TUCSON UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System Manual

Increasingly, educators are asked to use academic and non-academic student data to inform their instructional decisions. Gone are the days of a simple assessment cycle based on discrete tasks that serve to inform grading and a state summative assessment at the end of year. Today, educators routinely collect, analyze, interpret, and use data from multiple sources including standardized assessments, standards-aligned benchmark measures, and non-academic data such as attendance or disciplinary action information. The results are used to make instructional decisions for students' learning goals, document progress on goals, create learning groups, differentiate instruction, and provide evidence-based feedback to students and parents.

The proliferation of assessments for accountability such as state testing, benchmark assessments, intervention assessment platforms, curricular unit tests, and other resources that have been developed in isolation of classroom instruction may appear overwhelming or disconnected to the teacher without a comprehensive and balanced assessment system to link the various assessments together. The purpose of this manual is to help school staff view the different assessments as an integrated series to understand the learning profile of students.

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What is a Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System (CBAS)

A comprehensive and balanced assessment system in education understands that state summative assessments poorly served the primary purpose of assessment to improve learning and instruction. Large-scale summative tests are too far removed from instruction, at the wrong grain size, and administered at the wrong time of year to make a difference in a teacher's daily practice (Penuel & Shepard, 2016). A comprehensive and balanced assessment system strives to rebalance the system with smaller, more frequent assessments for improving learning and instruction in real time as well as for monitoring, accountability, and evaluation.

An assessment system is comprehensive and balanced when the assessments in the system are coherently linked through clearly specified learning targets; they comprehensively provide multiple sources of evidence to support educational decision-making; and they continuously document student progress over time (NRC, 2001). These criteria of coherence, continuity, and comprehensiveness create a high-quality system of assessments that is rooted in a common model of learning. (Marion et al. 2019)

When does planning need to occur to create an assessment system? Who should be involved and what resources are needed to create a plan?

What is Data Literacy

Data literacy is a critical skill set for educators to be successful in the classroom or managing a school even though it has not historically been emphasized in educator preparation programs. Unfortunately, most educators must learn how to interpret data on their own and wrestle with linking classroom practices to formative, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments. This manual aims to bridge that gap by providing teachers and administrators with a solid foundation on which to build the data literacy skills increasingly expected of them in their work.

The definition of data literacy is:

> *...the ability to transform information into actionable instructional knowledge and practices by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting all types of data (assessment, school climate, behavioral, snapshot, longitudinal, moment-to-moment, etc.) to help determine instructional steps. It combines an understanding of data with standards, disciplinary knowledge and practices, curricular knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and an understanding of how children learn.* (Mandinach and Gummer, 2016)

What does it look like when teachers are data literate in the classroom? The good news is that many teachers and administrators can already answer this question. Educators who are data literate perform the activities below on a regular basis:


Establish clear learning targets as the basis for both instruction and assessment.


Ensure that assignments and assessments (including assessment methods) align with the learning targets that have been or will be taught.


Create/select assessment items, learning tasks, and scoring guides that meet standards of quality.


Use the results of the assessment in ways that are aligned with the purpose for the assessment. In other words, balance the administration of formative and summative assessments to meet the information needs of all users, including students.


When interpreting the results, ask questions to transform the data trends into useful and actionable information. Link that information to classroom practice.


Collaborate with peers to reflect upon data trends and plan the next instructional steps.


Provide students with specific, descriptive, and useful feedback during the learning process, not just at the end of a unit or in the form of a grade on a test.

When appropriate, involve students in the assessment process as both an instructional strategy and a way to increase student motivation by developing students' ability to self-assess, set goals for further learning, and self-regulate.

Data literacy is having the knowledge and skills to use assessment practices and results for promoting and measuring learning effectively. It is where teachers fold assessment results back into instruction, integrate formative assessment strategies into daily instruction to improve learning, appropriately use several types of data to inform instruction, and use sound grading practices to communicate student progress and learning. Appendix 1 describes schoolwide structures that promote best practices for data literacy

TUSD supports a Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System approach for the ongoing assessment of instruction and learning. Taking this approach of administering assorted assessments with intentionality allows school principals, school leadership teams, and teachers to make informed instructional decisions that maximize student learning outcomes. These practices increase data literacy and facilitate instruction tailored to meet student's individual needs.


Are there teachers and staff at your school who are data literate? How did they become data literate? How does being data literate help the overall organization and management of a school?

The remainder of this manual provides an overview of assessment types with examples, describes the features and advantages of a comprehensive and balanced assessment system, and outlines the steps to create a balanced and comprehensive system. The manual concludes with a summary and a reflection on data literacy.

Types of Assessments

A Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System uses diverse types of assessments to understand the learning arc of students that includes 'assessments for learning' such as classroom formative assessments and unit assessments and 'assessments of learning' such as interim or benchmark assessments and end of year summative assessments. Appendix 2 lists the assessment types, their purpose, and a brief description. Each assessment has a specific purpose and intended use. The purpose and the intended use of most assessments are to:

Evaluate: Making judgements about the value or merit about something (e.g., school accountability, program effectiveness, instructional quality, or student learning)

Predict: Making a statement about a future event; signaling need for further investigation.

Diagnose: Identifying the cause of something through deeper examination.

Instruct: informing the teaching and learning process.

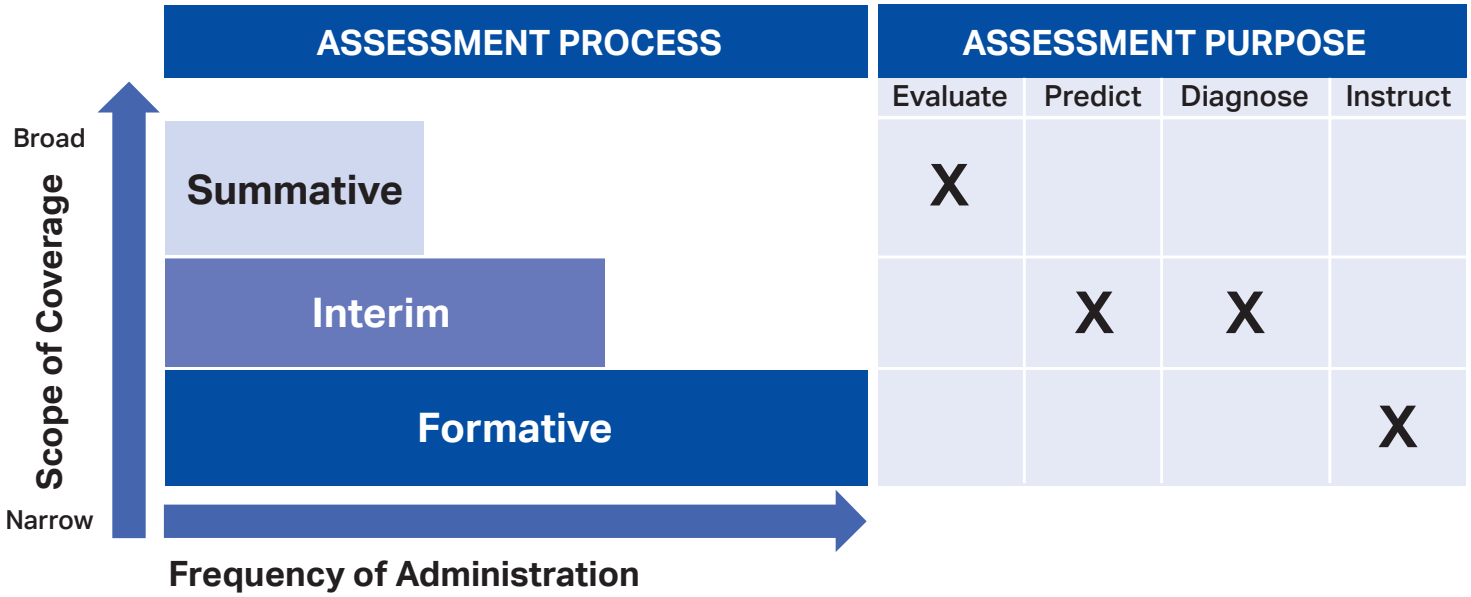
Also, most assessments serve additional purposes to:

Compare: Providing information about differences in performance among students or groups. (e.g., comparison to national benchmarks)

Monitor Progress: Indicating the extent of how much students or groups demonstrate academic growth from one point to another.

Chart 1 illustrates the frequency and scope of assessment types and the purpose they serve.

Chart 1. Assessment Process and Purpose



Evans, C.M. & Thompson, J. (2022). Classroom Assessment learning Modules (version 2.0). Dover, NH: National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment. Retrieved from NCIEA Classroom Assessment Learning Modules (nciea.org/library/classroom-assessment-learning-modules/)

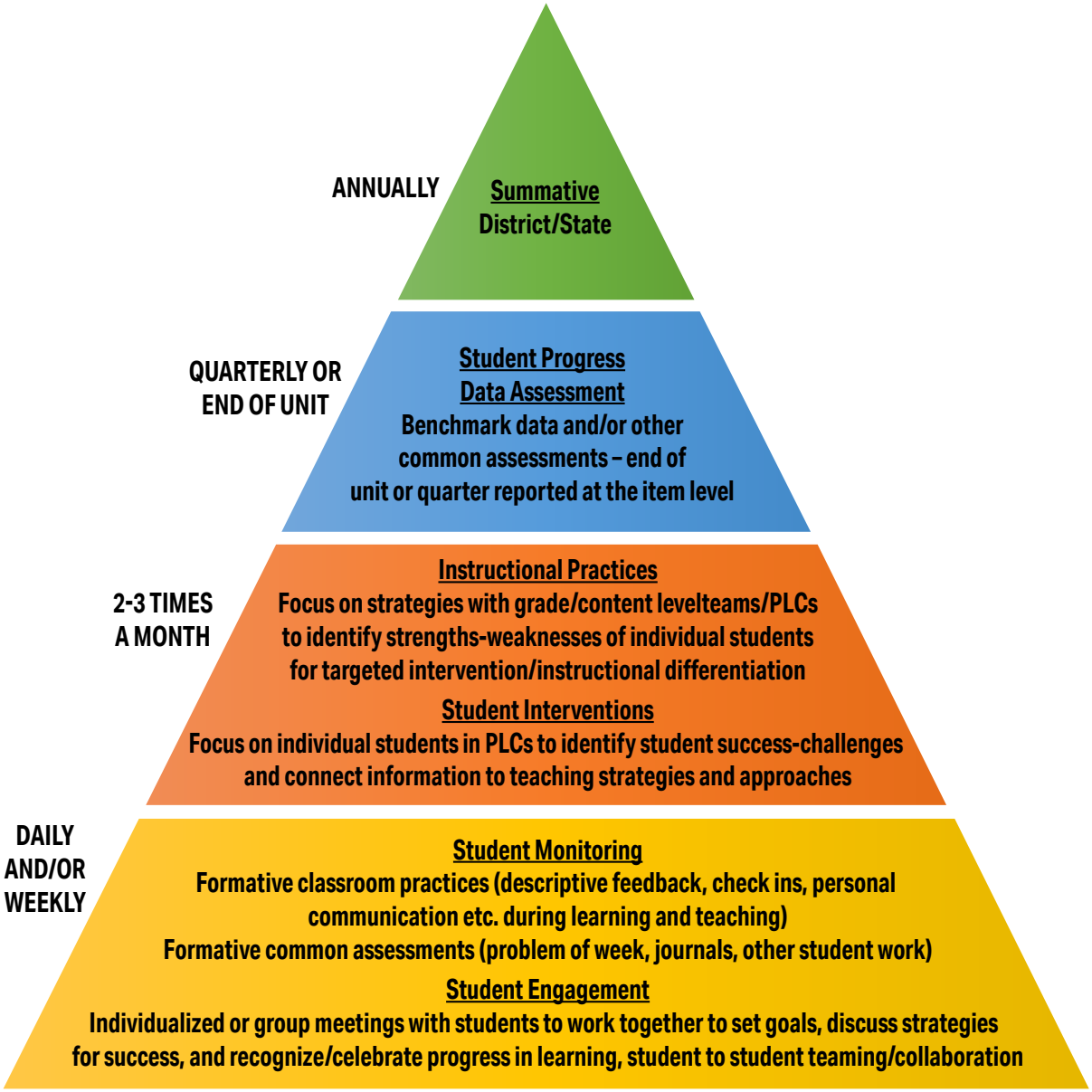
Examples of Assessment Types

A comprehensive and balanced assessment system strikes a balance with the different assessments so that the available information is appropriate and useful for the information needs at the various levels of the system. Additionally, each assessment type uses different strategies and frequency to collect data. Please see Chart 2 that explains in a 4-level pyramid image the type of strategies and the frequency associated with each assessment type.

Tier one in the base of the pyramid shows critical, ongoing teacher and student level activities that typically occur daily or multiple times during the week, while tier two is PLC-level activity that occurs 2-3 times monthly. Together, the bottom two tiers represent the assessment for learning where teachers monitor, assess, and adjust instruction in the classroom and collaborate with peers to plan school-wide interventions. The top two tiers of the pyramid show district and state-level activity that is typically episodic, represents a small portion of the whole, and occurs quarterly and annually. Tiers three and four represent the assessment of learning initiated by districts and state-level actors to provides teachers with information to compare their own student progress to other classrooms and/or schools and can identify grade level gaps and strengths. The top tier indicates the level of grade-level mastery from the state level that students have attained.

Do you think that the pyramid is asking teachers and schools to assess students too much, too little, or just right? Do you believe that a teacher can/should use all of this data? Is one assessment type more important than another? Why?

Chart 2. The Frequency Pyramid of Various Assessment Types



The Benefit of a Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment System (CBAS)

School leaders know that in high-performing schools and districts, little activity is ever done in isolation. A comprehensive and balanced assessment system is an organizational approach to assessments, the same way a curriculum is an organizational construct for learning expectations. This system assesses all valued learning outcomes, not just those that are easy to test, and assesses learning at all levels of the system. It provides intention and direction in meeting the learning needs of students by establishing the following structures within every classroom within a school:

- Use the assessment processes and results to cause students to learn; not merely report it.
- Rely on multiple measures of student learning to inform decisions.
- Spell out achievement expectations with clarity, leading to more focused instruction.
- Celebrate when progress monitoring or performance expectations are met.
- Ensure each assessment at every level is of high quality and standards based.
- Develop a data literate instructional staff.
- Identify and manage testing redundancies or gaps.

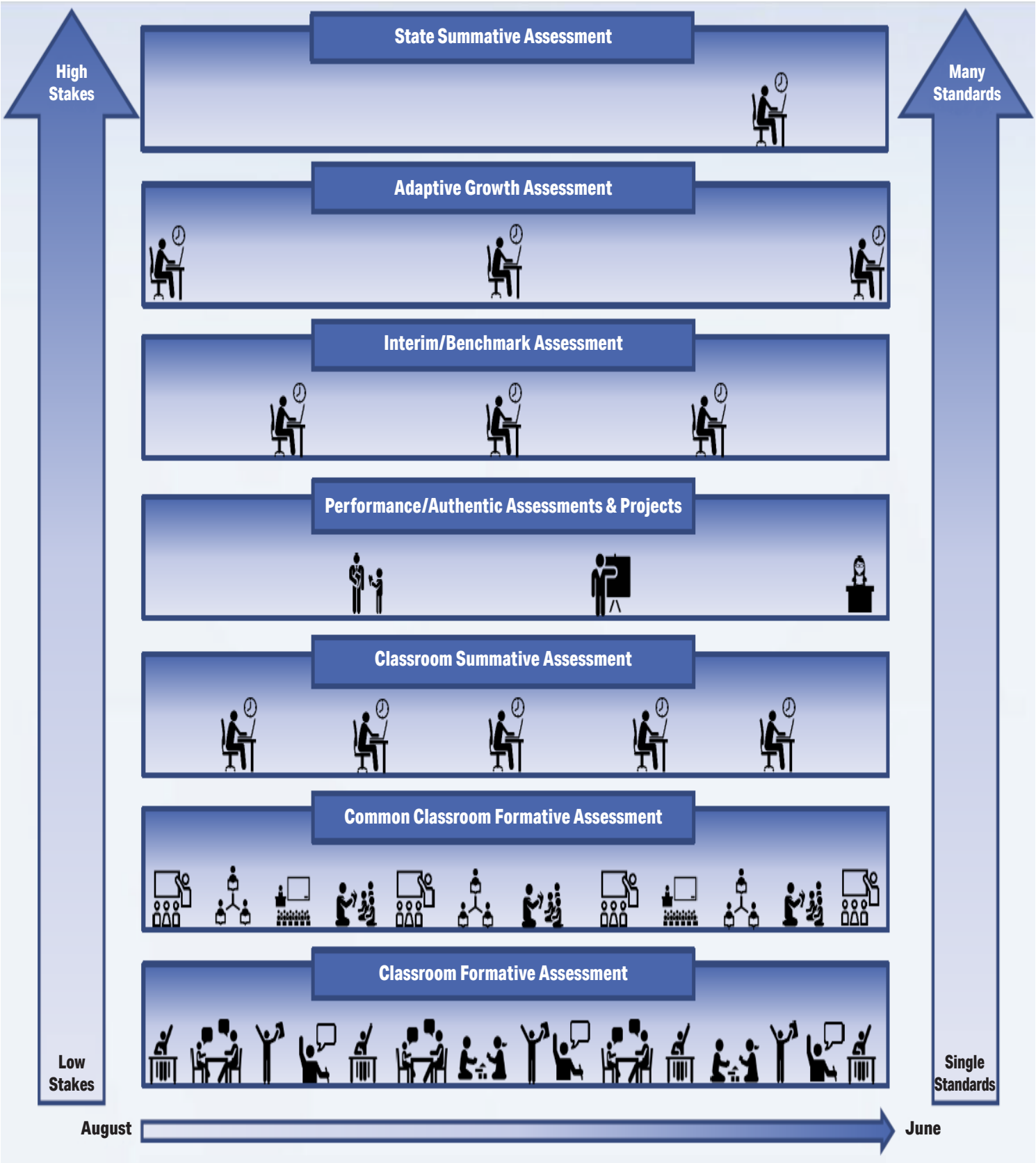
The value of school assessments has changed in recent years. Interest in and exploration of formative assessment practices has swept through many school systems, while controversy continues to mount around large-scale standardized testing programs. Most recently, with the passage of the Federal 'Every Student Succeeds Act' (ESSA), more autonomy has been granted to states and local districts to develop their own comprehensive and balanced assessment system for improved learning outcomes. Advocates argue that this system positively impacts schools and school districts by giving school staff a framework to understand how best to use various assessment instruments to improve student academic performance. A continuous feedback loop exists between curriculum, instruction, and assessments in the learning process demonstrated in Chart 3. Assessments viewed or used in isolation will not improve student achievement.

A comprehensive and balanced assessment system in Chart 3 illustrates the frequency of information provided, when the assessments are provided, the number of standards, and the level of accountability of each type of assessment. Please note in Chart 3 that a comprehensive and balanced assessment system does not provide an equal amount of assessment information to each level of the system. Rather, the system offers more detailed information to individual learners and their teachers in the classroom in the bottom 3 tiers where the learning takes place through ongoing formative and unit assessments. Additionally, the more general, aggregated benchmark and annual assessment information in the top 4 tiers are proportionally less available for decision-making as the distance from the learning is greater.

A common challenge with educational assessment systems in many districts is that the balance is backward, with more resources spent on the less frequent and summative components of the system rather than on the more frequent classroom formative assessments.

How does your school organize its assessment system and why? Does the system work for you?

Chart 3. A Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System



Screeners & diagnostics are also essential components of a balanced assessment system. Rather than measuring student mastery of state standards, these assessments generally provide information regarding specific skill development, additional services, and placement.

Arizona Department of Education's (ADE) Balanced Assessment Framework

ADE has established a Framework for school districts to follow. This framework, shown in Table 1, describes the diverse types of academic assessments, who uses them, how often they are administered, and how to use the data. This framework compliments Chart 3 by providing greater definitions to each type of assessment.

Table 1. The Purpose of Each Assessment Type and the Users of the Assessment Results

	SCREENER/ DIAGNOSTIC	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: STUDENT	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: TEACHER	CLASSROOM SUMMATIVE	INTERIM/ BENCHMARK	END-OF-YEAR/ COURSE SUMMATIVE
	Classroom, district, or state	Classroom feedback loop informs instruction; may include PLC/ common assessments			PLC, district, or state-developed/common assessments	
USERS	*Teacher, student support pros, school or district administrator, family*	*Student, student-to-student teams, student, and teacher team*	*Student, student-to-student teams, teacher*	*Student, teacher, student support professional, school or district administrator, family*	*Student, teacher, student support professional, school or district administrator, family*	*Teacher, student support professionals, school or district administrator, state, family*
FREQUENCY	*Periodically*	*Daily – Integrated and ongoing during learning and teaching*	*Daily – Integrated and ongoing during learning and teaching*	*After an extended period (quizzes, end of unit or learning module)*	*Across instructional units/ calendar periods (quarter, semester)*	*End-of-year, grade level, or course*
PURPOSE	Screener: Identify students who may be at risk. Monitor student progress. Screen for special program placement or intervention Diagnostic: Supply the information to design or modify instructional activities. Determine readiness for learning. Identify underlying causes of breakdown in learning.	Clarify learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning. Engage in self-assessment and peer feedback. Monitor learning relative to learning goals. Use evidence and actionable feedback to move learning forward	Clarify learning goals and success criteria within a broader learning progression. Elicit/analyze evidence of student thinking. Provide actionable feedback. Use evidence/actionable feedback to move student learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps. Monitor student learning relative to learning goals. Monitor progress with respect to specifically targeted interventions. Inform instruction and improvement. Evaluate attainment of learning goals	Inform instruction and improvement. Evaluate attainment of learning goals.	Track student learning relative to expected learning goals. Predict end-of-year/course proficiency. Inform system improvement decisions regarding curriculum intervention, and instruction.	Measure end-of-year/ course proficiency. Inform improvement strategies: teacher, program, school, district, and state. Meet accountability requirements: Gauge student achievement of standards. Establish benchmark or starting point for school or district. Gauge school or district progress relative to student achievement and growth.

Action Steps to Develop a Balanced and Comprehensive System (CBAS)

Creating a comprehensive and balanced assessment system at your school takes both commitment and consensus from your faculty that using a system of assessments in a coordinated and coherent way will improve teaching and learning. Building data literacy skills through the assessment system takes time, practice, and most of all, curiosity. We caution against implementing a comprehensive and balanced assessment system at your school as a directive. This system must be introduced by exploring the purpose, roles, and responsibilities, and discussing how to build data-driven practices into the workday. Please see Appendix 3 for a list of roles and responsibilities of a school where the faculty is data literate.

All too frequently, schools that administer assessments with little to no buy-in may feel that the assessments are a waste of instructional time. They do not see the connection of the results to student learning in the classroom. This scenario can become a self-fulfilling prophesy because the assessments are administered to meet compliance demands, but the results are not used.

> *Thinking about your school: How do the teachers and staff view assessments? How do the teachers and staff explain aspects of student learning using assessment results?*

Producing a data-literate school takes intention, collaboration, goal setting, support, monitoring, and celebration. Data becomes meaningful when you have a clear understanding of the outcome you are trying to achieve. See the action steps in Chart 4 to build a balanced assessment system by prioritizing data literacy at a school.

Chart 4. Action Steps to Develop a Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System

- **Needs Assessment:** The first step is to understand how data literate your faculty is and what supports are needed. Being data literate means that educators use data to inform decision-making processes from beginning to end. Appendix 4 is a self-assessment survey to determine the data structures at your school. Additionally, Appendix 5 describes a school's different levels of data literacy to understand where your school is on the continuum. This first step is like a diagnostic assessment of your school's data structure and practices to understand strengths and gaps in your staff's data literacy.

  Resource: NCIEA Classroom Assessment Learning Modules (nciea.org/library/classroom-assessment-learning-modules)

- **Goal Setting:** The next step is to set performance goals for students and learning goals collaboratively with the school staff. These goals must be developed as a team whether it is by grade level, subject level, or whole school with a consensus that the goals are ambitious, but achievable. Goal setting can be accomplished by using SMART goals. We invite you to dream big! Consider the big picture impacts you want to make (e.g., students are more invested in their education, the school has adopted a culture of formative practice, school letter grade improves) and use SMART goals to plan how you will measure progress toward and achievement of those outcomes. SMART goals are:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Relevant
  - Timed

  Resource: Smart Goals: A How to Guide (ucop.edu/local-human-resources/_files/performance-appraisal/How%20to%20write%20SMART%20Goals%20v2.pdf)
- **Action Planning:** Once your goals are established, a plan needs to be created. Careful planning in advance will maximize time for analysis and action to help you progress more effectively toward your goals. This plan must align with the data needs that you established in your goals. What processes should be included in an action plan? Ongoing professional learning for instructional staff is critical as part of the action planning to support the interpretation of the data and knowing how to group students based on data. Other action planning steps might include:
  - Creating a Master Assessment Calendar with time built in for teacher analysis and planning.
  - Providing sufficient time before each quarter for teachers to align lesson plans and associated formative assessments/unit tests to the scope and sequence.
  - Scheduling time for teachers to review the quarterly benchmark assessments and to take the assessment themselves.
  - Reserving sanctioned time for staff to analyze the results of different data and to plan forward.
  - Assuring collective commitments among teachers that the Professional Learning Team time will include actions such as teachers coming prepared with their data results to conduct structured data discussions.

  For schools with higher levels of data literacy, teachers might create data notebooks or other constructs to discuss data results with students and parents. If available, the school can develop a data room where the progress of all students is visible and monitored.

  Resource: Data Dialogue (learningforward.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/10/harrison294.pdf)
- **Progress Monitoring:** School leadership will need to ensure practices in the action plan are being used by all staff and to check in frequently to ensure professional expectations and action steps are clear. School leadership will also need to communicate often that assessments are part of the instructional cycle intended to improve student learning and that instructional practices must be aligned to the scope and sequence. Patience and persistence are critical in the first year or two because becoming data literacy is challenging work.

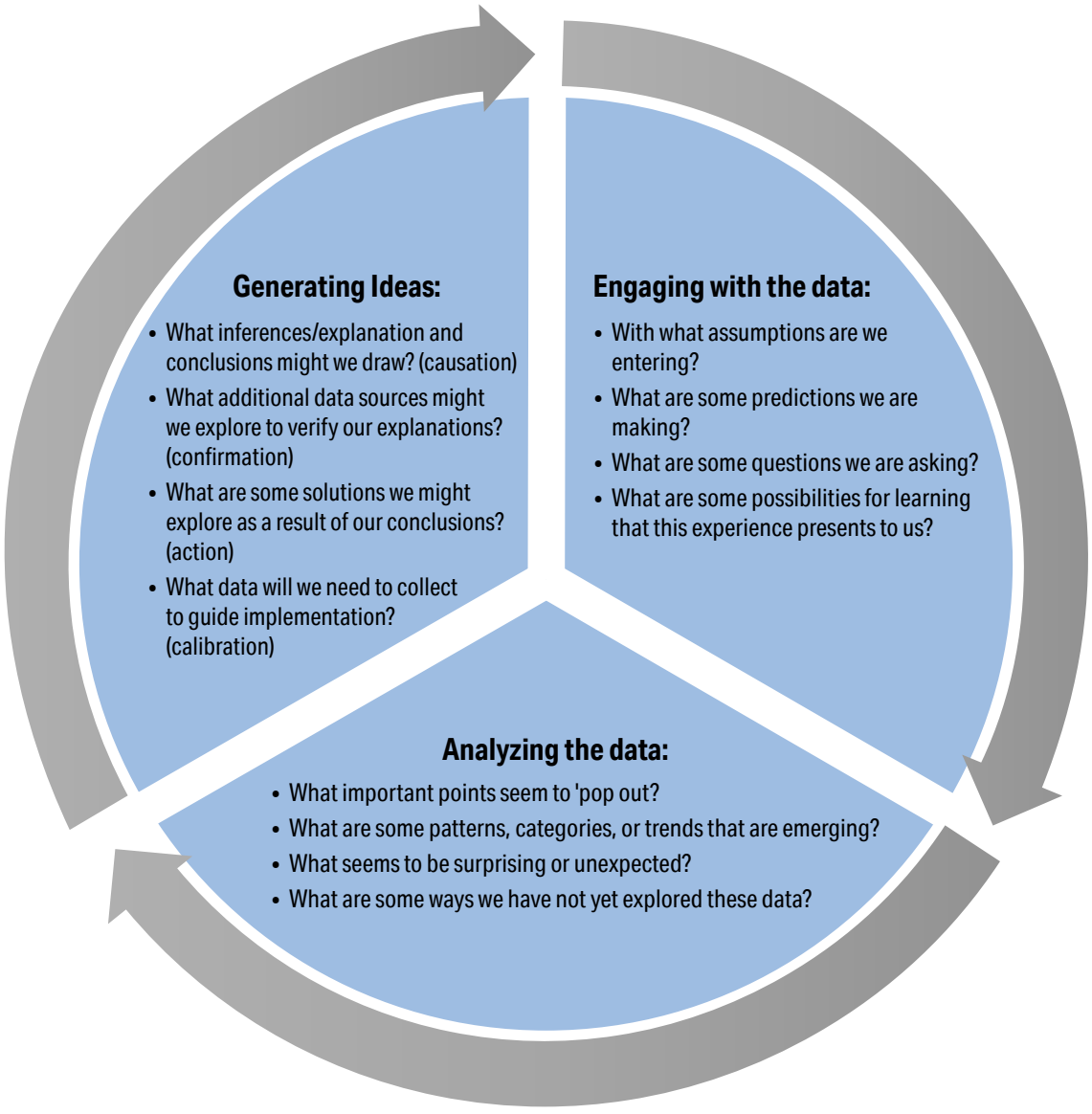
  As instructional staff build greater data literacy, patterns and trends will emerge in the data, and consideration of potential underlying causes may be discussed (e.g., Why might my second-period class keep outperforming my fourth-period class? Why are 6th and 8th graders showing so much more growth than 7th graders? Why did everyone miss question 11?) Teachers will increasingly recognize patterns in data using these guidelines to make sense of 'the story' of the data:
  - Look at what is "typical" for the group, but also take note of the outliers.
  - Consider how widely the data varies. Are many or most students about the same, or are they all quite different from one another?
  - Compare your data to data from larger groups (school, district, state) for reference.
  - Compare your data to data from the same group that originated from other assessment sources. Do the stories told by each source corroborate or contradict each other?
  - Take note of what additional questions or observations the data raises for you.
  - Assessment & Program Evaluation (A&E) has many resources available to assist you with analyzing data (tusd1.sharepoint.com/sites/AandE)

What are some challenges for your school to become more data literate? What are some personal challenges that you experience when analyzing student data?

Chart 5 shows a variety of data-driven questions to guide collaborative assessment interpretation. A major component of school data literacy is the collective discovery and discussion by faculty about trends in the data. The questions are divided into (1) engaging with the data, (2) analyzing the data, and (3) generating ideas. Questions for engaging with the data is the first step and is intended to become familiarized with the assessment, the purpose of the assessment, and what can be learned from the assessment. Questions for analyzing the data is the second step where patterns in the results are sought out to understand student strengths and gaps. Finally, questions about generating ideas is the third step to decide how to use the collective insights from the data analysis to link trends to other data sources and to create action steps.

Chart 5. Collaborative Inquiry with Data Trends

Adapted from Data-Driven Dialogue, Wellman and Lipton, 2017



Once teachers have analyzed their student data through a comparison of trends as well as digging into individual student data, they will be ready to act. They will have specific, objective information about the status of their classroom, school, or district in relation to their own school's goals. They may also have some hypotheses about the reasons why they saw what others saw in the data. Now is the time to plan next steps such as:

- Gathering more information to better understand what you saw in the data.

- Reteach or extend based on which standards students mastered/did not master.
- Group students or change student groupings.
- Adjust student schedules or the way intervention time is being used.
- Celebrate achievements, milestones, or progress.
- Engage in one-on-one data talks with students to help them understand their data and set goals.
  - Youcubed resources for data talks with students (youcubed.org/resource/data-talks/)
- Set mini goals for the next data collection period with individual students, small groups, or as a class.
- Emphasize a particular standard(s) in future instruction.
- Introduce alternative ways of learning about/thinking about a difficult concept.
- Further reading.
  - Three ways to put assessment data to work in the classroom (nwea.org/blog/2022/three-ways-to-put-assessment-data-to-work-in-the-classroom/)
  - Using Student Achievement Data to Support Instructional Decision Making (naesp.org/sites/default/files/Student_Data_0.pdf)

- **Evaluation:** To examine how successful the school has been in meeting the established student academic progress and staff learning goals, ongoing evaluation is needed. Periodic assessments such as quarterly benchmarks, pre-post growth testing, and state testing are appropriate measures to assess progress towards goals. Additionally, small wins should be celebrated often, and teachers should be recognized who practice data literacy skills with regularity. Finally, at the end of the year, instructional staff should meet as a team to evaluate which goals were met and why and begin planning for the next year.

  Analyzing and taking action from data results are not new behaviors for educators. Appendix 6 shows examples of action steps and data literacy practices that may already be in place at your school. These practices may be evident in pockets which can be built upon in the development of a comprehensive and balanced assessment system for the entire school. In time, your instructional staff will be data literate and will understand which data will help make specific instructional decisions and how to understand 'the story' that the multiple sources of data are telling from the school culture, classroom expectations, or teacher expertise. In summary, data literacy refers to an ability to:

  - Interpret the story being told by data by observing patterns and making comparisons.
  - Understand what is and is not being measured by the data.
  - Critically evaluate what is missing and what the data is NOT telling you.
  - Ask questions about data and understand what additional data is needed to answer those questions.
  - Synthesize multiple data points or data sources to reach a conclusion or make a decision.
  - Use data to inform the development of SMART goals.
  - Use data to track progress and recognize success.

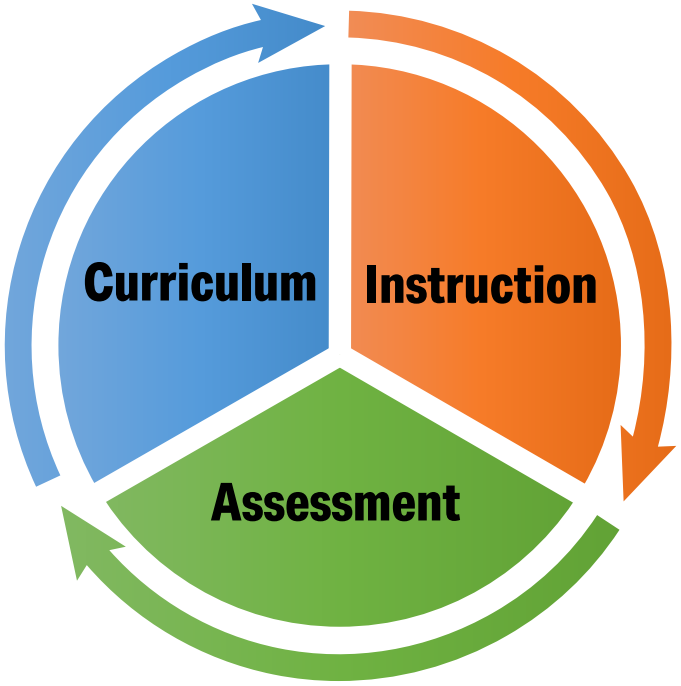
  Resources for further reading on data literacy and evaluation:

  - Youcubed K-12 Data Science (youcubed.org/resource/data-literacy/)
  - Eight questions teachers should ask when giving assessments (nwea.org/blog/2022/8-questions-teachers-ask-giving-assessments/)
  - How to get from data as foe to data as friend (nwea.org/blog/2020/how-to-get-data-foe-to-data-friend/)
  - Data Can Help Students (dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Data-Can-Help-Students-Excel.pdf)

How much time is scheduled or expected at your school to analyze formative assessment or quarterly assessment results?

Summary

The need for data-literate teachers and staff has become more important than ever as the use of data in schools grows. This manual illustrates how the use and interpretation of assessments must go beyond tests and tools to include coherent processes and consistent strategies that encourage and support greater student achievement, especially for struggling learners. To become data literate, teachers and staff need to understand how to use and balance both formative and summative assessments. A comprehensive and balanced assessment system serves a variety of purposes, uses multiple measures, and meets the information and decision-making needs of all users at the classroom, building, and district levels. High-quality, accurate assessments provide users with dependable evidence of achievement that they need to do their jobs well and improve learning. The primary goal of a comprehensive and balanced assessment system is to meet all needs of users in the system. To accomplish a data-literate school or district, the following 5 conditions must be in place:



Source: Adapted from *The Teacher Guide to the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessments: English Language Arts/Literacy, Grades Three, Four, and Five.* p. 3. Copyright 2016 by the California Department of Education. Adapted with permission.

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of the assessments must always be clear to all involved. All educators and students must know who will use the assessment results and how they will use them, whether the assessments are to support student learning or to confirm it.
2. **Clarity:** The learning targets to be assessed must be clearly, completely, and appropriately defined to know the purpose of the assessment. When that clarity is in place, assessment items, learning tasks, and scoring procedures can be developed or selected to reflect the intended learning.
3. **Quality:** All assessment instruments and procedures must meet accepted standards of quality to provide dependable results that decision-makers will use.
4. **Timeliness:** Systems must be in place to communicate assessment results effectively. Establishing an assessment calendar and communicating results promptly are needed for the data to be actionable.
5. **Relevance:** Teachers must understand how the assessment is connected to student learning. Additionally, the assessment/decision-making process acknowledges a direct link to student motivation. It is necessary that both successful and struggling learners remain confident that success is within reach.

In summary, making effective schooling decisions without the help of data is like working inside a black box. No matter how well-informed or well-intentioned school staff may be, biases are part of the human experience and can limit informed decision-making. Using assessment data to observe relevant patterns and trends can help educators make sense of substantial amounts of information that may not have been immediately evident. To add to the complexity of understanding trends, data may come from multiple separate sources, measure different skills, or measure the same skill but in different ways. Becoming data literate helps educators understand what steps are needed to reach a goal, how to make relevant and impactful decisions, and what might be the impact of those decisions.

Further reading on data to drive academic improvement.

- Mr. Maya's Data-Rich Year (dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Maya-Data-Rich-Year-Web.pdf)
- Ms. Bullen's Data-Rich Year (dataqualitycampaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Data-Rich-Year-Infographic.pdf)
- Teacher Data Literacy (k12engagement.unl.edu/Nudata/DQC-Data%20Literacy%20Brief.pdf)
- The Data Wise Improvement Process (datawise.gse.harvard.edu/data-wise-improvement-process)
- The Effective Schools Framework (texasesf.org/)

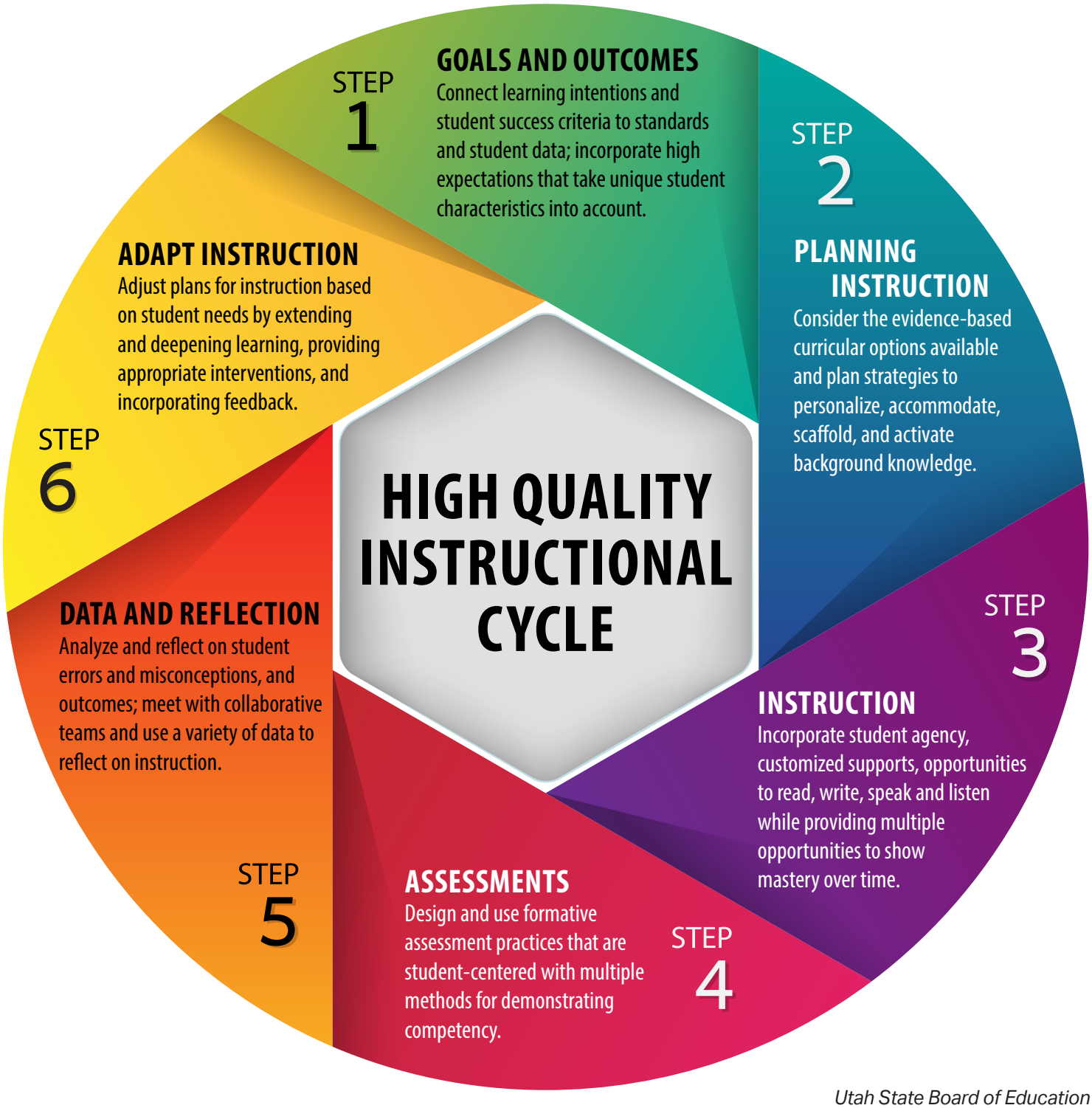
Reflection

Please reflect on the questions below that ask about the purpose of assessments at your school and your own belief system. Additionally, some questions ask about the integration of assessments into the instructional cycle.

- **What is my belief system with assessments?**
    a. If a parent asked me, "Why do you assess students in the way that you do," what would I say?
    b. What is the underlying model of learning that grounds my instructional decisions?
    c. How does my model align with the curricular and assessment decisions within the district?
    d. Do my classroom assessments match what I believe about how students learn and what is most important to learn?
- **What is my understanding of and practice with assessments?**
    a. When do I as an educator use different types of assessments and does my definition match my system's definition of the assessment type?
    b. Do I understand the types of information that can be gained from each type of assessment, and do I use this information to guide instruction or programs?
    c. Do I use each type of assessment in one or more ways suggested by the framework?
    d. Are there any types of assessments that are overrepresented in my system's current practice? If so, how do we begin to balance our assessment system?
- **What is my understanding of using assessments as part of the instructional cycle in the classroom?**
    a. Can I explain the connections among curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
    b. Do I design and use different types of assessments?
    c. What is my preferred type of assessment(s) that I use most frequently? What is my least preferred assessment and why?
    d. How often do I use data results to adapt my instruction based on student need?
    e. Are there any methods/strategies I can add to inform and enhance my instructional and programmatic decisions?
- **How can I learn how to use assessments collaboratively with my peers?**
    a. Who do I turn to when I have a data question?
    b. What resources are already available in my school or district that can support my professional learning about a balanced assessment framework and its integration into the instructional cycle?
    c. How often should I meet with my peers to refine instruction and learning goals?
    d. What do I want to know more about?

Chart 6 is an example of a high-quality instructional cycle model that embeds assessment, data results and reflection, and instructional adaptation as key elements of the instructional cycle.

Chart 6. The High-Quality Instructional Cycle



Utah State Board of Education

Is this system in place at my school?

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Appendix 1: Schoolwide Data Literacy Best Practices

- Campus Instructional Leaders review disaggregated data to track and monitor the progress of all students and provide evidence-based feedback to teachers.
- Teachers use a corrective instruction action planning process, individually and in PLCs to analyze data, identify trends in student misconceptions, determine the root cause as to why students may not have learned the concept, and create plans to reteach.
- Teachers (with content and grade-level teams whenever possible) have protected time built into the master schedule to meet frequently and regularly for in-depth conversations about formative and interim student data, effective instructional strategies, and possible adjustments to instructional delivery focused on meeting the needs of both struggling learners and learners needing acceleration.
- Student ownership and progress toward measurable goals (e.g., % of class and individual student mastering of objectives, individual student fluency progress, etc.) is visible in every classroom and throughout the school to foster student ownership and goal setting.

Taken from: The Effective Schools Framework (texasesf.org/framework/prioritized-lever-5/)

Appendix 2: Definition of Various Assessment Types

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) has adopted the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) assessment typology.

Types of Assessment in a Balanced Assessment System Arizona Department of Education		
Purpose	**Type of Assessment**	**Description of Assessment**
Screener or Diagnostic Assessment	Screener	Universal screener assessments consist of brief tests focused on targeted skills that are highly predictive of the likelihood of success on meeting or exceeding curricular benchmarks. Used for placement or determination of services.
	Diagnostic	Diagnostic assessments are evidence-gathering procedures that provide a sufficiently clear indication regarding which targeted subskills a student does or does not possess. Used to assess reading/math levels or skills at different intervals throughout the year.
Assessments for Learning	Short-cycle Classroom Formative Assessments-Students	Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers (student to student and student to teacher) during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.
	Short-cycle Classroom Formative Assessments – Teacher	Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers (teacher to student) during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.
	Classroom Summative Assessment	Classroom summative assessments are designed to provide information regarding the level of student success at an endpoint in time. Summative tests are administered after the conclusion of instruction. The results are used to make inferences about a student's mastery of the learning goals and content standards.
Assessments of Learning	Interim or Benchmark Assessments	Interim tests are typically administered periodically throughout the school year (e.g., every few months) to fulfill one or more of the following functions: instructional (to supply teachers with individual student data), predictive (identifying student readiness for success on a later high-stakes test), and/or evaluative (to appraise ongoing educational programs).
	End of Year or Course Summative Assessments	End-of-Year/Course summative assessments provide information regarding the level of the student, school, or program success at an endpoint in time. Summative tests are administered after the conclusion of instruction. The results are used to fulfill summative functions, such as student mastery of course goals, determine the effectiveness of a recently concluded educational program, and/or meet local, state, and federal accountability requirements.

Appendix 3: Data Literacy Roles and Responsibilities

District Roles and Responsibilities to Create a Comprehensive and Balanced System

To create a prominent level of data literacy across the district within a Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment System, all staff must play a role. Responsibilities of site and district personnel include the following: systemic support and monitoring of logistics prior to and during the administration of the assessment, implementation of the assessment at the classroom level, interpretation and use of the results, and the communication of the results to the other levels of the system. The alignment of assessments to the state standards and student learning should be intentional and coordinated. Below are the roles and responsibilities for supporting data literacy at each level of decision-making in a district.

Overall District Expectations:

- Provide high-levels of responsiveness: timely, solution-oriented, friendly, and trustworthy.
- Work collaboratively to solve problems and plan solutions.
- Support teachers, principals, and district initiatives
- Build relationships through mutual respect, trust, and quality work.

Role of District Administrators (Superintendent and Leadership Team, District Data Team, etc.):

- Communicate vision clearly and often.
- Require alignment of curriculum and the scope and sequence, standards, and assessments.
- Provide ongoing coaching and PD to support instructional leadership systems (feedback on instructional materials alignment and use, data-driven instruction, and observation and feedback).
- Provide PD for all teacher/coaches, Curriculum Service Providers (CSP), and other teacher leaders on a variety of topics such as planning for core instruction, unpacking the standards, planning for intervention, accessing data, appropriate uses of data, etc.
- Provide administrators/teachers with timely access to district assessment's data reports.
- Provide schools with access to student academic, behavioral, and on-track to graduate data (present and historical).
- Provide effective systems for identifying and supporting struggling learners.
- Reinforce policies and practices that support effective instruction in schools.
- Supply principals with the necessary tools and skills to support data literacy.
- Support the development and use of common benchmark assessments.
- Meet 1 to 2 times a semester with school administrators as follow up.
- Develop district-wide protocols for accessing data, discussing data, and data-informed action planning.
- Streamline protocols for common assessments, access to curriculum, and teacher collaboration.
- Participate in district walk-throughs.
- Support benchmark testing roll out.

Role of School Administrators (Principal, Assistant Principals, Instructional Coaches, etc.):

- Communicate vision clearly and often.
- Be a strong supporter of the Data Team and data use.
- Review disaggregated data to monitor the progress of all students.
- Create a safe and supportive environment for data use.
- Actively participate as a member of a Data Team and model the practice of using data.
- Delegate Data Team leadership to a Data Coach
- Empower teachers to make instructional decisions based on data.
- Provide teachers with protected time that is built into the master schedule to meet regularly.
- Share regular e-mail updates with faculty (e.g., weekly, monthly) on progress from Data Team

Role of the Data Coach

- Be a dedicated supporter of collaboration in the Data Team and of data use.
- Review disaggregated data to track and monitor the progress of all students and provide evidence-based feedback to teachers.
- Actively participate as a member of a Data Team and model the practice of using data.
- Provide structure, guidance, and resources for Data Teams
- Spread data literacy** to Data Team
- Advocates for equity in interpretation of student data for all students
- Lead PLCs/CCTs in data talk protocols, analyzing data, looking at student work, creating common assessments, identifying curriculum gaps, etc.
- Provide PD on data systems, assessment, planning.
- Collect walkthrough data for principal for PD planning.
- Work with teachers in the classroom to plan targeted intervention strategies.

Role of School Faculty (Teachers and Specialists):

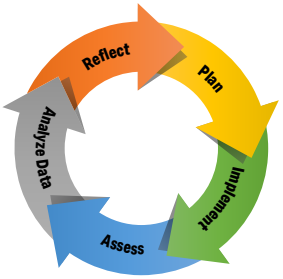
- Actively participate on Data Teams or sessions led by Data Teams.
- Use data to improve teaching.
- Keep informed of Data Team's work if not on a team.
- Make data visible in classrooms to foster student ownership and goal setting.
- Take collective responsibility for improving student learning.
- Contribute positively to a schoolwide culture of data literacy.

***The ability to interpret and use multiple data sources effectively to improve teaching and learning*

Appendix 4: Self-Assessment Survey on Data Literacy

Self-Assessment 0n Data-Driven Instruction (DDI)

Modified from Paul Bambrick-Santoyo & New Leaders for New Schools



The self-assessment rubric assesses current DDI in a school. The rubric specifically targets formative assessments and the key drivers leading to increased student achievement

KEY: 1=No Implementation 2=Some Implementation
3=Proficient Implementation 4=Exemplary Implementation

Data-Driven Culture	**Highly active Leadership Team: facilitates** teacher-leader data analysis meetings after each interim or formative assessment and maintain focus on the process throughout the year.	
	Role of Leadership Team: supports teacher to reflect on predicted outcomes of assessment, model analysis process, create action items, and scaffold questions so that teacher does the cognitive work	
	Specific procedures are in place: Leadership Team has clear responsibilities for DDI work and high expectations of teachers/ students; data walls or other visual data analysis is evident; consistent format to communicate/discuss analysis results	
	Introductory **Professional Development**: teachers/leaders are effectively introduced to DDI. They understand how formative assessments define rigor as well as the process of analyzing results and adapting instruction	
	Implementation Calendar: begin each semester with a detailed calendar that includes time for assessment creation/ adaptation, implementation, analysis, planning meetings and re-teaching. Flexible enough to accommodate district changes and mandates	
	Ongoing **Professional Development**: PD calendar is aligned with DDI plan; includes modeling assessment analysis/action planning and is flexible to adapt to student learning needs	
	Build by Borrowing: Identify and implement best practices from high-achieving teachers and schools; visit schools/ classrooms, share, and disseminate resources and strategies	
	Paid time for teachers to analyze results of data and to plan new lessons based on these results	
	Re-teaching time is built into calendar	
Analysis	**Analysis of results** and reflection by teachers in teams/PLC's occur immediately after release of data	
	Teacher takes responsibility to analyze own data and is supported by effective leadership preparation	
	Teachers show **strong fluency** in understanding results and can strategize how to improve results and/or to identify areas to re-teach and re-assess.	
	Teachers use various **data reports** including skills/item analysis and can link results to standards	
Action	Teachers **plan new lessons** collaboratively to develop new strategies based on data analysis	
	Teachers implement explicit **instructional plan** for whole-class instruction, small groups, tutorials, and before/after school supports	
	Teacher instructional plan includes explicit **differentiated supports/interventions** for struggling students, and creative use of extra time for advanced students	
	Ongoing formative assessment: utilize in-the-moment checks for understanding and in-class assessment to ensure student progress between formative assessments	
	Teachers can accurately **predict** how students will perform on next formative assessmen	
	Accountability: instructional leaders review lesson/unit plans and give observation feedback driven by the instructional plan and student learning needs	
	Students are knowledgeable about their own data: know their end goal, how they did, and what actions they are taking to improve. Student data portfolio is current, and student generated.	
	Data talks between teachers/students occur regularly. Students set performance goals for the next assessment	
Total Points (84 possible)		

DDI Implementation Scoring Guide: 0-31=Just Beginning; 32-52=Developing; 53-73=Proficient; 74-84=Excellent

Appendix 5: Definition of Data Literacy School Levels

Level of Data Use by Schools in Working Towards a Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment System

One way to understand a school's data literacy level is to administer a self-reflection tool. (See Appendix 3). School levels are described below. These levels are important to tier schools in terms of their data support needs.

Level 1 Schools:

- Teachers lesson plans/units and classroom assessments are loosely aligned to the scope and sequence.
- Little or no understanding of a comprehensive and balanced assessment system in the school.
- Many teachers are first time users of available data reports (e.g., SchoolCity, IXL, etc.)
- Principal commitment to data is not well defined.
- Principal does not have a vision for schoolwide data literacy, or vision is poorly communicated.
- No Data Coach identified.
- No Data Teams in place
- No school-based Professional Development (PD) on data-driven decision making.
- Faculty lacks trust, buy in, and/or willingness to collaborate on data literacy.

Level 2 Schools:

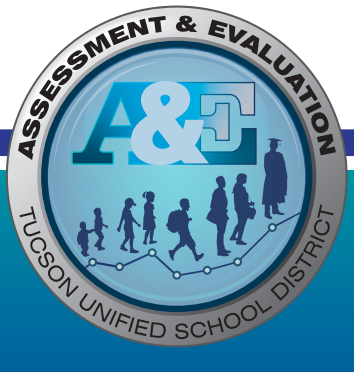
- Teachers lesson plans/units and classroom assessments are aligned to the scope and sequence in pockets but is not a school wide practice.
- Good basic knowledge of where to find data reports with the ability to drill down to student or group data.
- Principal is committed to use data but needs support.
- Principal's vision for schoolwide data literacy exists but may be general or unrealistic.
- Inconsistent use of data by faculty or a focus on only one type of assessment.
- Data Coach assumes the responsibility of pulling and analyzing data trends for staff.
- Data Teams are not school wide and/or do not meet regularly.
- PD addresses data-driven decision-making but has little or no expectations in place for application.
- Most faculty members demonstrate trust, buy in, and willingness to collaborate on data literacy.

Level 3 Schools:

- Teacher lesson plans/units and classroom assessments are aligned to the scope and sequence.
- Have used SC or other formative assessments/benchmarks.
- Strong principal commitment to the use of data to guide instruction.
- Principal has a clearly communicated and appropriate vision for schoolwide data literacy.
- Most faculty uses data and understands that the different assessments provide information on distinct aspects of learning.
- Data Coach works collaboratively with staff to identify trends.
- Data Teams are school wide and meet regularly.
- PD data results are analyzed in real time in a common way with expected practice/feedback/follow up based on the expectations of the principal.
- Students understand and monitor their own data.
- Faculty demonstrates strong trust and self-motivated collaboration on data literacy.

Appendix 6: Action Steps

Action Steps for Students, Teachers, and Administrators to Develop a Comprehensive and Balanced System		
Stage	**Purpose**	**Sample Activities**
Needs Assessment	Understand the status, diagnose problems, identify needs and gaps	Student – Review IXL diagnostic scores and determine which areas to work on first Teacher – Review prior-year AASA data for incoming students and identify content areas that students struggled with Administrator – Review the breakdown of points awarded for the school's most recent letter grade and identify areas with room for improvements
Goal Setting	Determine what a realistic, desirable outcome looks like	Student – "I will grow my IXL diagnostic score for Fractions by 100 points this year" Teacher – "At least three of my students will move up to the next highest proficiency level this year" Administrator – "We will increase our letter grade by one letter this year"
Action Planning	Decide what steps are necessary to achieve the goal	Student – Complete 10 practice questions on Fractions each week and ask peers or teacher for help with tricky ones Teacher – Plan for extra time and attention dedicated to areas of weakness in lesson plans, decide which techniques or resources to use to emphasize them Administrator – Identify students who scored on the cusp between two performance levels and ensure they receive targeted support
Progress Monitoring	Understand status in relation to goal and determine whether adjustments are necessary	Student – Review current Fractions score after each practice session and determine if practice might be necessary. Review missed questions to understand why they were missed. Teacher – Conduct informal formative check-ins to see how students are progressing on the content area of interest and adjust teaching accordingly Administrator – Review Quarterly Benchmark results and compare to prior years to determine whether performance is on track for an improved letter grade
Evaluation	Determine whether the goal was achieved, why or why not, and whether any actions taken were particularly helpful or not helpful	Student – View Fractions skill strand growth to see if it was at least 100 points. Reflect on whether the actions you took helped you learn or not. Teacher – Review student performance on the assessment used to measure the content area (common formative assessment, unit test, Quarterly Benchmark, or other teacher-created quiz or assignment) and determine whether you are satisfied with the outcome of your plan. Administrator – Review state test scores when they become available and compare to prior year.



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