
Comprehensive & Balanced Student Assessment System

About

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) prioritizes the use of a comprehensive and balanced student assessment system in support of the whole child to achieve Michigan's strategic plan to become a top 10 education state in 10 years. Diverse assessments are used across Michigan under a variety of names. The following assessment definitions were developed to establish a shared vocabulary for discussing learner assessments. This document will inform the development of further guidance and support for planning and implementing assessment systems.

Definitions

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

Formative Assessment is a planned, ongoing **process** used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners.

Progress Monitoring is used to quantify a learner's rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, intervention or supports and guide future learning. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual learners and small groups. The frequency of measures should match the level of intervention intensity. Progress monitoring can be used to provide additional information about the effectiveness of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Universal Screeners are designed to measure specific skills, behaviors or characteristics that are predictive of later outcomes to identify learners who may need additional diagnostic assessments and/or interventions. Screeners are efficient, reliable, easy to administer, repeatable, and provide comparative data for *all* learners within a defined group or setting.



Diagnostic Assessments measure specific skills (needs and/or assets) for the purpose of providing in-depth information to guide supports for *individual* learners as needed.

Interim/Benchmark Assessments measure growth toward competencies and the impact of Tier 1 instruction for all learners. They are administered periodically throughout the school year for one or more of the following purposes: predictive (identify learner readiness for success on a later summative assessment); evaluative (to appraise ongoing educational programs) and/or instructional (to supply teachers with individual learner performance data).

Summative Assessments provide information regarding the level of learner, program or school success at an endpoint in time. Administered at the conclusion of learning to 1) determine the effectiveness of a recently concluded program, 2) infer about a learner's mastery of curricular aims, and/or 3) meet local, state and federal accountability requirements.

Special Education Evaluations have a unique set of requirements that may be found within the [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\) With Related IDEA Federal Regulations](#) document.

Additional Resources

- The [Michigan Department of Education formative assessment website](#) provides more information about formative assessment.
- The Michigan Assessment Consortium developed the [Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative](#) document that defines assessment literacy standards.
- The [Assessment Learning Network \(ALN\)](#) is a professional learning community consisting of members from Michigan's professional education organizations. The goal of the ALN is to increase the assessment literacy of all of Michigan's professional educators.