



Building a Better Assessment Future

Time to Lead: Innovation to Implementation

AUGUST 6–7 2026 • EAST LANSING, MI

Session Summary

A3- Exploring the Components of an Equitable Assessment System (CEAS) Survey

Presenters

John Lane/Kathy Dewsbury-White/Joe Orban

August 6, 2026, 10:30-11:45pm ET

Description

This interactive session will provide an overview of the components of an equitable assessment system and how the components are captured in the CEAS surveys. Participants will then hear from one practitioner in the field who administered the surveys and what he learned from the results. Finally, participants will explore the surveys and generate ideas about how they might use them in their local contexts.

Framing Questions

1. What are the Components of an Equitable Assessment System; how and why were they developed?
2. How were these Components distilled into the CEAS surveys?
3. What have practitioners learned from administering the surveys?
4. How have they used survey results to create more equitable assessment practices in their contexts?

Presentation Key Points

The Context

In 2020 the world experienced the Covid-19 Pandemic. Disparities derived from income, education, forms of government, race/ethnicity, and available technologies were highlighted. Our already marginalized students, their families, and communities suffered the most. Societal tensions ran high. George Floyd's killing (and others) were shameful atrocities. In June 2020, our Board published a statement, *"Equity and Justice for Michigan Students."* We said that we believed equity and inclusion were at the heart of our mission and that all children deserve a quality education that prepares them for success. We indicated we were committed to breaking down barriers of systemic racial inequality through high-quality professional learning, resources, and support to MI educators. The most basic connection of this statement to our mission said that we would advocate for assessment literacy for all school stakeholders, so that assessment advances student learning and isn't misused to harm students and student learning.



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Evolution of our organization's exploration of equity

To act on this statement the MAC Board of Directors adopted two goals in their strategic plan

1. Seek and maintain diversity in the organization (both the Board and the individuals we hire, and
2. Define what we think equity means in assessment systems and filter our programs, services and publications through that lens.

The Board needed to engage in an exploration of what equity in assessment practices and systems looked like. We examined various literatures, engaged in whole group learning about identity and decided to use a framework developed by Transcend Education that identified the ways in which instruction would need to change to meet the needs of modern/21st Century students. We studied Transcend's framework and attempted to identify assessment practices contributing to assessment systems that serve as logical "if-then" corollaries. If we instruct in this way, then we will need to engage students in assessment in this way.

Three foundational convictions and ten components were identified. We published a Policy Statement: *Components of an Equitable Assessment System* in August 2022. The summary statement says...

We at the Michigan assessment Consortium believe that integral to meaningful assessment is equitable assessment that promotes all of the following:

- *High expectations for all students*
- *Sufficient & equitable opportunities to learn*
- *High-quality instruction*
- *High-quality, ambitious assessment*
- *Assessment for the Whole Child*
- *Authentic Assessment*
- *Reflective self & peer assessment*
- *Socially conscious assessment*
- *Collaborative learning and assessment*
- *Differentiated assessment*
- *Student driven assessments*
- *Student-centered assessment*

To that end, we commit to collaboratively engage with Michigan education stakeholders in the work of advancing assessment literacy and advocating for excellence and equity in assessment practices and systems



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One thing leads to another

Expert review of the framework that comprises *Components of an Equitable Assessment System* suggested that the first three components were foundational convictions that need to be in place for the assessment components to be actualized. Additionally, initial review of the framework suggested we needed explanatory material to define, describe, illustrate and support through literature reviews, the components.

We published the *Components of an Equitable Assessment Brief* in June 2024. The seventy+ page “brief” starts with the convictions that provide the strong foundation necessary to instruct and assess in an equitable manner. The ten components aligned to Transcend Education’s 21st Century Instructional Leaps include descriptions derived from current practice and research literatures and illustrated with vignettes and samples of practice in school settings where possible.

Concurrent with development of the *CEAS Brief*, the MAC’s Assessment Resource Development Committee undertook a thorough review of our *Assessment Literacy Standards* (2020) to be cross walked with what we were learning and saying about equitable assessment systems and practices. An updated version of the ALS was released in 2024. Additionally, our political environment was seeming to suggest diversity; equity and inclusion were four-letter words. We thought it prudent to explicit about what we meant by equity in assessment, Board Member Steven Snead authored a MAC Thinkpoint: *What do we mean by equity in assessment?*

Student perspective is a missing piece of the puzzle

We met with researchers at Transcend Education to learn about the development of their framework. We were especially interested to know how they obtained their best practice examples. When they explained they had developed survey instruments to elicit student perspectives about their learning environment, we were interested to know how many of the site examples touched on the assessment environments students were experiencing. An analysis revealed not too many; there was some overlap with what we called foundational convictions.

With Transcend’s blessing, we embarked on the development of a student survey aligned to our CEAS framework. The purpose of the CEAS Surveys is to gather student and teacher perception data about strengths and needs relative to equitable assessment practices. We would like districts to use the results (along with other evidence related to student and teacher practices) to identify, implement and monitor strategies to improve the assessment experience of students. The goal would be that all CEAS components are present and working in support of a 21st century learning environment.



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Session
Summary

Survey development is its own journey

We engaged the psychometrician who developed the Transcend Student Surveys to review our initial work. Ultimately, four scales/surveys were developed for both students and teachers, accompanied by a Theory of Action. A second independent psychometrician was engaged to run analysis when we piloted the instruments in 2025/26 across four MI school districts representing urban, rural, and suburban communities. The Technical Report indicates the CEAS Survey Instruments functioned well, and we can be confident the results are valid and reliable.

We anticipate additional piloting of the instruments and will embark on Validation Studies in 2026-27 that focus on the consequences and uses of the survey results. We envision future use of the survey as being integrated with and supported by professional learning and service aimed at implementing innovation to district assessment systems.

Early returns as told by one pilot district

Session A-3 at the 2026 BBAF Conference includes the story from one of the 2025-26 pilot districts, a large urban district in southeast MI. The story is about how educators in the district administered, analyzed, shared and responded to the CEAS survey results. This district has been engaged in work on their district assessment system since 2018, when they first participated in a *District Assessment System Design Toolkit process* offered by the MAC. Those results led to a desire to increase the use of the formative assessment process by all staff and upgrade the quality of district-developed common assessments.

The CEAS student and teacher perspective surveys were additional data collected to provide insights into how their district improvement efforts are working for primary users of the assessment information—students and their teachers. Their results suggest to them that they have the start of a solid system in place; student responses highlight gaps and opportunities for growth; both students and teachers desire more personalization, relevance and support. This district plans continued professional engagement with the MAC. They have shared a summary of results at their Annual District Improvement Summit, used the data to integrate a goal in their MICIP specifically; they integrated CEAS into their Tier I Standard of Care Goal Statement.

It takes a village

As an organization, we are proud of the contribution to the field we think these CEAS Surveys will provide. We are grateful to the MAC Board of Directors present and former 2018-2026 and the following individuals for their expertise, labor and leadership through survey development and piloting. John Lane, Ed Roeber, Ellen Vorenkamp, Linda Wacyk, Kathy Humphrey, Kathy Dewsbury-White, Steven Snead, Joe Orban, Ninette Soares, Susan Lyons, and Jodi Casabianca.