

Organizing and Design Principles

PHASE I — Planning for and Designing an Early Literacy Assessment System (ELAS)

Principle #1: The ELAS must be designed to ALIGN AND INTEGRATE WITH ALL SCHOOL- AND DISTRICT-LEVEL SYSTEMS; this includes the systems of curriculum, instruction, professional learning, as well as the overall assessment system.

Principle #2: The ELAS must reflect ASSESSMENT SYSTEM DESIGN FEATURES that make it coherent, comprehensive, and continuous across time and contexts of use.

PHASE II — Implementing an Early Literacy Assessment System (ELAS)

Principle #3: The ELAS must reflect what we know from theory, research, and practice about LITERACY DEVELOPMENT.

Principle #4: The ELAS must reflect what we know about the PURPOSES, USERS, AND TECHNICAL ADEQUACY OF EARLY LITERACY ASSESSMENT.

PHASE III — Supporting and Monitoring an Early Literacy Assessment System (ELAS)

Principle #5: The ELAS must be supported and monitored by a sustained program of collaborative, inquiry-based PROFESSIONAL LEARNING and FEEDBACK.

This chart represents at a glance five key **Organizing and Design Principles** that should guide districts in creating an Early Literacy Assessment System (ELAS). Each Principle gives rise to a set of related **Recommendations** through Three Phases: planning & design, implementation, and support & monitoring of a district's ELAS. The Principles and Recommendations are described in greater detail—and supported with suggested resources—in a full-length Guide available at www.MichiganAssessmentConsortium.org/ELAS.

Recommendations

PHASE I — Planning & Design

1.1: **DISTRICT LEADERS** should form an **ELAS Leadership Team** charged with guiding the Planning and Design, Implementation, and Supporting and Monitoring Phases of the ELAS.

The **ELAS LEADERSHIP TEAM** should:

1.2: Establish compatibility and coordination of the ELAS with other district- and state-level systems of curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning, and accountability.

1.3: Plan thoughtful strategies for engaging with families and the community as key participants in the ELAS process, both as contributors to and recipients of assessment data.

1.4: Develop and adopt a logic model and theory of action for the structure, functioning, and evaluation of the proposed ELAS.

1.5: Identify the educational decisions to be made, assessment information needed to support those decisions, and the stakeholder(s) who will be making the decision(s).

1.6: Construct a framework for the ELAS that includes clearly articulated relationships among the assessment tools and practices relative to a model of competency development in reading, writing, speaking, or listening.

1.7: Use the framework to conduct an audit of all existing district- and school-level assessment tools and practices currently in use to determine whether they meet criteria for inclusion and should remain part of the system.

PHASE II — Implementation

2.1: The **ELAS LEADERSHIP TEAM** should use the logic model and theory of action (called for in Phase I) to guide the selection and implementation of assessment tools and resources for inclusion in the system.

To accomplish Recommendation 2.1, the **ELAS LEADERSHIP TEAM, in collaboration with PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS**, should:

2.2: Select individual assessment resources on the basis of evidence of their capacity to provide construct-relevant and instructionally valuable information about a student's literacy development and growth in a given literacy domain – reading, writing, speaking, or listening.

2.3: Select individual assessment resources on the basis of evidence that they are developmentally appropriate and respectful with regard to the cognitive, social, emotional, cultural, and performance demands they place on children.

2.4: Select individual assessment resources on the basis of evidence of appropriate levels of technical quality with respect to validity, reliability, and fairness given the intended interpretive use(s) and the potential consequences for students:

High-stakes judgments call for **high levels** of technical quality.

Lower stakes decisions require **sufficient levels** of technical quality

2.5: Provide assistance and guidance to the system's various assessment users to help assure that they can select assessments that best meet their information needs and then use the results from those assessments in appropriate and technically defensible ways.

PHASE III — Support and Monitoring

3.1: The **ELAS LEADERSHIP TEAM** should use the logic model and theory of action to develop plans for professional learning and formative evaluation of the ELAS.

To accomplish Recommendation 3.1, the **ELAS LEADERSHIP TEAM, in collaboration with PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS**, should:

3.2: Gather information about the current level of knowledge and capacity related to literacy, assessment, and professional learning (strengths and gaps) among staff (teachers, administrators, coaches), students and their families, and local policymakers, and use these data to guide the implementation and support of an ELAS.

3.3: Create a cohesive master professional learning plan (Michigan's Professional Learning Policy and associated Standards for Professional Learning) to support all stakeholders responsible for early literacy development and assessment. The plan should address early literacy development and assessment and meet the learning needs of children and instructional needs of teachers based on evidence of need as well as research.

3.4: Budget for and plan to provide substantive resources and support for content-focused professional learning about early literacy development and assessment that is collaborative, intensive, sustained, and job-embedded.

3.5: Participate in statewide efforts to prepare, support, and generate teacher leaders and instructional coaches to promote effective early literacy development and assessment practices, with an emphasis on the use of classroom formative assessment practices.

3.6: Develop a plan for formative evaluation of the ELAS that includes ongoing monitoring and feedback from the field about the quality, utility, and effectiveness of the assessment system as it is implemented and becomes operational.