

To: Interested Parties

From: Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association, Middle Cities Education Association, West Michigan Talent Triangle

RE: Assessment Vision/Position updated November 21, 2016

An effective and comprehensive assessment system should drive instruction, provide meaningful student growth measures and inform accountability systems. This vision incorporates input from various stakeholders from across the state, the RFI process and Superintendent Brian Whiston’s vision on assessments. Based on that information, we recommend the following qualities in an assessment system for Michigan’s future:

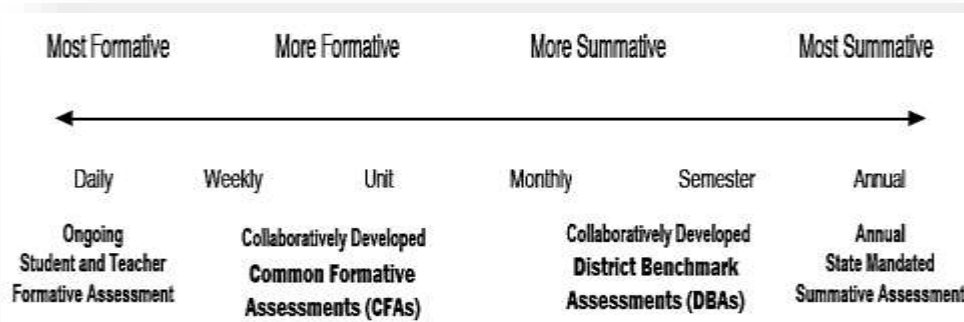
- Assessment items must be developed from the standards and meet the rigor of the standards. Maintaining the current item bank that all vendors have access to assure continuity in accountability.
- The assessment system should be fully funded to provide three types assessments (Common Formative, Comprehensive Benchmark and Summative assessments) from the same assessment item bank and delivered by one vendor. All three types of assessments will be recommended throughout the year, however only the spring assessments will be required.
- Comprehensive Benchmark/Interim Assessments will be recommended in grades 3-7 (ELA and Math) in the fall and winter; the spring Comprehensive Benchmark will be required for accountability. In addition to the Comprehensive Benchmark, certain grade levels (likely 4th, 7th and 11th) will participate in an innovative group project and submit a written reflection to the state. The group project and any other written components at other grade levels will be graded locally.
- PSAT will be administered in the spring for 8th through 10th grade and SAT in 11th grade.
- The system must provide timely feedback, quality reports and local access to data.

Historic Problem: Disconnected Assessments.

Michigan does not currently have a comprehensive and cohesive assessment system that links common formative assessments (given every 5 – 9 weeks) to benchmark assessments (given 2 – 3 times per year) to summative assessments (given every 1 – 3 years). This has led to districts piece-mealing an assessment system to meet instructional needs and inevitably results in a disconnect between the growth seen on benchmark assessments (MAP, iReady, STAR, or Discovery Ed) and the state summative assessment (PSAT, SAT, M-STEP).

Nationally recognized experts on four types of assessments

Based on the assessment design, each assessment has a primary purpose to either drive instruction, predict future achievement, evaluate growth over time or evaluate proficiency over a vast number of standards. On the spectrum below¹, the far left is solely for driving instruction and the far right is for evaluation. Research indicates assessment adapted to purposes for which it was not designed — “especially disparate purposes— rarely fulfills any purpose well.”²



Key Components of an Assessment Vision to Articulate in the RFP

The following table provides information and answers to key questions about the proposed assessment system. Please note a column for formative assessments is not included based on local control of teacher generated checks for student understanding. The following three types of assessments are available or willing to be built from numerous vendors, though assessment names vary for the Common Formative Assessments (i.e. Interim Block, iReady Standards Mastery or similar to NWEA Skills Navigator).

Solution Tree Language	Common Formative Assessments (CFAs) (a.k.a. Interim Block)	Comprehensive Benchmark Assessments (a.k.a. Interim Comprehensive)	Spring Summative Assessments (a.k.a. Spring Comprehensive Interim)
Primary Purpose	Instructional only. Fully funded, yet optional for schools to give with local control over the sequence of assessments.	Student Growth option for locals to use Fall to Spring for Educator Evaluation, recommended.	Accountability to evaluate schools and programs. Spring Comprehensive Benchmark grades 3-7, PSAT 8-10, SAT 11.
Required? Who provides assessments?	Optional, recommended. Schools may choose to use state vendor or district generated.	Optional, recommended. MDE provides a state vendor or districts choose to pay for another vendor.	Required 3-11, State vendor. Additional group project (not submitted) and writing reflection (submitted) once per grade span (4 th , 7 th , 11 th)
Frequency	Research suggests every 5-9 weeks.	Fall and Winter are optional. Spring test is required and becomes part of the summative test.	Annually ELA and Math. Group project, submitted writing, Science and Social Studies once per grade span.
Reports	Immediate results that group students & provide item level analysis.	Immediate, or within 48 hours for reporting both growth and proficiency.	Immediate results for online components. Ideally 1 – 2 months for school accountability.
Additional information	Not adaptive, specific to instruction interval. Item level analysis available.	Adaptive, covers multiple grade levels. Both proficiency (criterion) and growth (normed) reports.	Adaptive, covers multiple grade levels if allowed by ESSA. Both proficiency (criterion) and growth (normed) reports.

Based on a recent Request for Information Process administered by the Michigan Department of Education, several assessment vendors indicated they can create an assessment “suite” or “system” that would fulfill the vision outlined above. We would advocate for the RFP from the Department to include these specific components of a comprehensive and cohesive vision; not intended to be all inclusive of other aspects that should be considered as well, such as parent communication and student accommodations. For any points of clarification, questions or suggestions, please contact Chris Glass at ChrisGlass@kentisd.org or Doug Greer at DGreer@oaisd.org.

¹Solution Tree, Dr. R. DuFour and Dr. T. Many (2013) ²Perie, Gong & Marian (2009)