



Tools and Resources to Develop a Learning Focused District Assessment System

MI School Testing Conference
February 13, 2018

Link to session materials goo.gl/Pi5U4z



Welcome and Introductions

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Who's In the Room?

- Quick Survey of roles participants hold in their districts...

Central Office



Which? University




Administrator

TEACHERS




Vision of the Project

- Although the topic of balanced assessment (BA) systems has been the subject of considerable recent interest, there is **little practical guidance** for policymakers about how to design and implement balanced assessment systems to leverage associated opportunities and address associated challenges. **Policymakers need clear guidance and frameworks to support the implementation of coherent balanced assessment systems to support student learning as the primary objective.**
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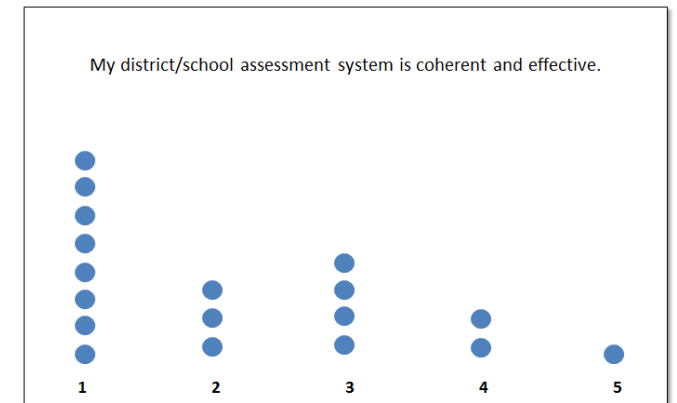
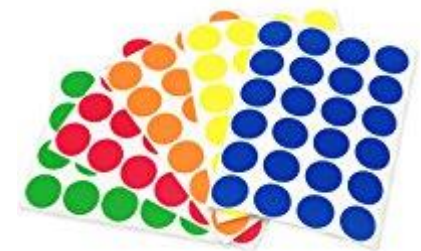


Session Purpose

- This session brings together a practical perspectives on designing and implementing coherent balanced assessment systems, including evaluating the flow of information across multiple assessments, a framework for developing and implementing instructionally-useful interim assessments, a model for integrating data across various assessments, and the practical realities of implementing a district-based balanced assessment system that incorporates classroom and state assessment activities.
- 


What is the state of your local assessment system?

1. As a table, visit each chart and read each statement.
2. Before engaging in group dialogue, each person should place a **blue** dot on the **pretest** side above the number, indicating the degree to which you agree with the statement. 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Stack your dots vertically.
3. Engage in dialogue around the statement.
(3 minutes per chart)





What to Expect from this Session

- Deeper understanding of the issues surrounding assessment and balanced assessment systems and the work that has yet to be accomplished
 - Introduction to a tool that will aid districts in streamlining assessment systems to create a more coherent and meaningful assessment system
 - Awareness of a project that is underway to assist local districts in this process and the opportunity to learn from their experiences.
- 



Designing and Implementing a District Balanced Assessment System

Problems of Practice

Ellen Vorenkamp



The Why

Putting the Project in Context





Balanced Assessment System Definition

A balanced assessment system is one that intentionally and purposefully...

“uses different types of assessment for different purposes. It can also mean the use of assessments **for** learning (to guide it as it is occurring) and **of** learning (to measure how much students have learned at the end of instruction).”

Michigan Assessment Consortium





Clarifying the Definition

- Read the Learning Point Brief using the following debriefing protocol:

v = Makes sense; affirms my thinking

! = “aha”; new insight.

? = Raises a question, challenges my thinking.

X = Something you disagree with or would challenge



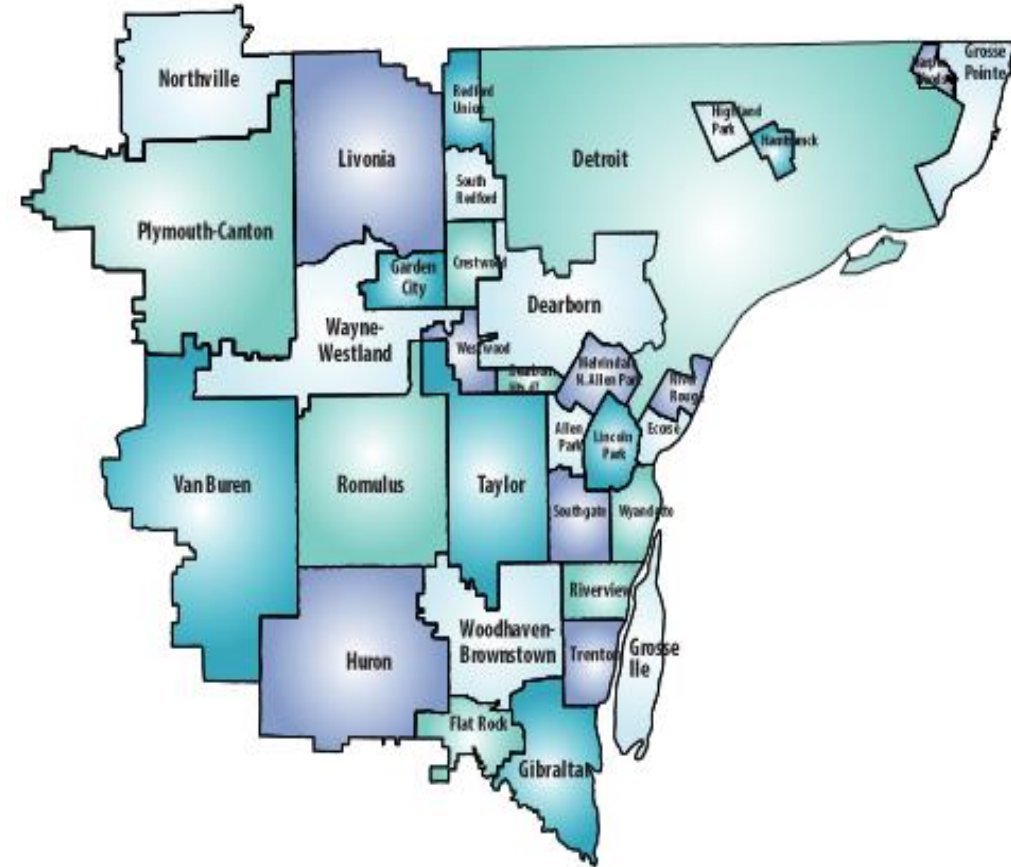
Balanced Assessment System Definition

An assessment system is in balance when appropriate assessment information, in terms of both the type of information and quantity of information is provided to all relevant stakeholders.



Wayne County Context

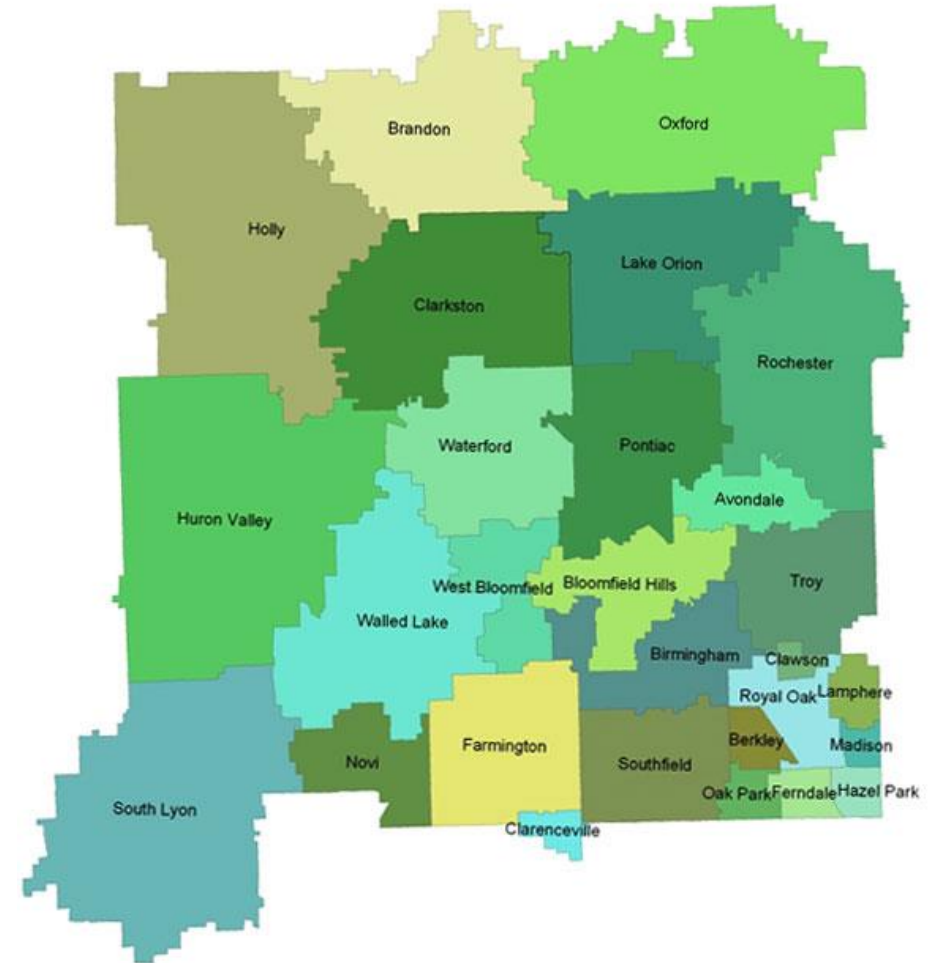
- Wayne County is located in southeast Michigan. It is the most populous county in the State of Michigan.
- There are 33 school districts in 43 Wayne County communities serving approximately 260,000 students.
- Additionally, there are more than 111 Public School Academies (PSAs) serving 53,000 students for a combined total of approximately 313,000 students in public schools county-wide.



Oakland County Context

- Oakland County is located in southeast Michigan. It is the second most populous county in the State of Michigan.
- There are 28 school districts in serving approximately 172,000 students.
- Additionally, there are more than 24 Public School Academies (PSAs) serving 12,000 students for a combined total of approximately 184,000 students in public schools county-wide.

Oakland County School Districts



Oakland County Context

Diversity in size

- Traditional public districts range in size from 1,200 to 15,200.

Diversity in resources & capacity

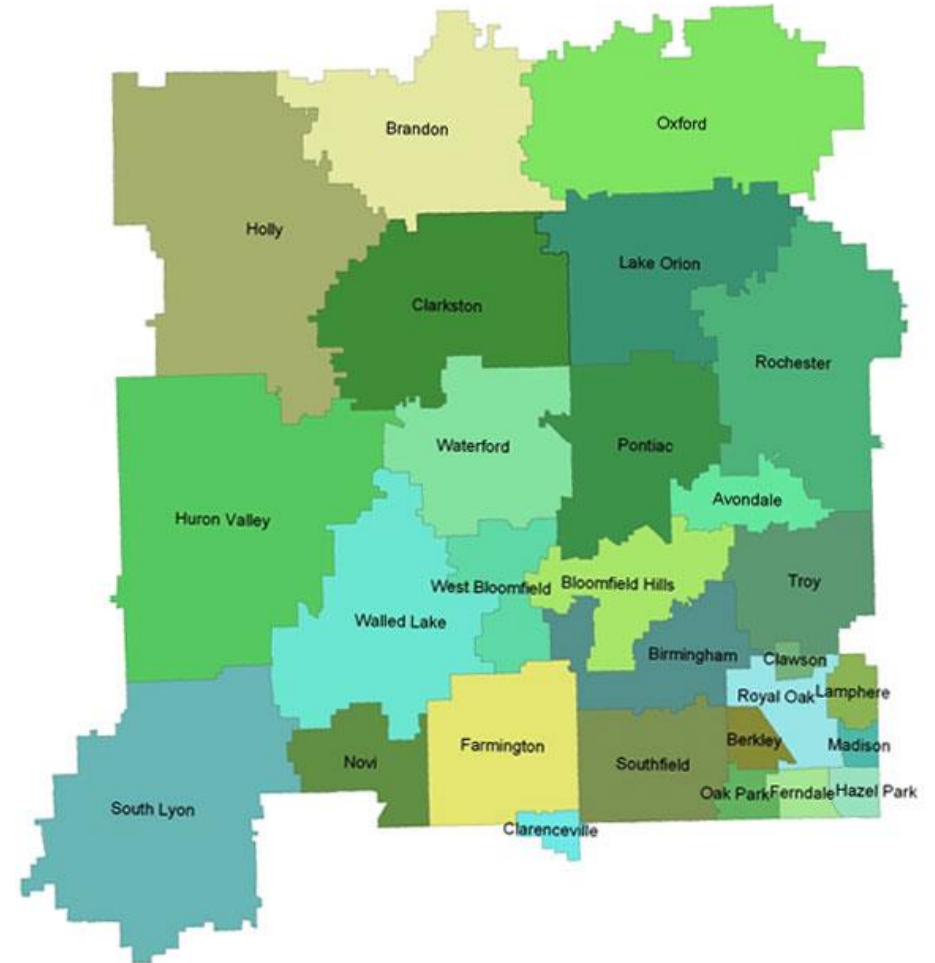
Diversity in demographics

- ED 1-80%, EL 1-25%, African American 1-97%, Asian 0-42%, Hispanic 0-33%, White 3-91%

Diversity in academic achievement

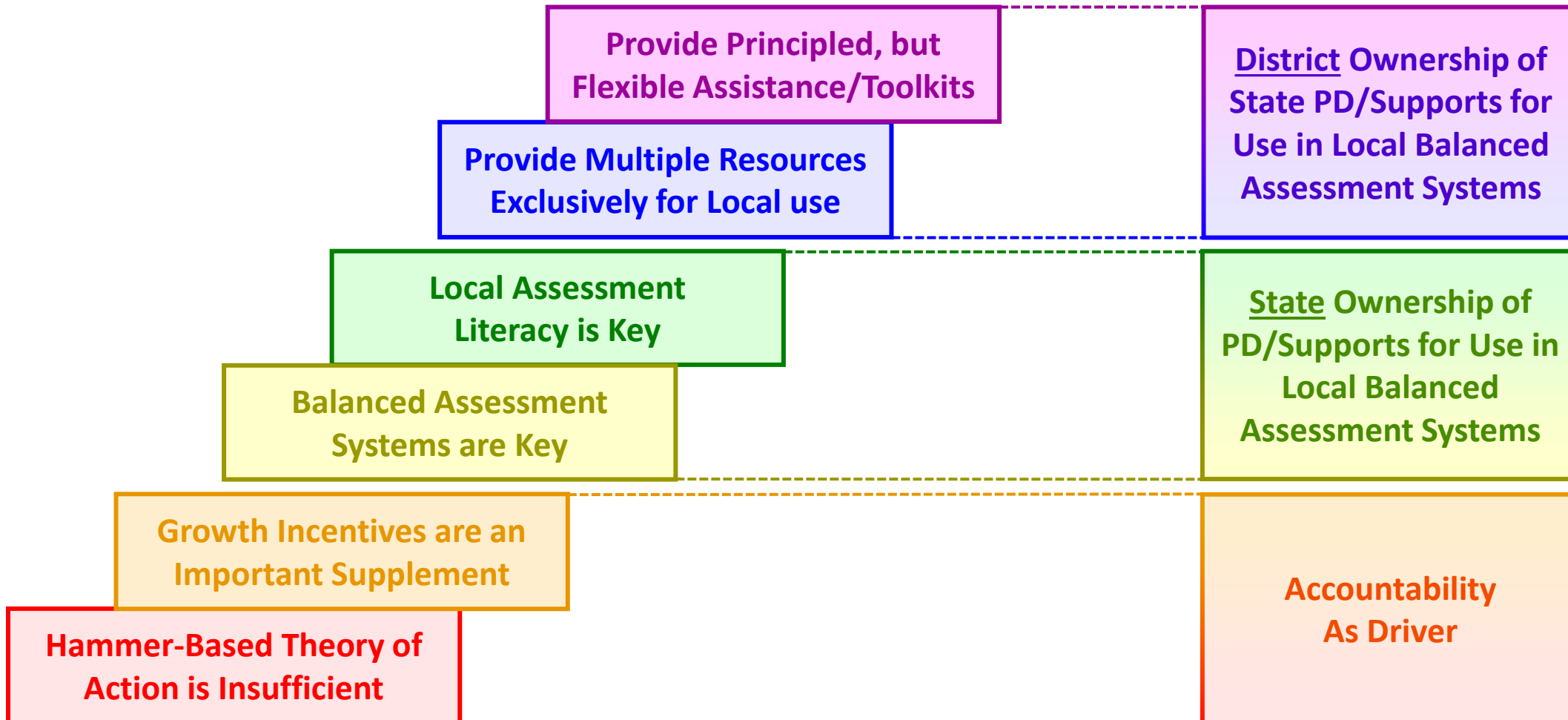
- 5 of top 10 and 2 of bottom 10 (SAT*)

Oakland County School Districts



*Mean SAT total score Spring 2017

National Context: Typical Evolution of State Incentives & Support for Local Improvement



Balanced Assessment Systems



- When engaging in this implementation work, local districts and schools are finding it difficult to balance their assessment systems for a variety of reasons.
- The following are a few of the most prominent ***problems of practice*** noted over the past several years.

The slide features decorative geometric shapes in the top-left and bottom-right corners. The top-left corner consists of overlapping triangles in dark blue, light blue, and maroon. The bottom-right corner features a similar arrangement of overlapping triangles in light blue, maroon, and dark blue.

Problems of Practice

Knowledge

- **Lack of Assessment Literacy**
- Lack of Clarity—Purpose of Assessments
- Lack of Clarity—Structure of a Balanced Assessment System

Systems

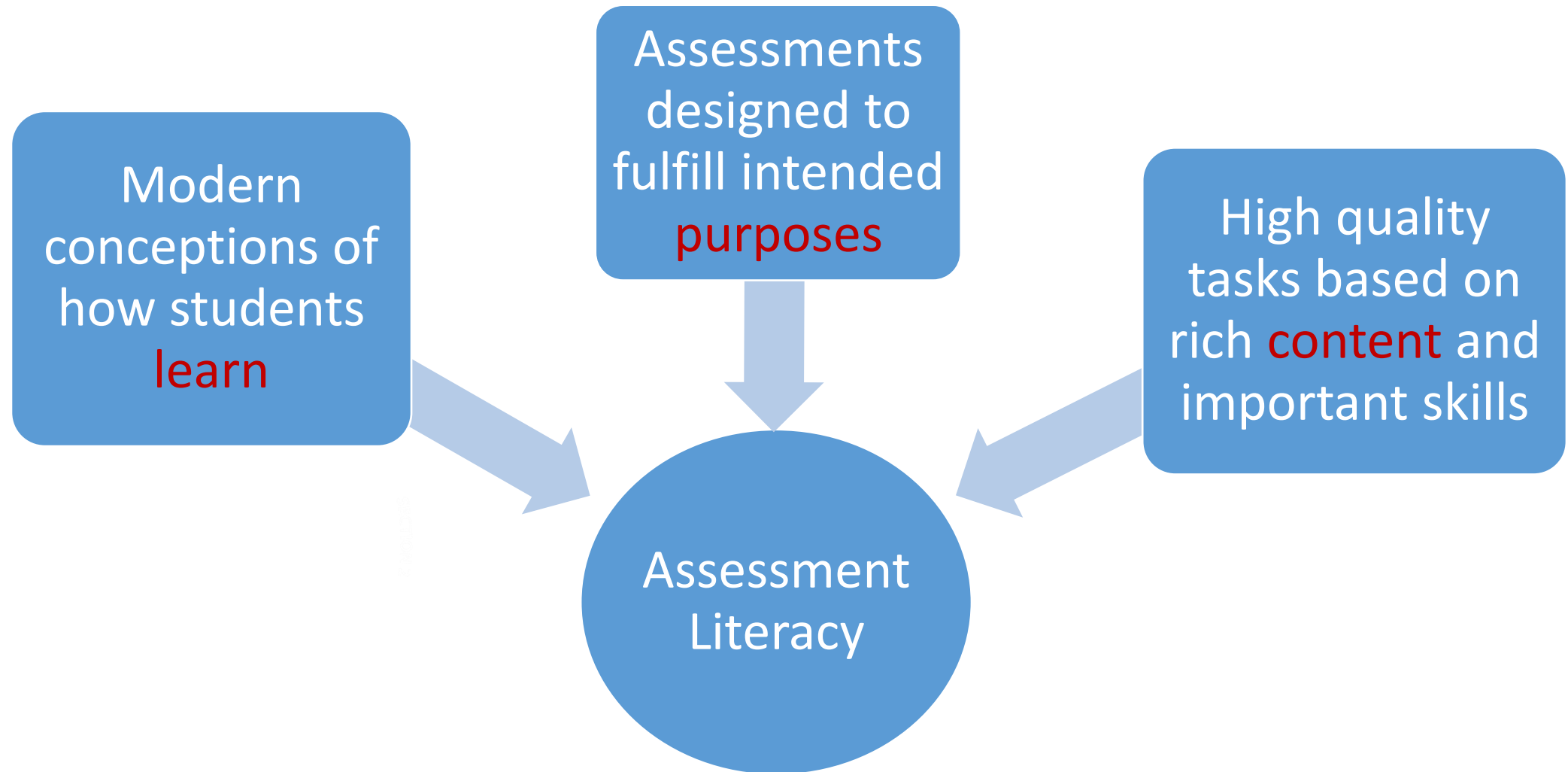
- Power Struggles
- **Accountability Issues that Promote Inappropriate use of Data**
- Policy Conflicts
- Coherence Issues
- Comprehensiveness
- Continuity of Programs

Assessment Literacy

- The knowledge, skills and dispositions associated with designing, selecting, interpreting, and using high-quality assessments to improve student learning and to serve other important educational and policy purposes



Moving to Assessment Literacy



Moving to Assessment Literacy

District/School Assessment Plan

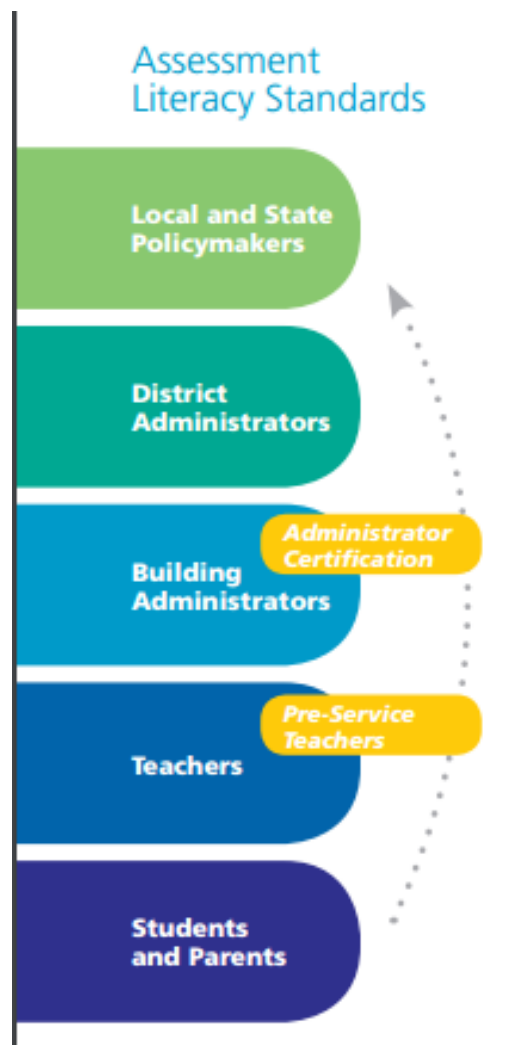
- Create a Philosophy Statement or Guiding Principles
- Develop a written record and agreement of assessments given, when and why
- Professional learning plan that assists staff to learn and to use quality assessment practices

**Philosophy Statement /
Guiding Principles**

Written Record

**Professional
Learning Plan**

MAC Assessment Literacy Standards



FORMAT AND USE

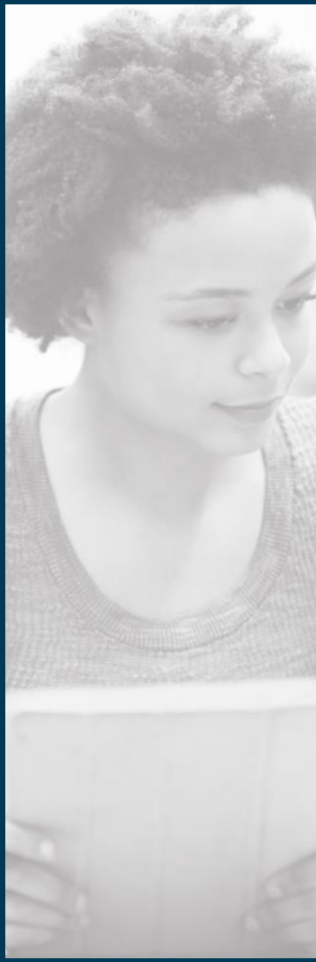
The Assessment Literacy Standards were written for five groups of individuals:

- Students and Parents
- Classroom Teachers
- Building Administrators
- District Administrators
- Policymakers

The standards for each group are separated into Dispositions, Knowledge, and Performance.

- **Dispositions:** standards address what the individual should believe regarding assessment.
- **Knowledge:** standards specify the particular vocabulary, processes and practices that individuals must comprehend.
- **Performance:** standards address the skills and competencies for which individuals must be proficient.

Propels Action



“Our assessments work best in contexts of strong assessment literacy, and they fail us when assessment literacy is lacking. One becomes assessment literate by mastering basic principles of sound assessment practice, coming to believe strongly in their consistent, high-quality application in order to meet the diverse needs of all students, and acting assertively based on those values.”

Michigan Assessment Consortium



The What

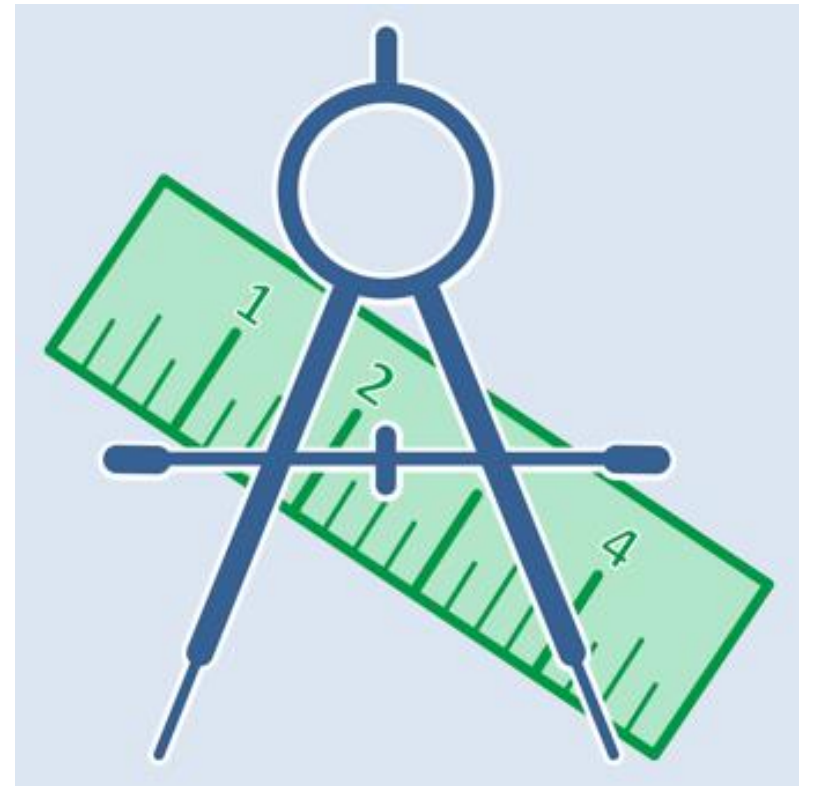
About the Toolkit



A Toolkit to Facilitate a Flexible, Principled Process to Locally Design a District Assessment System

Designed to address two primary, typical challenges

- Lack of Assessment Literacy
- Accountability Issues that Promote Inappropriate Use of Data



Motivating Questions

- Do you have a coherent and effective district and school assessment system that complements and enhances instruction?
- Does it serve student, teacher, administrator, and policymaker needs, and with the correct balance?
- Was the system designed so that teachers, principals, and administrators share power in the service of providing students the best possible education?

- Or does the collection of tests feel more like a collection of bricks than a well-designed house?*

* Coladarci, T. (2002). Is it a House...Or a Pile of Bricks? Important Features of a Local Assessment System. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 83(10). pp. 772-774.


Some Symptoms of Having a Pile of Bricks



- Purposes of Assessment
 - Unclear, misunderstood, understood differently by different people.
 - Given by tradition, but purpose has been forgotten.
 - “System creep,” with new tests added but old ones rarely dropped.
- Appropriate Use
 - Type of assessment may not be appropriate for the intended purpose.
 - Test data are rarely used (if at all) when data become available.
 - New tests added without explicit attention to appropriate use.
 - It feel like some tests will crumble under the weight of use.
- Coherence and Fit with Instruction
 - State, district, and/or classroom tests conflict in timing, content standards, and/or results.
 - It feel like, overall, testing disrupts rather than facilitates instruction.




Challenges in Creating a House Rather than a Pile of Bricks Addressed in the Toolkit and Associated Facilitated Process

- Achieving a **shared assessment vocabulary**
 - Achieving a **shared understanding of intended purposes** of assessment
 - Achieving a shared understanding of the **match between purpose and types/characteristics of assessment**
 - Designing a **parsimonious** system that **minimizes duplication** (and thus the amount of potential instructional time devoted to formal test taking)
- 



Challenges in Creating a House Rather than a Pile of Bricks Addressed in the Toolkit and Associated Facilitated Process

- Designing a **coherent** system in which component are **consistent with an overall vision** and **complementary to each other** in drawing a **balanced** and **non-contradictory** picture of student learning
 - Developing a productive approach to **power sharing** across levels of responsibility (e.g., teacher, principal, central office, superintendent, school board)
 - Developing a sound **plan to implement** the newly designed system that **attends to potential barriers**
 - Developing a sound plan to **maintain the system over time** so that it **evolves as a system** to meet changing needs.
- 




The Vocabulary

- Key Terms and Definitions
- 29 Purposes of Assessment






What is the District Assessment System Design Toolkit?

- An evaluation of the currently-ongoing pilot
 - A (soon-to-be) complete set of materials to support three meetings of a district team to be facilitated by an outside expert, and coordinated with a district liaison.
 - The set of materials includes
 - Advanced readings for workshops
 - Annotated facilitator agendas
 - Simplified participant agendas
 - Slide decks
 - Templates for homework assignments
- 




What is the District Assessment System Design Toolkit

- The materials include
 - Tools for
 - Performing an assessment audit
 - Summarizing the results of the assessment audit
 - Implementing a principled system design process
 - Comparing the results of the audit and the design process
- 




What is the District Assessment System Design Toolkit

- The materials include
 - Templates for
 - Feedback from participants
 - Compiling potential barriers to implementation
 - Developing a project plan for implementation [including strategies to address potential barriers]
 - Creating a design document
 - Developing an project implementation plan
 - Developing a comprehensive report on the results of the process.
- 




Included in the Toolkit and Associated Facilitated Process

- Professional learning regarding...
 - Types and characteristics of assessment
 - Purposes of assessment
 - Matching types and characteristics to purpose
 - Integration of all educator/leader roles within the district
 - Principled processes to...
 - Audit an existing district assessment system
 - Select and prioritize intended purposes of the district assessment system
 - Design/refine a district assessment system to optimally match intended purposes
 - Develop a plan to address potential barriers to implementation
 - A comprehensive end-of-process report that...
 - Describes the principled process
 - Incorporates a design document based on district team decisions
 - Incorporates a set of principles for allowing the system to evolve to meet changing needs, but that builds on the process already completed.
- 




Not Included in the Toolkit and Associated Facilitated Process

- The toolkit and associated facilitated process only prepares the district and its stakeholders to plan implementation and maintenance of the newly designed/refined district assessment system (with associated detailed professional learning)
 - The toolkit and associated facilitated process does not extend into actual implementation and maintenance (with associated detailed professional learning)
 - Additional professional learning will need to be targeted for different types of educators within the district. The MAC's assessment learning network is a great place for targeted professional learning opportunities.
- 



District Investment

- Three approximately 4-hour workshops
 - Sending a team representing teachers, building leadership, central office staff, and district leadership
 - Advance reading materials to minimize the number and duration of meetings.
 - Homework between sessions.
- 




District Return on Investment

- Increased assessment literacy
 - Types and characteristics of assessment
 - Purposes of assessment
 - Match between purpose and types and characteristics of assessment





District Return on Investment

- A comprehensive report detailing...
 - The deliberative process
 - Representation on the district team
 - An assessment system design document and associated schematic representation
 - A compilation of potential barriers to implementation with associated strategies for addressing them
 - A set of principled questions to address ongoing maintenance of a system
- 



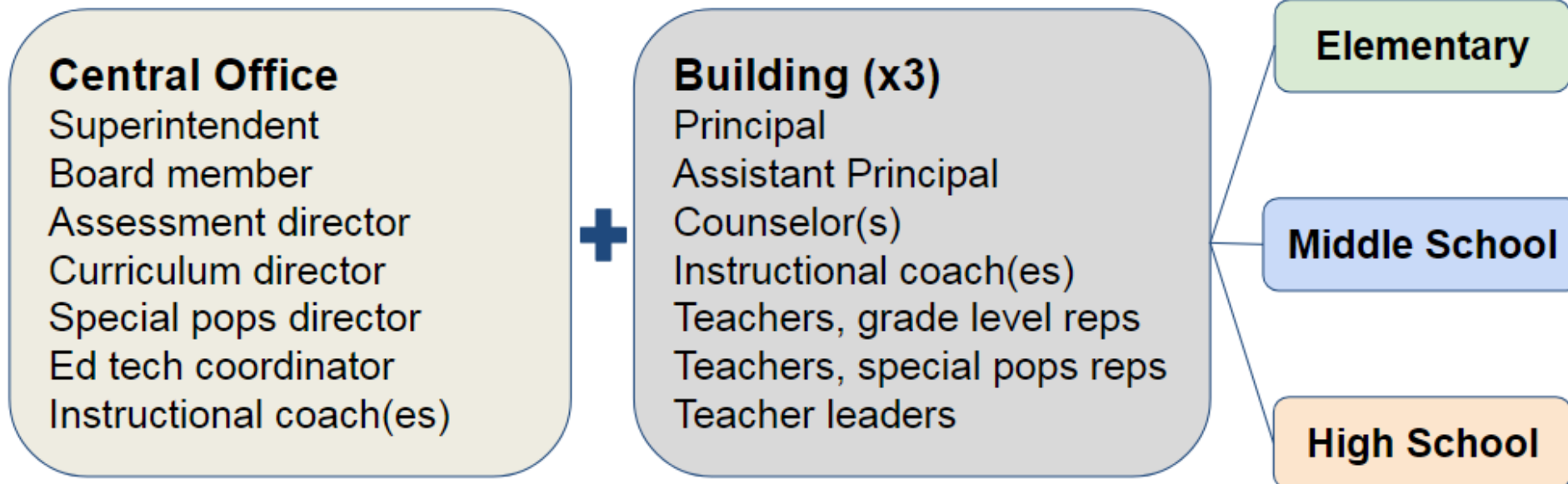
The How

The Pilot



The How – About the Pilot

- Solicited districts to participate in
- Three after school facilitated meetings (3 ½ hrs each) with homework
- Suggested broad-based teams



The How – About the Pilot

Pilot Project Management Team

- Center for Assessment
- Michigan Assessment Consortium
- Wayne RESA (1 district facilitator)
- Oakland Schools (2 district facilitators)



District Teams

- District lead/liaison (primary contact)
- Team members; multiple levels; leaders and practitioners
- Ranged in size from about 10-25



Toolkit process aligned with district goals




The How – Alignment with district goals

District 1

Our participation in the District Assessment System Design (DASD) Toolkit will help us to advance our priorities by looking at our assessment system and analyzing the role it plays in the learning cycle. Specifically, looking at student data (and systems to generate meaningful data) to identifying areas for possible interventions or curricular refinement as it relates to literacy and other core content areas is anticipated.

In addition, participation in this pilot will provide opportunities for structured conversation to strengthen the ties between district leaders within teaching and learning (classroom teachers, teacher leaders, building principals, and central office) to more deeply understand their roles within the learning cycle and how each can more deeply support the role of assessment within the district.






The How – Alignment with district goals

District 2

District 2 will create a well-aligned assessment system that provides important data on teaching and learning with as little impact on instructional time as possible.

We hope that this project will help us in these areas by increasing our assessment literacy and providing a framework to address these questions.

We hope that this toolkit will inform this process, and move beyond just cataloguing assessments as either formative or summative. Alignment has many different dimensions, so we hope that our work with the toolkit will help us look at our assessments in a more critical manner.






The How – Alignment with district goals

District 3

District 3 is focused on strengthening our Tier I instruction for all students through focused curriculum redesign, increasing high-quality instruction, and building a positive learning environment. We have many initiatives going right now that support these priorities, but we know we need to focus in on a few things and become really good at those if we want to see true success for our students.


As we look at our curriculum and instruction, we know that high-quality assessments will be a key to meeting our goals. We think the pilot will allow us to better understand what we currently offer and how to become even better. The data provided by assessments will help us to see what is working best for our students, thereby helping our educators replicate those experiences in other places and spaces.






Workshop Session 1 – Laying the foundation

Goal: Work toward a shared assessment vocabulary and an understanding of the different purposes/uses of assessments, thus, enabling districts to complete an assessment audit before the next workshop.

- Orientation to the toolkit; the why
 - Acknowledging challenges
 - Proposed norms
- 



Workshop Session 1 – Challenges to be expected

- The process will require openness to revisiting existing understanding.
 - The process will require compromise from staff at all levels in the system.
 - The process will require participants to share power across policy boundaries.
 - Voices from all perspectives need to be equally heard and appreciated.
 - Tradition will get in the way
- 


Workshop Session 1 – Proposed Norms

- **Think first of students and the support the system will provide to their educators.**
- Be open to expanding, changing, or even throwing out existing understanding.
- Challenge the limits of what is possible for yourself, your role, and your students.
- Consider your role as one critically important role in a system of such roles.
- Hold the experience, expertise, and needs of other participants with care.
- Protect confidentiality: speak freely and contribute your knowledge and experience.
- Seek to understand before being understood: listen fully and reflectively.
- Participate fully in workshops and complete between-session homework on time.
- Elicit the perspective of all participants so that all voices are heard and appreciated.



Workshop Session 1 – Laying the foundation

Goal: Work toward a **shared assessment **vocabulary and purposes** to enable districts to complete an assessment audit before the next workshop**

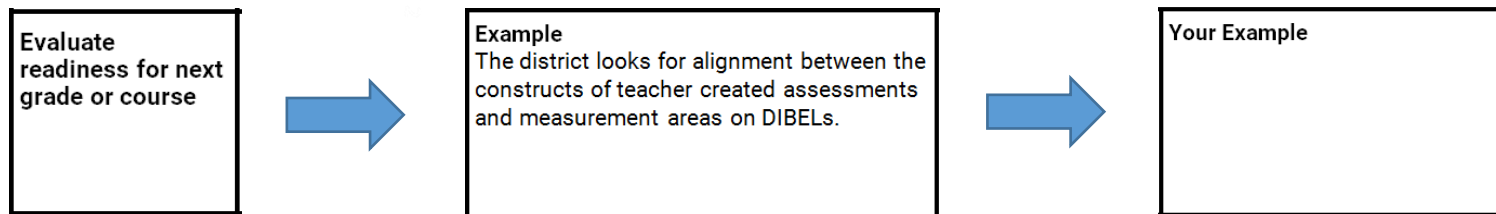
- Assessment vocabulary
 - units of instruction, assessment of/for learning, triangulation, grading, control of content/timing
 - Assessment purposes/uses
 - Team work time with ISD facilitator – preparing for the audit
 - generated examples of assessments at each level (ES, MS, HS) that might fit each of the purposes, using the new shared assessment vocabulary
- 

(Re)Engaging with Vocabulary

Assessment Vocabulary (Blue) & Assessment Purposes (Buff)

At your table groups begin with a set (blue or buff)


1. Individually read the Assessment Purposes & Uses document
2. At your table, match the term with the example
3. Create a real-world example from your context






Workshop Session 2 – Prioritizing Purposes & Uses

Goal: Select and prioritize the intended purposes/uses of the district's desired assessment system

- Refined and reviewed language around assessment vocabulary and purposes/uses; card sort activity
 - Team work time with ISD facilitator using the template provided
 - Step 1 – identified the most important 15 purposes/uses
 - Step 2 – prioritized the 15 as low, mid, high, or critical
 - Step 3 – selected the type of assessment, control over timing/content, and the timing and scope of the desired system
- 



Workshop Session 2 – Prioritizing Purposes & Uses


- The district's priorities and intended purposes/uses were combined with the type, control, and timing/scope ratings developed by the Center for Assessment
 - Preview of what the district's intended system should look
 - Homework: Identifying potential barriers for implementation; suggested solutions or strategies to overcome them
- 



Workshop Session 3

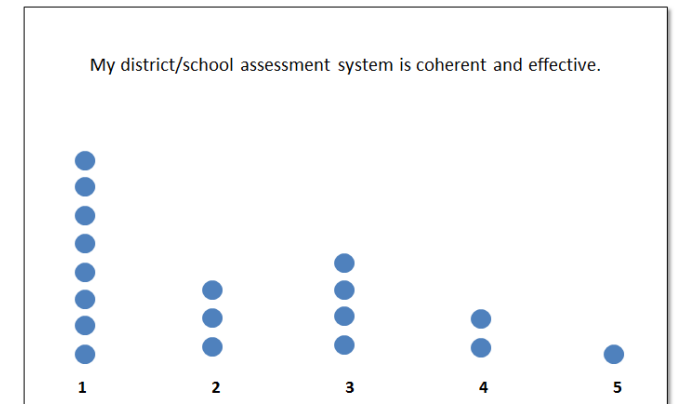
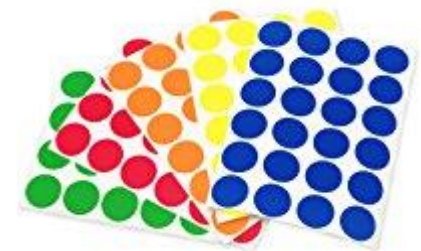
- Revisiting the Formative Assessment process
- Review of the districts' intended systems
- Presentation of district design pictures
- Further refinement of purposes/uses

Going forward: ISD facilitators to continue to work with districts, assisting with completion of implementation plans and subsequent activities



What is the state of your local assessment system?

1. As a table, **revisit** each chart and read each statement.
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3. Engage in dialogue around the statement.
(3 minutes per chart)





Contact us

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Evaluation of Pilot

- Ed Roeber is serving as the evaluator on the pilot.
 - He intends to (and has been asked to) clearly describe any problems in the process and how they might be improved.
 - We want this to be improved so that it can be completed by facilitators outside the team currently piloting the toolkit
 - Will become an open-source toolkit when the pilot and associated revisions are complete.
- 



Questions

