

## What Is Assessment Literacy and Why Is It Important?

Student assessment has become increasingly important in education. Yet, despite the link between instruction and assessment—and the proliferation of large-scale and classroom assessment programs—most of those effected by student assessment may not understand all they need to know about assessment.

An “assessment literate” individual has skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to:

- use the right measures and methods matched to a clear assessment purpose
- make appropriate decisions from the accurate information elicited
- foster better educated students—students who become self-regulating, lifelong learners

All education stakeholders—students, families, teachers, school administrators, and local and state policymakers—would benefit from learning more about:

- assessment tools and strategies used, and their purposes
- the types of assessment that can best match objectives
- the strengths and shortcomings of the various types of measures

They also need to be prepared to use the assessment results to benefit students, to improve their learning and their achievement.

Michigan has a set of “Assessment Literacy Standards” for various individuals who are affected by student assessments. These standards were developed by the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) and endorsed by the State Board of Education in 2016. They serve as the foundation for understanding what assessment literacy means and the role and purpose of comprehensive, balanced, quality assessment systems.

Assessment literacy is essential in this era where important decisions are being made about students, educators, and educational systems based on the data collected from students. Understanding the appropriate roles that student assessment can play to determine levels of student achievement, as well as to guide improved learning, is critical. Understanding what various assessment methods can and cannot accomplish is important to ensure that assessment information is used in the most positive and accurate manner possible.

### Resources

[What do we mean by Assessment Literacy?](#) Assessment Learning Network (ALN) Learning Point, Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2016

[What constitutes a high-quality, comprehensive, balanced assessment system?](#) ALN Learning Point, Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2016

[Michigan’s Assessment Literacy Standards](#)

### Put Into Practice

1. Read through Michigan’s Assessment Literacy Standards and assess where you might need to fill gaps in your current understanding of assessment.
2. Consider making assessment literacy a goal when planning staff professional learning. Incorporate learning opportunities and resources provided by the MDE, MAC, or other assessment organizations.
3. View and share this [short video](#) by Interim State Superintendent, Sheila Alles, describing how the MDE prioritizes the use of a comprehensive and balanced student assessment system **in support of the whole child**.