Strengthening and Streamlining Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Guidelines and Support for Leadership Teams

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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines and resources to help educators in supervisory unions and districts develop a streamlined, balanced local comprehensive assessment system for all students. This system should contain information that describes the types and purposes of assessments; the methods of ensuring validity, reliability, and fidelity; the decision-making processes used to inform instruction; and the logistics of using assessments effectively.

This document was initially produced in 2017 following a thorough review of the literature and current practices in the field of student assessment by Agency of Education staff as well as educators in the field. It provided a synthesis of research and policy, including the 2014 VTmtss Field Guide and the Education Quality Standards (EQS).

This document has been updated by staff at the Agency of Education. Additional work has been completed on Appendix B to provide the field with updated information about assessments included in that section. Connections to Act 28, Act 1, Act 173, the 2019 VTmtss Field Guide as well as the 2019 Blueprint for Early Literacy Comprehensive System of Services, PreK Through Third Grade have been incorporated into this version of the document. Additionally, Appendix B now includes assessment resources for content areas beyond mathematics and English language arts (ELA).

Policy and State Board of Education Rules Connections

State and federal policies, such as the ones below, require a local comprehensive assessment system to support their implementation and efficacy.

Act 1

The intent of Act 1 is to promote an overarching focus on preparing all students to participate effectively in an increasingly racially, culturally, and socially diverse Vermont and in global communities; ensure every student is in a safe, secure, and welcoming learning and social environment in which bias, whether implicit or explicit, toward others based on their membership in ethnic or social groups is acknowledged and addressed appropriately; challenge racist, sexist, or ableist bias, or bias based on gender or socioeconomic status, using principles aligned with restorative practice; specify prohibited conduct as it relates to racism, sexism, ableism, and other ethnic and social biases and refers to the process through which alleged misconduct will be addressed, including disciplinary action as appropriate; establish disciplinary responses to racial or ethnic and social group incidents that include the utilization of restorative practices where appropriate; and ensure that the school diversifies its workforce and provides its personnel training in how best to address bias incidents.

Act 28

This act provides funding and technical assistance to support improved literacy outcomes, including funding for: (1) providing professional development for educators in methods of teaching literacy in the five key areas of literacy instruction as identified by the National

Reading Panel, which are phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension; and (2) assisting supervisory unions in implementing evidence-based systems-wide literacy approaches that address learning loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Act 173

Act 173 of 2018 is an act relating to enhancing the effectiveness, availability, and equity of services provided to students who require additional support. The act has four main levers, one of which is Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems. The Agency of Education is integrating procedures and processes in order to support the field to adapt and adopt the systemic changes necessary to implement the goals of Act 173.

Vermont Education Quality Standards (EQS)

Proficiency-Based Learning (PBL) (2120.8. Local Graduation Requirements)

Student achievement begins with highly effective instruction, informed by research and guided by state standards and proficiency-based requirements. Vermont's EQS require that locally-adopted school graduation requirements be rooted in demonstrations of student proficiency. A comprehensive and balanced assessment system should align with Vermont's proficiency-based learning policy and the standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems (2123 State and Local Comprehensive Assessment System)

Supervisory unions must implement a local comprehensive assessment system that includes a balance of assessment types that provide information about student proficiency in a variety of ways, clearly communicated performance criteria, and methods for communicating student progress.

VTmtss Framework (EQS: 2121.5. Tiered System of Support)

A Multi-tiered System of Supports framework (Title 16 V.S.A. § 2902) for instruction and intervention is comprehensive, systematic, and relies on a variety of assessment data to maximize the opportunities for all students to learn within any content area. The VTmtss Framework articulates the components and principles of an effective school system that are necessary to provide every student with the academic, behavioral, and social emotional supports and services needed to succeed.

Act 77: Flexible Pathways (EQS: 2120.2. Flexible Pathways)

The Flexible Pathways Initiative (Title16 V.S.A. § 941), otherwise known as Act 77, was created to require school districts to develop and expand high quality educational experiences that acknowledge individual goals, learning styles, and the pathways by which a student can meet locally defined Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs). This initiative describes the transition to personalized instruction and learning, a move documented in the expectation that all Vermont students in grades 7 through 12 participate in "an ongoing personalized learning planning process." A local comprehensive assessment system that is balanced and

robust is the primary vehicle by which we can know and understand our students, a fundamental requirement in personalizing learning, and develop Personalized Learning Plans.

Strengthening and Streamlining a Local Comprehensive Balanced Assessment System: Essential Topics for Consideration

Components of a Local Comprehensive Balanced Assessment System

A Local Comprehensive Assessment System utilizes multiple measures of learning across all content areas, for various purposes, and data are used to inform instructional and programmatic decisions.

> A system of assessments collates information from different sources to address a wider range of needs. The system does so in a way that results in a more holistic picture of students, schools, and educational systems. Such an approach does not waste or duplicate information or effort, but also does not rely on a single source of data inappropriately. (Conley and Darling-Hammond, p. 29)

These measures include screening, benchmark, diagnostic, formative, progress monitoring, and summative assessments as well as state assessments. As stated in the VTmtss Field Guide 2019: the Vermont Agency of Education's Multi-tiered System of Supports Guidelines:

> A comprehensive assessment system contains within it all of the information needed for making decisions that enhance, ensure and improve quality, equity and opportunity. A balanced assessment system contains many types of information about students and about the system so that users can answer and explore a wide range of questions and can gain fresh perspectives on how to improve outcomes for all students. (p. 35)
>
> What is needed is an assessment system that provides decision-makers at all levels with sound information on which they can base their decisions in support of student learning. In a comprehensive system, there is a place for different types of assessment tools and processes, used for different purposes at different levels of the system: national, state, district, school, and classroom. (p. 36)

At the state level, Vermont has adopted standards to provide a consistent and equitable set of learning goals for all students in all schools. These standards are the operational description of what students should know, understand, and be able to do, and the level of proficiency that is necessary for students to thrive in civic and economic life. Statewide assessments for science, English language arts, and mathematics provide information on students' level of proficiency related to state standards and allow educators to plan improvements to their teaching through a better understanding of students' progress. These assessments are also used to inform decisions regarding the allocation of state and federal funding.

Assessment systems, one of the four levers related to Act 173, should be designed to provide parents, guardians, educators, and pediatricians with essential information that can follow a child from infancy through twelfth grade and beyond. The data that are collected enable caregivers and educators to determine how to provide learning opportunities and supports that

help each child to thrive. The 2019 Framework for Vermont's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System describes this system:

> At a minimum, an early childhood comprehensive assessment system includes developmental screening measures, formative assessments of the child's development, measures of environmental quality, and measures of the quality of adult-child interactions. An early childhood comprehensive assessment system supports the earlier identification of children with or at-risk of developmental delays or disabilities through appropriate screening and evaluation process. It helps improve young children's learning experiences, including both the instruction and services they receive, by providing actionable data about the child's needs. The system supports efforts to close the school readiness gap by using kindergarten-entry assessment results to inform decisions about practices and policies and documents the importance of high-quality early childhood programs in preparing children for school. (p. 6)

Assessments within the system should be of high quality and used to inform instruction, otherwise, students should not spend time taking them (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015). A high-quality assessment system should include assessments of priority content and transferable skills, such as communication, collaboration, problem solving, and self-direction; these assessments should be valid, reliable, fair, instructionally sensitive (i.e., be representative of content and concepts taught from curriculum and instruction), and have value for informing teaching (Darling-Hammond et al., 2013). The Criteria for Procuring and Evaluating High-Quality Assessments, published by the CCSSO, offers additional guidance for establishing or strengthening high-quality systems of assessment.

Different types of assessments can be used for more than one purpose and, generally, no one piece of assessment information can fulfill all purposes. Assessment systems should be inclusive of all students, which means that some students may require accommodations to access the assessment.

Local comprehensive assessment systems are a vital part of a broader educational system aimed at improving outcomes for students and enabling every student to meet critical proficiencies. The Local Comprehensive Assessment System Quality Criteria Single Point Rubric was developed as a tool for reflecting on a system's strengths as well as areas in need of improvement. It can therefore be used to determine next steps toward strengthening balanced assessment systems that enhance the effectiveness, availability, and equity of services provided to all students.

Types of Assessments

The type and purpose of the assessment dictate the frequency of its administration. "Done well and thoughtfully, assessments are tools for learning and promoting equity... Done poorly, in excess, or without a clear purpose, they take valuable time away from teaching and learning…" (Testing Action Plan: State and District Profiles).

Performance Assessments and Tasks

Performance assessments are any teacher- or student-designed learning activity or investigation in which students demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, and/or skills through a performance task. Performance assessments engage students in meaningful learning in authentic contexts, show genuine applications of knowledge, and yield a tangible product and/or performance that serves as evidence of learning (McTighe, Doubet, and Carbaugh, 2020; see Quality Criteria for Performance Assessments).

A performance task is what students actually do within a larger performance assessment framework. Tasks built around student interests engage students and help them make connections to their personal lives.

Project-Based Learning is one method of teaching that incorporates a series of performance assessments and learning opportunities that lead to a culminating product or performance for an audience. The Agency of Education document, Project-Based Learning: A Student-Centered Approach, explains:

> According to PBL Works, Project-Based Learning "unleashes a contagious, creative energy among students and teachers," strengthening relationships and creating a life-long love of learning. Students gain academic skills and content knowledge while honing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication, and other transferable skills. When done correctly, Project-Based Learning is an effective methodology to support Proficiency-Based and Personalized Learning as it allows students to engage in authentic learning opportunities that are meaningful and relevant to their lives and provide opportunities to present evidence of their learning in creative ways. (p. 1)

Universal Assessments

Universal assessments are used with **all students.** They can inform teachers about where students are performing relative to grade-level standards, performance indicators, or developmental milestones; which students need intervention; and how to adjust instruction to affect students' success. (See Tables 1, 2, and 3 for more information.)

Screener

Universal screening is conducted to identify or predict students who may need additional supports. Universal screening assessments are typically brief, conducted with all students at a grade level, and followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to corroborate students' risk status.

Interim Assessment

An interim assessment is a form of assessment that educators use to evaluate where students are in their progress toward overall proficiency as determined by state summative assessments. Concerns related to interim assessments are that some do not give teachers the level of detailed information needed to inform instruction and they may not be given frequently enough to impact instructional decisions. Before making a decision on purchasing or using a particular

interim assessment tool, educators should determine the purpose of the assessment and how the data will be used.

Benchmark

A benchmark is a point of reference against which a learner's level of proficiency can be measured. Benchmark assessments can be used at a variety of local levels including, but not limited to, classroom, grade, or school level. While benchmark assessments can be used as both screeners and interims, they additionally should be used to collect data for future planning of instruction and curriculum, as well as communicating to learners their progress toward proficiency.

Formative Assessment

Formative assessments provide information to both educators and students about what has been learned, which objectives have been addressed, and what techniques have been successful. They are assessments *for* learning and the data should be used to adapt or adjust instruction accordingly. (See Table 4 for more information.)

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments confirm what students know and can do, typically at the end of a year, semester, course, or instructional unit. They are assessments *of* learning. (See Table 5 for more information.)

Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring: Assessment Data for and from Targeted and Intensive Instruction

Diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments are conducted with only some students but are often necessary to plan instruction and/or intervention to meet the needs of students who require additional supports or encounter new challenges. This may mean more formal and frequent assessments for some students in order to improve outcomes.

Diagnostic

The purpose of a diagnostic assessment is to investigate and analyze a specific student's strengths and challenges, identify an appropriate focus for intervention, and explore the foundational skills/concepts of a content domain more comprehensively. (See Table 6 for more information.)

Progress Monitoring

The purpose of progress monitoring assessments is to measure a student's progress on a skill/concept in a predefined period of time, determine if the student has made sufficient progress to discontinue intervention or if they need a different or more intensified intervention, and decide if a child with an IEP is making progress on goals and objectives. (See Table 7 for more information.)

Table 1: Universal Assessments: Screeners

Category	Summary
Purpose	• **Screeners** are characterized by the administration of quick, low-cost, repeatable testing of age-appropriate skills to all students.
Frequency	• 3 times a year → Fall, Winter, Spring* • When a new student enrolls in school outside of a screening window.
What types of questions can this data answer?	• Who is performing above, at, or below grade level? • Is the child meeting developmental milestones? • Are at least 80% (or other local target) of students demonstrating proficiency? • What content should be emphasized in core instruction? • What are areas of strengths for this cohort of students? • How functional are the core curriculum, environment, and instruction in the school? • Who may not be making expected progress and who may need additional diagnostic assessment and/or intervention, either in small groups or on an individual basis?
Tips and Considerations	• Ensure that the screener is accessible to all students, enabling them to show what they know, and does not advantage some students over others. • Clarify the critical skills and concepts to be assessed. • Screening will identify students with advanced or emerging skills so schools must be ready to support students at either end of the spectrum. • It is essential that educators differentiate between universal instruction and a responsive learning environment; additionally, educators must provide targeted or intensive supports when needed. • Universal screening is an activity that can be part of the Local Education Agency's (LEA's) comprehensive Child Find system to locate and identify children who may be in need of special education and related services.

Resource: Elementary Assessments: Universal Screening, Diagnostic, and Progress Monitoring

**When a robust, comprehensive, and balanced system is in place, and when all assessment administrators have the necessary assessment and data literacy competencies, scheduling may vary, as determined by students' needs and progress.*

Table 2: Universal Assessments: Benchmarks

Category	Summary
Purpose	• Benchmark assessments are assessments administered periodically throughout the school year, at specified times during a curriculum sequence, to evaluate students' knowledge and skills relative to an explicit set of longer-term learning goals.
Frequency	• Once or twice during a unit of study; no more than four times over a year for end-of-year goals (e.g., English language arts).
What types of questions can this data answer?	• What knowledge and skills are important to learn? • How do curriculum and instruction need to be adjusted to meet student learning goals? • How well are programs, curricula, or other resources helping students to achieve learning goals? • Are students, classes, schools, and districts on course to demonstrate proficiency on?
Tips and Considerations	• Develop a clear description of the purpose(s) the benchmark assessment is intended to serve. • Identify what is most important for students to know and be able to do in a specific content area. • Ensure that the benchmark assessment is accessible, enabling all students to show what they know, and does not advantage some students over others. • Determine how useful the assessment will be in helping to accomplish intended purposes.

Resource: Benchmark Assessment for Improved Learning: AN AACC Policy Brief

Table 3: Universal Assessments: Interims

Category	Summary
Purpose	• An **interim assessment** is a form of **assessment** that educators use to determine whether students are on track for performing at the proficient level on state assessments.
Frequency	• Interim assessments are often administered three times during a school year. However, the frequency in which interims are administered may vary depending upon the specific assessment tool that is administered.
What types of questions can this data answer?	• How will students perform on the state assessment? • What proportion of students are at risk of scoring below Proficient on the end-of-year state assessments? • On which content standards are the students performing relatively well (or poorly) (for a student, classroom, school, district, or state)? • How does this student's performance compare to the performance of other students in the class?
Tips and Considerations	• Clarify what you hope to learn from this assessment. • Determine how the information gathered from this assessment will be used and identify action steps that will be taken as a result. • Decide what professional learning or support structures need to be in place to ensure the action steps are taken and are successful. • Discuss how student learning improves as a result of using this interim assessment and whether it will improve more than if the assessment was not used.

Resource: The Role of Interim Assessments in a Comprehensive Assessment System

Table 4: Formative (Assessment *for* Learning)

Category	Summary
Purpose	• To inform the educator about possible facilitators and barriers to instruction for students. • To provide actionable feedback to students regarding their learning. • To identify appropriate focus for instruction. • To inform future lessons and units. • To determine the efficacy of Universal Instruction.
Frequency	• Several times throughout a learning opportunity.
What types of questions can this data answer?	• Which students or groups of students need re-teaching and reinforcing of concepts? • Which students or groups of students need acceleration/enrichment? • In which areas are students proficient? • What preconceptions/misconceptions do students have about the content/concept? • How did instruction impact student learning? What could be improved? • Where are students on a continuum of proficiency?
Tips and Considerations	• Teachers and students need to share a common, clear, and accurate understanding of learning targets. • Formative assessments are targeted at specific skills and content and can be personalized for individual students. • Formative assessments occur as part of the learning process so adjustments can be made immediately or in the near future. • Formative assessments can take many forms such as verbal, written, virtual, or technology-based. • Fidelity of teacher instruction must also be measured. • An assessment is not formative if the results are not used to inform instructional decisions.

Resource: The Future of Assessment Practices: Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems

Table 5: Summative (Assessment *of* Learning)

Category	Summary
Purpose	• To verify learning and confirm what students know, understand, and can do relative to state standards or performance indicators. • To determine the efficacy of Universal Instruction. • To develop and monitor student progress on a personalized learning plan to meet proficiencies.
Frequency	• End of unit, course, semester, year
What types of questions can this data answer?	• In which standards do students demonstrate proficiency? • Are at least 80% (or other local benchmark) of students demonstrating proficiency? • Which students or groups of students need re-teaching and reinforcing of concepts? • Which students or groups of students need acceleration/enrichment? • Are there students who were not identified through Universal Screening who need intervention or enrichment?
Tips and Considerations	• Strategies should be developed to extract the relevant information from the assessment. • Data from summative assessments should be used to inform programmatic decisions. • Assessments need to adhere to principles of validity and reliability.

Resource: Baylor University: Summative Assessment

Table 6: Diagnostic

Category	Summary
Purpose	• To investigate and analyze a student's strengths and challenges. • To identify appropriate focus for intervention. • To explore the foundational skills/concepts of a content domain more comprehensively (math, literacy).
Frequency	• One time per data cycle or as needed to determine a student's academic need for intervention or instruction. • Students with IEPs have a formal (triennial) reevaluation every three years as required by IDEA and no more than once a year if requested by the family.
What types of questions can this data answer?	• What foundational skill/concept is preventing the student from being successful in grade level content/classroom? • What prior knowledge does the student bring to the task/assessment? • Have the student's needs changed? • Diagnostics in Special Education can help to answer: Is the child a "child with a disability" as defined by IDEA?
Tips and Considerations	• Create a common understanding of foundational concepts and skills. • Use valid, research-based, norm-referenced tools to diagnose student need. • Calibrate the administration and scoring of diagnostic assessments. • Only use diagnostics with students demonstrating a need for closer examination. • Gather necessary information regarding teacher implementation of evidence-based practices.

Resource: Elementary Assessments: Universal Screening, Diagnostic, and Progress Monitoring

Table 7: Progress Monitoring

Category	Summary
Purpose	• To measure students' progress on a skill/concept in a predefined period of time. • To determine if students have made sufficient progress to discontinue intervention. • To determine if a student needs a different or more intensified intervention. • To determine if a child with an IEP is making progress on goals and objectives.
Frequency	• As determined by the student's IEP team, EST Team, or intervention tool (Targeted or Intensive).
What types of questions can this data answer?	• What patterns do you notice in the data? • What are the obstacles to student learning? • Does this intervention meet the needs of this student? • What other strategies can be used to support the learner? • Is the student learning the skills/concepts needed to meet learning targets independently? • Does the student need more, less, or a different intervention? • Has the intervention made a difference for the child in gaining skills/concepts within the child's classroom environment?
Tips and Considerations	• If possible, use valid, research-based, norm-referenced tools to monitor progress; track student progress over time and across different contexts; and set a growth goal for a student based on their current level of performance. • The frequency of progress monitoring is determined by the student's needs and progress, which means that monitoring could occur multiple times throughout the day, daily, weekly, or monthly. • Reference the student's IEP and review goals and objectives as determined by the IEP team. • Embedding observation opportunities within the predefined period of time can further inform the educator of the student's progress.

Resource: Elementary Assessments: Universal Screening, Diagnostic, and Progress Monitoring

Reliability, Validity, and Fidelity

Equitable methods of assessing require appropriate design, administration, and interpretation. Whether designing or selecting assessments, reliability, validity, and fidelity are essential factors for making sound decisions. Additional considerations when selecting and using assessments can be found in the VTmtss Field Guide 2019 and the Framework for Vermont's Early Childhood Comprehensive Assessment System.

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurements when assessments are repeated – the degree to which results are free from measurement errors (AERA, APA, and NCME, 1999).

Results or scores reported for individuals or schools must be accurate to support each intended interpretation (AERA, 2000). Reliability, in conjunction with validity and fidelity, increases confidence that the assessment will provide scores that consistently and accurately determine students' academic abilities. The reliability of assessment data is increased when teachers have opportunities to calibrate scoring on student work samples. Commercially available assessments will detail their reliability in their technical reports. Large scale and commercial assessments will also provide data regarding reliability.

Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy of the interpretation of assessment results (Reynolds, Livingston, and Willson, 2009). In other words, it is the degree to which evidence supports the interpretation of results, entailed by proposed uses of tests (AERA et al., 1999). Therefore, the validation process involves collecting evidence to support the proposed interpretation of results or test scores (Lane, 1999). For example, if assessment results are interpreted as determining reading comprehension, the assessment must actually measure degrees or levels of reading comprehension. Tests valid for one use may be invalid for another (AERA, 2000). Again, commercially available assessments will provide evidence of validity studies in their technical reports. Additional information about reliability and validity can be accessed on page 13 of the document Criteria for High-Quality Assessments.

Fidelity

Fidelity refers to the degree to which a practitioner follows prescription or protocol when delivering an assessment, program, or intervention (e.g., Sanetti and Kratochwill, 2009; Mowbray, Holter, Teague, and Bybee, 2003). Fidelity of administration ensures that assessments produce valid and reliable results. For further reading about the importance of fidelity, please access the National Center on Response to Intervention Brief #4: Ensuring Fidelity of Assessment and Data Entry Procedures, and Ikeda, Neessen, and Witt (2007) Best Practices in Universal Screening.

Data and Decision-Making

A strong, local comprehensive assessment system provides a rich collection of data across all content areas. Educators and administrators must be prepared to collaboratively analyze, interpret, and make instructional and programmatic decisions based on these data. Problem-solving protocols and data-based decision making provide the ability to narrow broad statements about student performance to precise problem statements, making it more likely that continuous improvement plans are matched to needs and tied to student outcomes. Data literacy, therefore, is an essential competency for all decision-makers in this process. As stated by the Vermont Statewide Steering Committee on Response to Instruction and Intervention (2014):

> Assessment information alone is useless; it should invite action. Educators must be wise consumers of assessment data, understanding its properties and

appropriate uses. The data and information provided by assessment must be examined, discussed, reflected upon, and used to make decisions… (p. 29)

Different data sources inform different decisions. Refer to the tables in the previous section for sample questions that can be answered by various types of data. Articulating the decision-making process will help to determine what professional learning will be needed in order for educators to engage in thoughtful data use that informs instruction. Harvard offers a self-paced course, Introduction to Data Wise: A Collaborative Process to Improve Learning and Teaching, which describes a thoughtful process for analyzing and interpreting student data.

Systems, Structures, and Practices

In order for a local comprehensive assessment system to effectively impact instruction and student outcomes, organizational systems, structures, and culture must be built to support data collection, collaboration, analysis, and decision making.

School systems need to be places where ongoing learning happens at all levels. This requires administrators, teachers, and students to actively pursue deep learning through collaborative work and authentic learning opportunities. Effective systems include time during the school day to construct, analyze, and discuss evidence of learning. Clear, transparent learning expectations emphasize application and creation of knowledge, along with the development of important skills and dispositions. Flexible pathways within the system can allow learners to advance upon demonstrating proficiency, so that learning is the constant and time is the variable. Technology serves as a platform for communicating virtually, organizing resources, housing personalized learning plans, and disseminating information. The goal is a system that fosters continuous improvement for each and every learner over time.

Additionally, the Blueprint for Early Literacy Comprehensive System of Services, PreK Through Third Grade recommends the following research and evidence-based practices:

- Ensure that assessments are developmentally appropriate for young children (i.e., purposeful in design, use, and interpretation; clearly and explicitly integrated into the overall system, including curriculum and instruction, and represent the valued outcomes on which instruction is focused; and are beneficial in that they serve to optimize learning time and resources).
- Use valid and reliable standardized literacy assessments (including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring instruments) to determine the need for early literacy intervention.
- Ensure that progress monitoring assessments are aligned with instructional content and used to track students' response to intervention and inform further instructional practice.
- Ensure there is a balanced range of assessment types to address the specific purpose at hand.
- Ensure families and students receive clear and comprehensible information about students' proficiency, behavior, or social-emotional well-being (p. 18).

Systems and structures to consider when implementing a local comprehensive assessment system are assessment calendars; data-based decision-making teams and articulated teaming structures; procedures for ensuring the fidelity of assessment administration; and a data collection system that allows for the collecting, manipulating, and analyzing of various sources of data to inform continuous improvement.

Taking Inventory and Conducting Analyses in Current Systems

Achieve's Student Assessment Inventory for School Districts may serve as a process for auditing your current system. This tool supports a process by which districts evaluate the assessments students are taking and determine the minimum testing necessary to serve essential diagnostic, instructional, and accountability purposes. The goal is to ensure that every supervisory union/district-mandated assessment is of high quality. Assessments need to provide the information necessary for specific school and supervisory union/district purposes and be supported by identified resources, structures, and routines that enable educators to intentionally use data to determine action steps that will improve student outcomes.

Appendices

Appendix A: Resources

Assessment Resources (Non-Exhaustive List)

- Alternate Assessment
- Assessment Evaluation Tool (AET)
- Early Childhood Education Assessment
- ELA/Literacy Resources Page
- EQuIP Science Rubric Facilitator's Guide
- National Center for Intensive Intervention – Tools Chart
- Performance Assessment Tools and Resources
- Ready for Kindergarten! Survey (R4K!S)
- Teaching Strategies GOLD
- Universal Screening Assessments: Recommendations to Support a Strong and Healthy School Start
- VTmtss System Screener

Education Quality Standards Explanation of Local Comprehensive Assessment System:

2123.2 Development and Implementation of Local Comprehensive Assessment System

Each supervisory union shall develop, and each school shall implement, a local comprehensive assessment system that:

a. assesses the standards approved by the State Board of Education;

b. employs a balance of assessment types, including but not limited to, teacher-or student-designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects;
c. includes both formative and summative assessments;
d. enables decisions to be made about student progression and graduation, including measuring proficiency-based learning;
e. informs the development of Personalized Learning Plans and student support;
f. provides data that informs decisions regarding instruction, professional learning, and educational resources and curriculum; and
g. reflects strategies and goals outlined in the district's Continuous Improvement Plan.

The performance criteria of the assessment system shall be clear and be communicated to teachers, administrators, students, parents and other community members. Students and parents shall be informed at least annually regarding progress toward achieving the standards. This includes providing information in students' native languages or otherwise accessible formats.

Lexile and Quantile Framework

The Vermont Agency of Education has partnered with MetaMetrics to offer statewide access to the Lexile and Quantile Frameworks and their associated resources to all Vermont school districts. The Lexile Framework for Reading uses Lexile measures to help educators and parents find reading materials at each student's unique reading level, engaging students in learning by ensuring they comprehend their reading materials and monitoring their progress over time. Educators can use Lexile measures to personalize student learning, differentiate their instruction and better communicate with parents. The Quantile Framework for Mathematics evaluates the difficulty of mathematical skills and concepts as well as a student's ability to learn new mathematical concepts. Each of these measures are on a single scale so that the skill demand and student ability can be matched for targeting instruction. View the webinar, An Introduction to the Lexile and Quantile Hub, for more information about how to use these tools.

Local Comprehensive Assessment System Resources

- How Systems of Assessments Aligned with Competency-Based Education Can Support Equity describes what school, district, and state leaders can do to develop balanced assessment systems that are coherent with target competencies and learning progressions, comprehensively provide a range of evidence for each student, serve multiple stakeholders, and continuously monitor students' progress over time.
- Essential Components for Ensuring Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems are Culturally Relevant and Equitable: This document serves to support supervisory unions and/or school districts (SUs/SDs) as they refine their local comprehensive assessment systems (LCAS) to ensure that assessments are equitable and culturally relevant.
- Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems in School District Systems: Act 173 Technical Guidance provides additional technical assistance and guidance around local comprehensive assessment systems (LCAS). It is one of a series of four supporting

guidance documents the Agency of Education (AOE) has developed to provide supplemental information to the Education Quality Standards (EQS) rules and practices as they pertain to the change in practices necessary to implement Act 173 of 2018.

- Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems (LCAS): Making Connections with VTmtss is part of a tool set that links each systemic component (lever) of Act 173 with related component indicators in the VTmtss Driver Diagram.
- Not as Easy as It Sounds: Designing a Balanced Assessment System identifies and describes three essential criteria for a balanced assessment system: coherence, a theory of action, and efficiency.
- Strengthening and Streamlining Vermont Local Comprehensive Assessment Systems: Defining Essential Components includes a section of the Strengthening and Streamlining Local Comprehensive Assessment System document that defines assessment terminology that is commonly used in Vermont.
- Strengthening Local Assessment Systems for Personalized, Proficiency-Based Education: Strategies and Tools for Professional Learning describes Vermont's convenings to support schools, districts, and other education organizations seeking to create high-quality local comprehensive systems of assessments. It can serve as a resource for schools, districts, and states that are working toward improving their own assessment systems. Readers will learn about the rationale and essential components, formative and summative performance assessments, and student-designed performance assessments. Additionally, a webinar related to the report is available.
- The Future of Assessment Practices: Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems describes the components of an ideal comprehensive, balanced assessment system that includes formative assessment (within and between lessons), medium-cycle formative assessment (within and between instructional units), classroom summative assessment (grading), long-cycle formative assessment (several times during the school year), and district and state-level accountability assessment.

Suggested Readings

- Beyond Basic Skills: The Role of Performance Assessment in Achieving 21st Century Standards of Learning
- Creating Systems of Assessment for Deeper Learning
- Developing Assessments for the Next Generation Science Standards (BOTA, BOSE of National Academies of Science 2014)
- Framework for Vermont's Early Childhood (Birth-3rd Grade) Comprehensive Assessment System
- High-Quality Early Childhood Assessment: Learning from States' Use of Kindergarten Entry Assessments
- Mathematics Assessment Project

- NGSS Appendix D: All Standards, All Students
- NGSS Sample Assessment Tasks
- Norm-Referenced Assessment Tools for Children Birth to Age Five Years with Potential for Remote Administration for Eligibility Determination (2020)
- OGAP: Ongoing Assessment Project

Appendix B: Assessment Summaries, Strengths, and Limitations

The Appendix B tables provided as stackable documents on the State and Local Assessment webpage offer information, observations, and recommendations regarding the purpose and implementation of specific assessments utilized at the local level (provider, school, district, supervisory union/district). These resources are included to further support supervisory unions/districts (SU/SDs) in the provision of local comprehensive assessment and to meet the goals of Act 173 of 2018. **This is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of assessments** administered within a local comprehensive assessment system. Further, this list is **not a recommended or endorsed list**, rather, it is a partial list of commonly used assessments in schools.

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