

## Assessment Literacy

### What we believe

The MAC believes that effective assessment practices are as critical to learning as an aligned curriculum and skillful instruction. Therefore, our aspirations to educate all students to high levels require a strong commitment for all educators to achieve at least a basic level of assessment literacy. Assessment literacy standards describe what assessment literate teachers, administrators, policymakers, and students and their families believe, know, and can do in order to use assessment information to improve student learning and achievement.

Participants in education who are assessment literate are able to:

- Use the right assessment measures and methods matched to clear reasons for engaging in assessment,
- Make appropriate decisions from the accurate assessment information elicited, and
- Help to better educate students by helping them become self-regulating, lifelong learners.

### Background and support

Student assessment has become increasingly important to educators, students and their families, policymakers, and the public. Yet, despite the proliferation of large-scale and classroom assessment programs, most of the individuals affected by student assessment may not understand the assessment tools and strategies that can be used, the varied purposes for assessment, the types of assessment that can best match each purpose, and the strengths and shortcomings of various types of measures. These same stakeholder groups are under-prepared to use the results from these assessments to benefit students—to improve their learning and their achievement.

To increase assessment literacy, the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) spearheaded the development of Assessment Literacy Standards by Michigan educators and national experts. The standards, endorsed by the Michigan State Board of Education in 2016, provide a common framework to assist K-12 educators, students, families, and policymakers in becoming more knowledgeable about assessment purposes and uses. The standards are intended for long-term use in the field of education, to continually support assessment literate practice and systems.

### Recommendations

The MAC recommends and supports the use of Assessment Literacy Standards to inform policy and program development and decisions regarding:

- assessment practices,
- teacher preparation,
- administrative certification,
- educator evaluation, and
- school accreditation.

### What this means for...

#### Policy makers:

1. Actively work to become more assessment literate.
2. Become proficient in understanding and using accurate terminology when referencing various types of assessment and assessment concepts.

3. Understand the purposes for assessment, and which assessments can accomplish these purposes.
4. Use student results with caution, taking into consideration the benefits and challenges inherent in different types of assessment.
5. Invest in professional learning that supports administrators and teachers in their use of the formative assessment process.
6. Support all policy decisions with knowledge about research and best practice.

## **School leaders:**

1. Actively work to become assessment literate.
2. Know that effective use of student assessment is a key driver of improved student and school performance.
3. Understand various types of assessment and when and how they are best used.
4. Understand key assessment concepts and use assessment terminology accurately.
5. Know, in collaboration with teachers, how to use assessment results to improve individual teacher instruction, as well as the overall school instructional programs.
6. Support professional learning for teachers aimed at developing their use of the formative assessment process.
7. Know how to lead teachers and others to become more assessment literate.
8. Understand how the MAC Assessment Literacy Standards support and connect to the Michigan continuous improvement process(es).

## **Teachers**

1. Believe that student assessment, when done well, can improve student learning and thus, their achievement.
2. Actively work to become more assessment literate.
3. Become skillful in the use of the formative assessment process.
4. Understand various types of assessment and when and how they are best used.
5. Know how to use assessment results to improve instruction and, ultimately, student learning.
6. Understand key assessment concepts in non-technical terms.
7. Work to help students and their families become more assessment literate.

## **Students, Families, and Community**

1. Work to become more assessment literate.
2. Seek to understand the purposes and intended uses of the assessments used in the school and classrooms.
3. Learn how to understand individual student assessment results and the implications of the assessment results.
4. Believe that student assessment, when done well, can improve student learning and achievement.

- Brookhart, Susan M. "Educational Assessment Knowledge and Skills for Teachers," *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practices*, Spring 2011, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 3-12.
- Heritage, Margaret. "Formative Assessment: What Do Teachers Need to Know and Do?" *Phi Delta Kappan* October 2007, Vol. 89, No 2.
- Popham, James. *Everything School Leaders Need to Know About Assessment*, Corwin, 2010.
- Roeber, Edward. "Preparing Michigan Educators in Assessment," East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University, Presentation, 2011.
- Stiggins, Rick. "Assessment manifesto: A call for the development of balanced assessment systems," ETS Assessment Training Institute, 2008.