

Teacher Leader Assessment Specialists

What we believe

The Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) believes that students in Michigan’s K-12 public education system are over-tested but underassessed, creating conditions that perpetuate achievement gaps and create inequitable opportunities for all children to succeed. This condition exists for various reasons:

- Assessment is misunderstood as an *accountability* tool and not as a *teaching* tool.
- Pre-service teacher and administrator preparation and in-service programs have ignored or limited education about assessment, despite research that substantiates the essential role and purpose of assessment *for* learning to advance student growth and development.
- Within the 150 hours of professional learning required of all Michigan teachers, NO guidance is provided regarding content and NO mandate requires a focus on the important role of classroom assessment that promotes learning.

Taken together, these factors add to educators’ frustration about their efficacy and exacerbate early exits from the profession.

Therefore, MAC contends there is a critical need for programs of study, based on Michigan’s Assessment Literacy Standards, that would prepare and place certified teacher leaders in every school and district who are equipped to coach educators in the importance of balanced assessment systems and in the use of proven, research-supported classroom assessment practices that support student learning at high levels. We believe the time is right for this effort because:

1. Accountability requirements reinforce a flawed view of assessment’s role in the learning process
2. Current teachers need support, especially as they address post-pandemic learning delays
3. Fast-tracked new educators will need job-embedded learning that boosts their confidence and efficacy in their role

Background and support

The No Child Left Behind and ESSA accountability requirements place an extensive focus on the use of state and national accountability testing. Public Act 149 of 2020 adds the obligation to administer an interim benchmark assessment two to three times per year and report data to the state. Additional classroom assessments inform grading and other important decisions about students. Teachers oversee the administration of most of these tests, so it is essential they understand their purpose and how test data should and should not be used. Yet a 2012 study by the National Council on Teacher Quality found that only three percent of 180 teacher preparation programs studied provided assessment preparation coursework and experiences that could be deemed adequate.

Michigan is well-positioned to offer a competency-based program to promote assessment literacy. Our Assessment Literacy Standards (ALS), endorsed in 2015 by the Michigan State Board of Education, clearly articulate what teachers need to believe, know, and do to use assessment to both verify and advance learning. The ALS align with seven Classroom Assessment Specialist Competencies—with accompanying indicators to articulate what job-embedded application and performance look like—which form the foundation of a new **Teacher Leader in Assessment Specialists (TLAS)** program that prepares credentialed teacher leaders who can be deployed in schools and districts throughout Michigan.

The state-approved TLAS competency-based credentialing program is developed and supported by MAC’s deep bench of assessment experts and vast library of resources. It is directly aligned to Michigan’s Teacher

MAC Policy Brief

Leader Standards as well as Michigan’s Core Teaching Practices, and it was developed with attention to the National Standards for Professional Learning, which reflect MAC’s commitment to meaningful and effective professional learning for educators.

Recommendations

The MAC recommends that Michigan commit to equipping its teachers and school administrators with the assessment dispositions, knowledge, and skills needed to educate all students to high levels while enhancing educators’ sense of effectiveness and job satisfaction by:

1. Ensuring every school building in Michigan has on staff at least one certified **Teacher Leader Assessment Specialist (TLAS)**.
2. Engaging every educator in **approved professional learning** in assessment systems & practices that support learners.
3. Requiring and assisting every approved educator preparation program to offer **adequate pre-service and graduate coursework** based on Michigan’s Assessment Literacy Standards.

What this means for:

Policy makers:

1. Appropriate funding for a professional certification for assessment specialists.
2. Support continuity of quality assessment practices across the state by having trained teacher-leader assessment specialists in each building through appropriations.
3. Support Department of Education with incentivizing professional development within colleges of education for teacher-leader assessment specialists.

Michigan Department of Education

1. Incentivize colleges of education to include coursework in teacher-preparation programs for the teacher-leader assessment specialist certification.
2. Approve and support Michigan Assessment Consortium’s teacher-leader assessment specialist certification followed by MDE’s professional license.
3. Ensure that professional development on high quality assessment practices is required of all traditional and alternative teacher certifications.

Colleges of Education

1. Enter into agreement with Michigan Assessment Consortium on offering the teacher-leader assessment specialist professional certification.
2. Work with the MAC on offering professional development on quality assessment and practices that can benefit future and current teachers and administrators.

School leaders:

1. Commitment to identifying teachers who are good candidates for continued education to become a teacher-leader assessment specialist.
2. Work with the MAC on offering professional development that can benefit the school, teachers, and students.

Teachers

1. Open to coaching from the specialist for the betterment of the students and their learning.
2. Seek professional development in quality assessment and practices with the possibility of becoming an assessment specialist.

Students, Families, and Community

1. Work to become more assessment literate.
2. Be able to ask the school if they have assessment specialists and what is your plan for educating teachers on assessment.

Support for Our Beliefs:

1. Black, Paul & Harrison, Christine & Lee, Clare & Marshall, Bethan & Wiliam, Dylan. (2004). [Working Inside the Black Box: Assessment for Learning in the Classroom.](#)
2. Black, Paul and Wiliam, Dylan (1998) [“Assessment and Classroom Learning,”](#) Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 5:1, 7 — 74
3. Wiliam, Dylan. (2007). [Keeping learning on track: Formative assessment and the regulation of learning.](#)
4. Learning Forward (2011,2020). National Standards for Professional Learning.
5. National Council on Teacher Quality (May 2012). [“What Teacher Preparation Programs Teach About K-12 Assessment: A Review.”](#)
6. Michigan Assessment Consortium (2015). [Assessment Literacy Standards.](#)