

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE  
MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**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, 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 common assessments will be stored in the district's data warehouse. 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. Exemptions for schools may be permitted in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis. Students with disabilities may participate with accommodations or in alternate assessments per the requirements of Individualized Education Plans. Early English-language learners may be assessed in their first languages.

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

**(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). Results from these assessments are reported publicly to provide to parents and the broader community information about student performance and the effects of school- and program-improvement plans.

(b) The district's role in summative assessment is to guide the development of common end-of-course tests and to coordinate the administration of 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, including reporting value-added analyses of standardized test data. 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 ASSESSMENT**

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

1. the benchmark assessments will be used to serve as the district's universal screening measure to identify children in need of intervention;
2. they will inform instruction much as do formative assessment data;
3. they can be used to measure students' responses to school-based interventions;
4. they can be administered upon entry into the district; and
5. they provide information to monitor and evaluate school and program performance.

(b) The district's role in benchmark assessment is to provide and to score assessments in selected grades and to provide reports to individual students, 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 to 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 for future academic failure.

#### **(4) FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

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

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**Previous Coding:** Admin. Policy IL, ILA, prior to May 1995; Admin. Policy 9.38, May 1995-August 1996

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