



# LEARNING POINT

## What do we mean by Assessment Literacy?

Student assessment has become increasingly important in education. Yet, despite the link between instruction and assessment—and the proliferation of large-scale and classroom assessment programs—most of those effected by student assessment may not understand all they need to know about assessment. All stakeholders—students, parents/

assessments to benefit students—to improve their learning and their achievement.

Because of these issues, the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) created “Assessment Literacy Standards” for various individuals who are affected by student assessments. Our hope is

as those who work with them, to understand what each group needs to value, to know, and to do. The ultimate goal of the MAC is for assessment literacy standards to be used to inform policy and program development and decisions regarding assessment practices, teacher preparation, administrative certification, educator evaluation, and school accreditation.

**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.”**

guardians, teachers, school administrators, and local and state policymakers—would benefit from learning more about:

- assessment tools and strategies used, and their purposes;
- the types of assessment that can best match objectives; and
- the strengths and shortcomings of the various types of measures.

They also need to be better prepared to use the results from all types of

that the 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 is intended to lead educators and policymakers, as well

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 various assessment methods can and cannot accomplish is important to ensure that assessment 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. Additionally, balance is a critical component of the standards and is critical to the effective use of assessment results.

Balance needs to exist between:

- a. multiple measures, which may include formative assessment strategies, as well as interim and summative assessments
- b. multiple uses of assessments such as diagnostic, placement, and progress
- c. various users such as students, parents, educators and policymakers.

The MAC contends that curricula, instruction, and assessment will improve when all users of assessment achieve assessment literacy – all leading to improved student achievement.

## 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 assessment and reduce/eliminate negative 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 goal of this effort is to create a more assessment-literate population able to better use student assessment to improve student learning and achievement.

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

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

Some standards are common to all five groups. Others are specific to the roles and responsibilities of each group.

## 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.

## To learn more

- **Assessment Literacy Standards: A National Imperative** (Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2015)  
[www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org](http://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org)
- **Assessment Literacy for Michigan Education** (Roeber, 2011)  
[www.tinyurl.com/assessment-literacy-Roeber-11](http://www.tinyurl.com/assessment-literacy-Roeber-11)
- **Building Assessment Literacy for All** (2013, Judy Backes, Ed Roeber, Kathy Dewsbury-White, [www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/topics/what-assessment-literacy](http://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/topics/what-assessment-literacy))
- **Assessment Literacy Standards and Improvement Frameworks 2.0: A Perfect Pairing** (2014, Lisa Lockman, Deb Asano)  
[www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/topics/what-assessment-literacy](http://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org/topics/what-assessment-literacy)

*The Michigan Assessment Consortium's Assessment Learning Network ALN, is a professional learning community consisting of members from MI's professional education organizations; the goal of the ALN is to increase the assessment literacy of all of Michigan's professional educators.*