results to hold educators or others responsible for the performance of students, educators, or school programs.

*Program Evaluation*–Using results to determine the success of a program and perhaps to suggest improvements.

*Prediction*–Using test results to determine the likelihood of success of an individual in some future activity.

**Balance of Representation**
The match between the relative emphasis of concept areas in a set of content standards and the assessment that measures those standards. The key question is, "Does the balance of representation in the assessment match that of the content standards?"

**Balanced Assessment System**
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**
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).

**Causation**
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.

**Constructed- or Written-response Items**
Test items that require students to write out their responses. Often, responses take the form of short- or extended-response essays, although other items might ask students to draw a picture, construct a table, show a flow chart, and so forth. A traditional "fill-in-the-blank" type question is also a written response item. Constructed- or written-response items typically require a checklist or rubric for scoring.

**Correlation**
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 of performance.

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

**Depth of Knowledge (DoK)**
A taxonomy of four levels, developed by Norm Webb, that can be used to classify the cognitive complexity of test items, content standards, and learning objectives.

**Diagnostic Test**
A test used to determine the areas of strength and weakness of an individual.

**Dispositions**
Attitudes or beliefs about something.

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

**Essential Learnings**
A set of prioritized outcomes, derived from state standards, that helps focus on the most needed aspects of the curriculum for instructional planning purposes.

**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 Assessment**
Information collected and used by teachers and students during instruction to improve teaching and 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 level or in the same course.

**Instructional Decisions**
The choices made by educators as they teach.

**Instructional Objective**
A statement that specifies what a learner will know and be able to do as a result of instruction. Most often found in curriculum framework documents.

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

**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.

**Interviews**
In this type of assessment, a teacher typically works with an individual student, asks a series of planned and/or unplanned questions, and records students' responses to the questions.

**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**
Assessments where students are asked to perform in some way, such as completing an experiment in science, conducting an investigation in science, singing, acting out a character in a theatrical production, or completing a painting in an arts class. The products of performance assessment can be many types. Performance assessments typically require a checklist or a rubric for scoring.

**Performance Event**
This is an on-demand performance assessment on which students are given little or no time to rehearse their performance and limited opportunities to improve their initial performance. Such assessments may take a class period or less to administer. One of two types of assessment that require the student to perform some activity. These two types are distinguished by their complexity and the length of time students have to respond to them.

**Performance Task**
On this type of assessment, students have days, weeks, or months to compose a response. Thus, a Performance Task may involve multiple responses of different types to multiple prompts. The resultant work may be lengthy and comprise multiple parts. Embedded in the Task may be written-response items, presentations, papers, student self-reflections, and so forth. One of two types of assessment that require the student to perform some activity. These two types are distinguished by their complexity and the length of time students have to respond to them.

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

**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.

**Placement Test**
A test used to determine the best program or treatment for an individual.

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

**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.

# GLOSSARY

**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.

**Progress Monitoring Test**
A test used to gauge the improvement in performance of an individual or a program.

**Protocols**
Protocols are agreed-upon 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.

**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.

**Rigor**
The level of knowledge necessary to achieve a content standard or to correctly respond to an assessment item. Typically measured in the Depth of Knowledge category, one of four dimensions of the Webb Alignment Tool, developed by Norm Webb, Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

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

**Scoring 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 Guide**
A scoring guide is composed of a rationale for the correct or preferred responses to the assessment. A guide includes one or more scoring rubrics; examples of student responses for each score level of each rubric; and sets of pre-scored student papers used to train, certify, and monitor the scorers.

**Scoring 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/criterion are sometimes attached to a rubric.

**Screening Test**
A test used to determine eligibility of an individual for a program or activity.

**Selected-response Items**
A test item that requires students to pick a response from among two or more answer choices provided for each item. Multiple-choice, true-false, and matching items are all examples of selected-response items. Multiple-choice items are the most frequently used type of selected-response items.

**Selection Test**
A test used to determine which individuals will most likely be successful in a program.

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

**Standard**
The larger expectations we express in association with knowledge, skills, and dispositions, comprising entire disciplines (mathematics, science, etc.).

**Student-friendly Language**
Writing of some educational language in a jargon-free manner understandable by students.

**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.

**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.

**Success Criteria**
Statements that tells students what they should know, understand, and be able to do at the end of a lesson. These criteria identify elements of quality that will be present in student work. These criteria become the measures teachers use to determine proficiency.

**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**
Determining 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.

**The mission** of the Michigan Assessment Consortium is to improve student learning and achievement through a system of coherent 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.

MAC

**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.

1980 North College Road, Mason, MI 48854 · 517-816-4520



Michigan
Assessment
Consortium
Improve learning.
Increase success.

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

**MichiganAssessmentConsortium.org**