

Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment Systems

Assessment is the process of gathering and using evidence to understand where students are in their learning. Assessments are designed to provide information about student learning for a particular purpose. The purposes and uses of assessment information differ at each level of the education system (state, district/school and classroom) and for the stakeholders using the information. There is no single assessment that can be used to support all purposes and uses. Together, information from each level should describe the learning expectations defined in the standards.

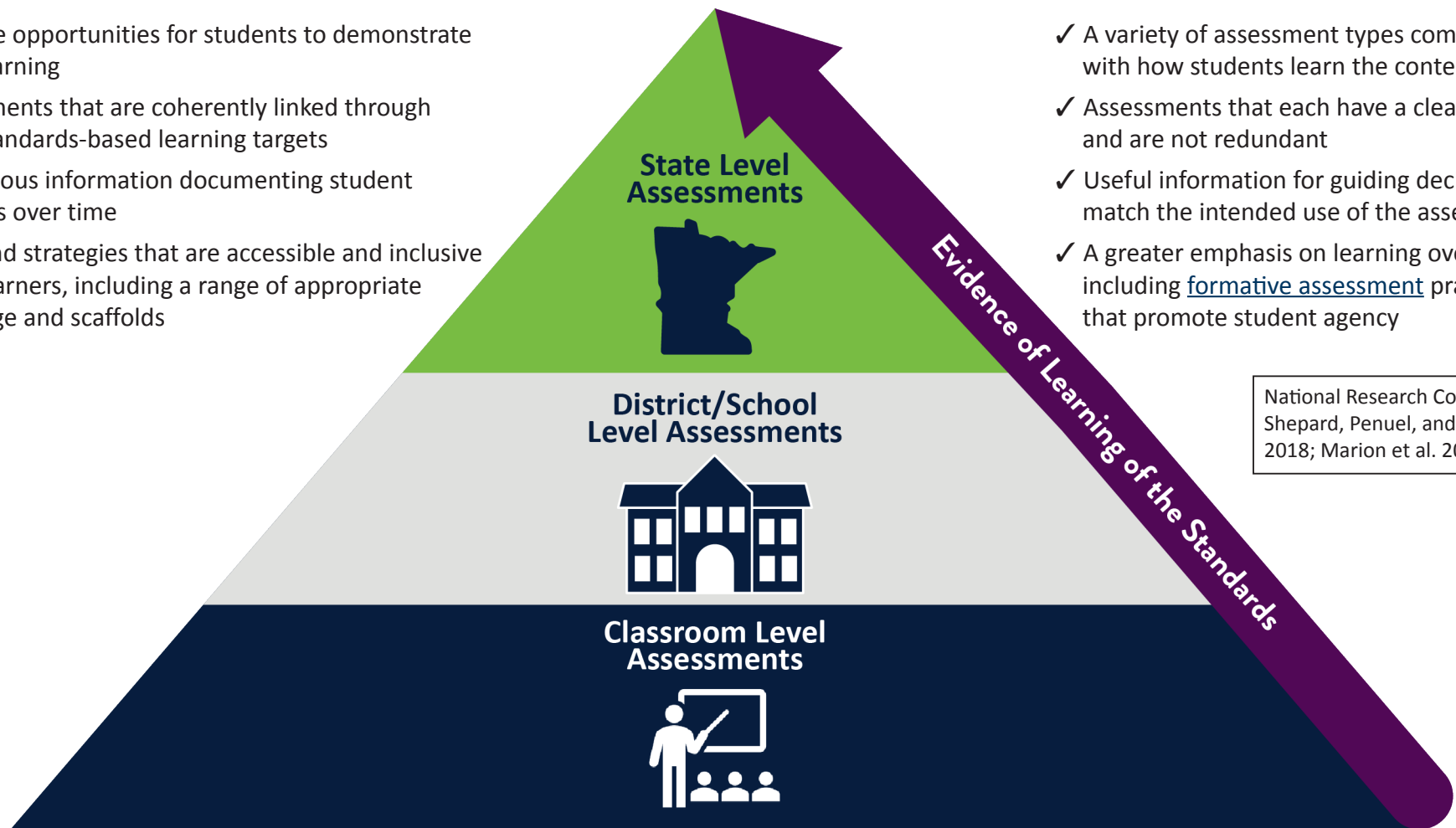
How do you know if your assessment system is **comprehensive** and **balanced**?

A **comprehensive** assessment system includes:

- ✓ Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning
- ✓ Assessments that are coherently linked through clear standards-based learning targets
- ✓ Continuous information documenting student progress over time
- ✓ Tools and strategies that are accessible and inclusive of all learners, including a range of appropriate challenge and scaffolds

A **balanced** assessment system includes:

- ✓ A variety of assessment types compatible with how students learn the content domain
- ✓ Assessments that each have a clear purpose and are not redundant
- ✓ Useful information for guiding decisions that match the intended use of the assessment
- ✓ A greater emphasis on learning over grading, including [formative assessment](#) practices that promote student agency



National Research Council 2001; Shepard, Penuel, and Pellegrino 2018; Marion et al. 2019