

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 7.38 BALANCED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

(1) DEFINITION AND PURPOSE

(a) Within school districts, people in different roles need different assessment information at different times and in different forms in order to make decisions. The MPS Balanced Assessment System is designed to match assessment types, purposes, and users to improve data-informed decision making throughout the district.

(b) The Balanced Assessment System will support instructional planning, district- and school-improvement planning, curriculum and program evaluation, district-wide resource planning and decision making, and accountability. The Balanced Assessment System will include national, state, district, school-, and classroom-based components. District-level oversight and guidance will be provided to support school staff, and data from assessments will be stored in the district's data dashboard. Data elements will be used to support graduation- and promotion-related decisions for individual students. Selected assessment data will also be reported to the public annually in the District Report Card as per Administrative Policy 2.16, District Accountability System, to promote transparency, shared responsibility for student success, and a focus on results.

(c) All students in all schools will participate in the Balanced Assessment System. Students with disabilities participate with designated supports and accommodations or in alternate assessments per the requirements of Individualized Education Plans. English-learners may be exempt from testing if they have been in the United States less than 12 months and have an English proficiency level of less than two.

(d) The MPS Balanced Assessment System comprises three major components: summative assessments, benchmark assessments, and formative assessments.

(2) SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

(a) Summative assessments are used primarily for student, school, and district accountability. They typically include assessments such as end-of-course tests, chapter tests, state assessments, and national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Some state and national assessment results from these assessments are reported publicly to provide to parents and the broader community with information about student, school and district performance and the effects of school- and program-improvement plans.

(b) The district's role in summative assessments is to guide the development of assessments and to coordinate the administration of district, state, and national tests. The district is responsible for reporting the results from state and national assessments in a manner consistent with state and federal guidelines and district policy. The district will also use the data for district improvement planning, school interventions, and program/policy-evaluation research. The role of school personnel is to administer the summative assessments consistent with Administrative Policy 2.14, Assessment Ethics, and to use the data, as applicable, for grade reporting and school-improvement planning.

(3) BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS

(a) Benchmark assessments are standardized assessments administered multiple times per year. The purpose of benchmark assessments is as follows:

1. The benchmark assessments will be used as part of the district's universal screening process to identify children in need of intervention;
2. They will inform instruction as much as formative assessment data do;
3. They can be used to measure students' responses to school-based interventions;
4. They can be administered upon entry into the district;

5. They provide information to monitor and evaluate school and program performance.

(b) The district's role in benchmark assessments is to provide and score assessments in selected grades and to provide reports to individual students, parents classroom teachers, schools, and the district office. The district is also responsible for providing professional development for learning teams and classroom teachers in interpreting and using benchmark data to monitor performance and improve instruction. The schools' role is to administer benchmark assessments to all students and to use the data for instructional and school-improvement planning by identifying and intervening with students at risk of future academic failure.

(4) FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS

(a) Formative assessment practices are intended to inform instruction; provide immediate, specific, and descriptive feedback for students; to guide differentiation of instructional practices; and facilitate students' goal setting and self-assessment. Typically, these assessments are not graded. Formative assessments shall be used across all content areas and all grades within the district. Data from these informal assessment strategies may be reported to the district.

(b) Formal assessment for progress monitoring is required with all students who receive additional educational supports and interventions. Progress monitoring is used to assess academic performance, quantify rate of improvement or responsiveness to instruction, and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction or intervention. Progress-monitoring procedures permit ongoing decision making and adjustment of interventions when needed, thereby increasing the likelihood of helping students acquire new skills, knowledge, or improved functioning. Progress monitoring occurs frequently throughout the course of the intervention/support, and data are routinely analyzed by staff so that adjustments can be made. These data will be available to the district.

(c) The district's role in formative assessments is to provide grade-level standards/learning targets, sample assessments of those targets/standards, grade-level exemplars of student work, progress-monitoring tools, and professional development for educators. The schools' role is to implement formative assessment practices, score assessments, analyze data within the learning team/collaborative teacher teams, and use the data to inform instruction and monitor the efficacy of interventions.

(5) ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

A list of current assessments and a description of each shall be posted to the Research, Assessment, and Data page of the MPS website.

History: Adopted 2-22-95; revised 10-31-2000, 8-2-01, 01-28-10; 6-27-24

Previous Coding: Admin. Policy 1L, 1LA, prior to May 1995; Admin. Policy 9.38, May 1995-August 1996

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