

# MAC News

The Newsletter of the Michigan Assessment Consortium



May 2009

Volume 1, Issue 3

## Special Interest Articles:

- **MAC Completes First Year** 1
- **It's a Wrap - Past PD** 1

## Individual Highlights:

**Planning 2010 PD Programs** 2

**Assessment Development** 2

**MAC News** 2

**Board of Directors** 3  
3

**Balanced Assessment Work** 4

**Dansville's Assessment Work** 4

## MAC Completes First Year

As the 2009-10 school year comes to a conclusion, the MAC is finishing its first full year. Since its inception in May 2008, the Consortium has carried out several professional development programs for Michigan educators. In addition, at least one collaborative assessment development project is under way and others are being planned.

There are new activities that are being planned that will expand the reach and impact of the MAC, and we would like your

input on how the Consortium can meet your needs and interests, as detailed in this newsletter.

There are two committees that do the work of the MAC - one for assessment development and one for professional development. Each could use your help. Please see the list of MAC Board shown on page 3 of this newsletter to contact any Board member to get involved in the MAC - your organization to improve the quality of assessment practices in the state of Michigan.

## It's a Wrap -- Past PD Programs

During the past year plus, the MAC put on four PD programs for Michigan educators. These were:

1 - "Creating a Balanced Assessment System for Student Success: A Conversation with Dr. Rick Stiggins" (air date March 7, 2008). 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.

3 - "The Connection Between Motivation, Learning Theory and Our Assessment Practice" (air date January 28, 2009) Dr. Carol

Commodore shared ideas about how good quality assessments can serve to motivate students' learning, which in turn can improve their achievement.

4 - "Learning Progressions" (air date April 23, 2009) Margaret Heritage spoke on the importance of learning progressions in the formative assessment process. Ideally, a learning progression is a logical sequence of instruction that may occur over one or more school years that leads students to accomplish something of significance. 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 achieving a standard.

To view these sessions, go to [www.mistreamnet.com](http://www.mistreamnet.com), click on "Video On Demand."

Excellent-quality  
professional  
development  
programs are  
available online.

## Planning the 2009-10 PD Programs

The MAC professional development committee needs your help - to determine which speakers and which topics you would like to see the MAC bring to you for the coming school year.

The suggestions could be of several types:

- a favorite speaker that you have heard and that you feel would be a presenter that others could learn from;
- a topic that is of interest to you and/or educators in your area of the state;
- an area of need that is prevalent in your district or school that you would like the MAC to address.

If any of these apply, please go to the new MAC website and participate in the online survey about past and upcoming PD topics and presenters. The website is

[www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org](http://www.michiganassessmentconsortium.org)

Please send your ideas to Kim Young, chair of the MAC professional development committee. She and the rest of the committee will be putting together the 2009-10 schedule of PD programs and could really use your help in coming up with good ideas. Send those ideas to Kim at: [Youngk1@michigan.gov](mailto:Youngk1@michigan.gov).

## Assessment Development Plans Unfold

The MAC assessment committee continues to plan potential assessment development projects in these areas:

- Interim benchmark assessments in social studies, based on the curricula and instructional models developed by the Michigan Citizenship Collaborative Curriculum (MC3);
- CTE secondary technical skills summative assessments for CTE completers;
- Interim benchmark and/or summative Science assessments for the high school.

Each of these is an area where ISDs/RESAs/others could work together on the assessments needed. Once enough interested parties "sign on," the project can begin, 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, produced at lower cost than what any one district could produce on its own.

## MAC News

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information to educators interested in improved student assessment and achievement. MAC News is published quarterly to keep you apprised of the activities of the MAC.

There are activities planned in both professional development and assessment development. You (yes, you!) can be a part of this effort to collaboratively improve the student assessments being developed and used. Let any of us know of your interest in getting involved!

## MAC Board of Directors

The following individuals have been serving as the initial MAC Board this school year. Organizational procedures have been developed to determine how Board members and officers will be selected in the future. The current roster of Board members is as follows:

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

Interim Director, MDE OSI

Mike Yocum, Oakland ISD

Please feel free to contact any of the Board members regarding the MAC. Persons interested in getting involved are welcome to join either the assessment or professional development committees. Volunteers are always welcome!

---

"Persons interested in getting involved in the activities of the MAC are more than welcome to join in!"

## MAC/MC3 Implement TD Project

In late May, representatives of the MAC and the Michigan Civics Curriculum Collaborative (MC3) met for the first time to begin the development of the first interim benchmark social studies assessments to go along with the curriculum and instructional resources already prepared by the MC3 group.

Classroom teachers who worked on the World History section (or who have implemented in their classrooms) were selected as the initial item developers. The goal of the project is to produce prototype assessments that teachers implementing the units of instruction can use to determine student achievement of the unit.

A variety of types of assessment will be used in this prototype including performance assessments, projects, presentations and other innovative approaches to assessment. The goal is to provide these materials to schools by next school year.

## MDE/MAC Continue PD Work on Balanced Assessment

### MAC News

Editor: Ed Roeber  
Phone: (517) 432-0427  
Fax: (517) 432-6202  
E-Mail: [roeber@msu.edu](mailto:roeber@msu.edu)

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

The initial cohorts of 30 coaches and approximately 200 K-12 Michigan educators completed their first year of training with a large celebration of accomplishments at a meeting held May 20.

Teams were provided professional development and supporting materials and resources to begin deepening their understanding of the formative assessment process. Over the next several months, teams met regularly, facilitated by their site-based coach. Each month had a theme to guide team learning, such as feedback for learning, self-assessment, and using assessment to adjust instruction.

Learning teams were provided articles, research and materials to support their understanding and implementation of Feedback for Learning. Team members then shared their learning and practiced with their learning team, discussing the implications and considerations of their classroom practice.

Communication on a regular basis is an important component of the project. Teams and coaches have access to a user-friendly website for resources, information, and announcements about professional learning teams and formative assessment. Coaches have ongoing communication with OEAA staff and the professional development provider, Measured Progress to support their work with teams and to adjust to the needs of coaches and their teams.

During the 2009-10 school year, this effort will expand to more than 100 school teams and coaches. Individuals interested in serving as coaches or who wish to nominate a team are encouraged to contact Kim Young, Michigan Department of Education at [youngk1@michigan.gov](mailto:youngk1@michigan.gov). The work will continue and expand on the coach/learning team efforts of the current year, bringing the benefits of such work to a larger number of schools.

### Dansville High School Balanced Assessment Team

As part of the Developing and Implementing the MDE/MAC work on balanced assessment, four teachers from Dansville High School have formed a team. Kristen Fancher (Science), Jason Gubeno (Mathematics), Dan Price (Social Studies), and Amber VanStempvoort (Mathematics). They meet on a regular basis to share ideas, strategies and experiences with using formative assessment, which has changed their classroom practice in ways that improve student learning and increase their efficacy as teachers.

Dan Price, Social Studies teacher, said that since he has been using assessment strategies such as rewriting expectations into student friendly language, and asking students to reflect on their learning, his students are achieving success at a higher rate than in previous years.

When asked about how the assessment work has changed her practice, Amber VanStempvoort, Mathematics teacher said:

"Thinking about assessment this year has definitely had a huge impact on the way I approach learning. Focusing more on formative assessment as a way to build knowledge so that they (students) are successful on the summative assessments has made me more confident that the grades the students are earning are true reflections of their content knowledge. I have also noticed a change in the way my students approach challenges - they are no longer shutting down as soon as they cannot figure something out right away. They are more willing to try and try again until they get it because they know the goal is for them to learn, not for me to nail them on a quiz. Spending time with an assessment team has been the best thing so far for my curriculum and overall approach to teaching. Working on assessment and changing the way I think about grades has given me a huge boost and has fought off the "teaching blues" because it has given me and my students hope in the learning process."