

MAC News

The Newsletter of the Michigan Assessment Consortium



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Special Interest Articles:

- **MAC Activity Under Way 1**
- **Upcoming PD Dates 1**

Individual Highlights:

MAC Organization Takes Shape 2

Assessment Development 2

MAC News 2

Board of Directors 3

MAC Vision 3

Work on Balanced Assessment 4

Resources on the Web 4

MAC Activity Under Way

The school year has begun, and so has activity for the Michigan Assessment Consortium - the MAC for short. Currently, there are activities under way for the entire group, while the two MAC committees - one for assessment development and the other for professional development, have already undertaken planning activities for the remainder of this year and next school year. These plans are detailed in this newsletter, while additional information is available from

any Board member.

The MAC exists to serve the needs of Michigan's local and intermediate school districts - to improve the assessments used in our schools through increased professional development and advocacy for high quality assessments.

If there are areas that your district needs help with, do let us know - that might be the start of a new activity for the MAC. See the mission statement for the MAC on page 3.

Upcoming PD Dates

Two additional major professional development activities will take place next year (on top of the PD session with Rick Stiggins held on October 8; see page 4 on how to access the archived session). The new dates are:

- January 28, 2009, 9 - 11 am - Dr. Carol Commodore will present "The Connection Between Motivation, Learning Theory and Our Assessment Practice" Carol is the founding member of Leadership, Learning and Assessment, a founding member of the Wisconsin Assessment Consortium and is an independent consultant associated with the Assessment Training Institute.
- April 23, 2009, 9 - 11 am - Margaret Heritage will speak on "Learning Progressions." Margaret, who is the assistant director for professional development at the CRESST at UCLA, will speak on the importance of learning progressions in the formative

assessment process. For formative assessment to be effective it must be linked to learning progressions that are clear. They can also help teachers locate students' current learning status on their way toward the standard.

Each session will be brought to the state in-person and via videoconference, permitting educators unable to attend in person to do so "virtually." Educators who are able to attend in person will have the added opportunity of participating in a question-and-answer session that will follow each speaker's presentation.

To receive more information about each of these activities, or those of the organization, make sure that your name and e-mail address is on the official MAC mailing list. To add your name (or that of a colleague) to the list, please e-mail: roeber@msu.edu.

"MAC as a formal organization has begun to take shape."

MAC Organization Takes Shape

During the September 5-7 weekend, fifteen individuals who shared the common interest in helping to establish the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC) as a formal organization gathered at a retreat site up north to lay the groundwork for the new organization. MAC as a formal organization has begun to take shape.

At the retreat, the group defined the types of professional development and assessment

development work that the group might undertake. In addition, the group developed initial mission and vision statements to guide the work of the group. These statements are shown elsewhere in this edition of the newsletter.

The founding group also discussed some of the procedures for operating the MAC. These included the nature of memberships in the group, potential activities, and other related matters.

Assessment Development Plans

The MAC assessment committee has met twice to discuss potential assessment development projects. These include the potential of developing interim benchmark assessments in the area of social studies, and the creation of summative assessments in the area of CTE secondary technical skills assessments. Each of these is an area where ISDs/RESAs have been working and where assessments are needed.

If approved by the membership, these projects would be carried

out collaboratively within the state, using local and intermediate educators and others to create the needed assessments. The goal of this assessment development work is to create needed assessments that are of higher quality and that are produced at lower cost than what any one district could produce. The assessment committee is scheduled to meet again on December 10 and will continue its exploration of these projects.

MAC News

The purpose of a newsletter is to provide information to educators who are interested in improved student assessment and achievement. We hope to publish it periodically to keep you apprised of the activities of the organization so you can become more involved in the MAC. As this

newsletter points out, there are planned activities in both professional and assessment development. These are ways that you can be a part of this new effort to collaboratively improve the student assessments being used and developed.

MAC Board of Directors

The following individuals have agreed to serve as ad hoc members of the initial MAC Board. During this coming year, organizational procedures will be developed to determine how Board members and officers will be selected. Until then, this is the slate of Board members:

President: Kathy Dewsbury-White, Ingham ISD

Secretary: Ed Roeber, MSU

Treasurer: Kim Young, Ionia County ISD

Board Members:

Judy Backes, Macomb ISD

Robby Cramer, MSTA

Bruce Fay, Wayne RESA

Karen Mlcek, Wexford-

Missaukee ISD

Joseph Martineau, MDE OEAA

Olga Moir, MASCD

Dodie Raycraft, St. Joseph County ISD

Rochelle Rubin, MSTA

Betty Underwood, MDE OSI

Mike Yocum, Oakland ISD

Please feel free to interact with any of the Board members regarding the MAC, including your interest in being involved in MAC activities, ideas for new projects, and so forth. Persons interested in getting involved are welcome to join either the assessment or professional development committees. Volunteers are always welcome!

"During this coming year, organizational procedures will be developed to determine how Board members and officers will be selected."

MAC Vision for Michigan Educators

The MAC vision for assessment in Michigan includes the following:

Formative assessment and a balanced assessment system are valued components of Michigan education.

All Michigan educators understand and implement a system of coherent curriculum, balanced assessment and effective instruction.

A network of assessment coaches and partners function effectively to support the implementation of sound balanced assessment practices.

All teachers and administrators graduating from Michigan institutions of higher education are adequately prepared in

formative assessment practices and balanced assessment systems.

Michigan educational entities (e.g. districts, ISDs, educational organizations, universities, etc.) actively seek to collaborate with other entities on the development of assessment products and services.

Information on assessment products and services is readily available, in an organized manner, to Michigan educators.

These are the guiding principles that will direct the work of the MAC. Members are invited to comment on this visionary statement. Please send comments to:

Kathy Dewsbury-White at the following address: KDWhite@inghamisd.org

MDE/MAC PD Work on Balanced Assessment

MAC Musings

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*Improving
student learning
and achievement
through
coherent
curriculum,
balanced
assessment and
effective
instruction*

The next cohorts of balanced assessment trainings have begun for the 2008-09 school year. The goal is to advance the work already undertaken by providing information, ideas, and support to Michigan educators as they learn and implement formative assessment strategies. In response to this challenge, a cadre of coaches and learning teams has been recruited from intermediate school districts and local school districts.

In October, coaches were specially trained in foundational formative assessment and in the facilitation of learning teams in a formative culture. During the first week of December, learning teams will be engaged in thinking and discussion around the formative assessment process. With the support of professional development providers from Measured Progress (and underwritten by MDE OEAA), coaches

will work throughout the year with their learning teams as teachers implement formative assessment strategies in their classrooms. In addition, coaches will guide learning teams in exploring monthly themes linked to formative assessment. Themes may include feedback for learning, self-assessment, and using assessment to adjust instruction. Learning teams and their coaches will gather together in May to share their work and to develop a learning team action plan for the next school.

In addition to the trainings, our teams and coaches will be volunteering information for an exploratory study. The essential research question is "What is the impact of this formative assessment professional development on learning and implementation (i.e., practice)?" Analysis of the information collected will inform next steps and instruction of projected future coach training and learning team training.

Balanced Assessment Resources on the Web

The website www.mistreamnet.com has two videoconferences by Dr. Rick Stiggins for your use. PPTs and additional readings are also posted.

1 - "Creating a Balanced Assessment System for Student Success: A Conversation with Dr. Rick Stiggins" (air date March 7, 2007) Dr. Stiggins addressed the importance of a balanced assessment system and the roles of teachers, students, and other stakeholders in the assessment process.

2 - "7 Actions - Assessment for Learning, the Achievement Gap & Effective Schools" (air date October 8, 2008) Dr. Stiggins shared seven specific actions that tackle the role of assessment in serving the learning needs of students with multiple issues.