

# Balanced and Comprehensive Assessment Systems

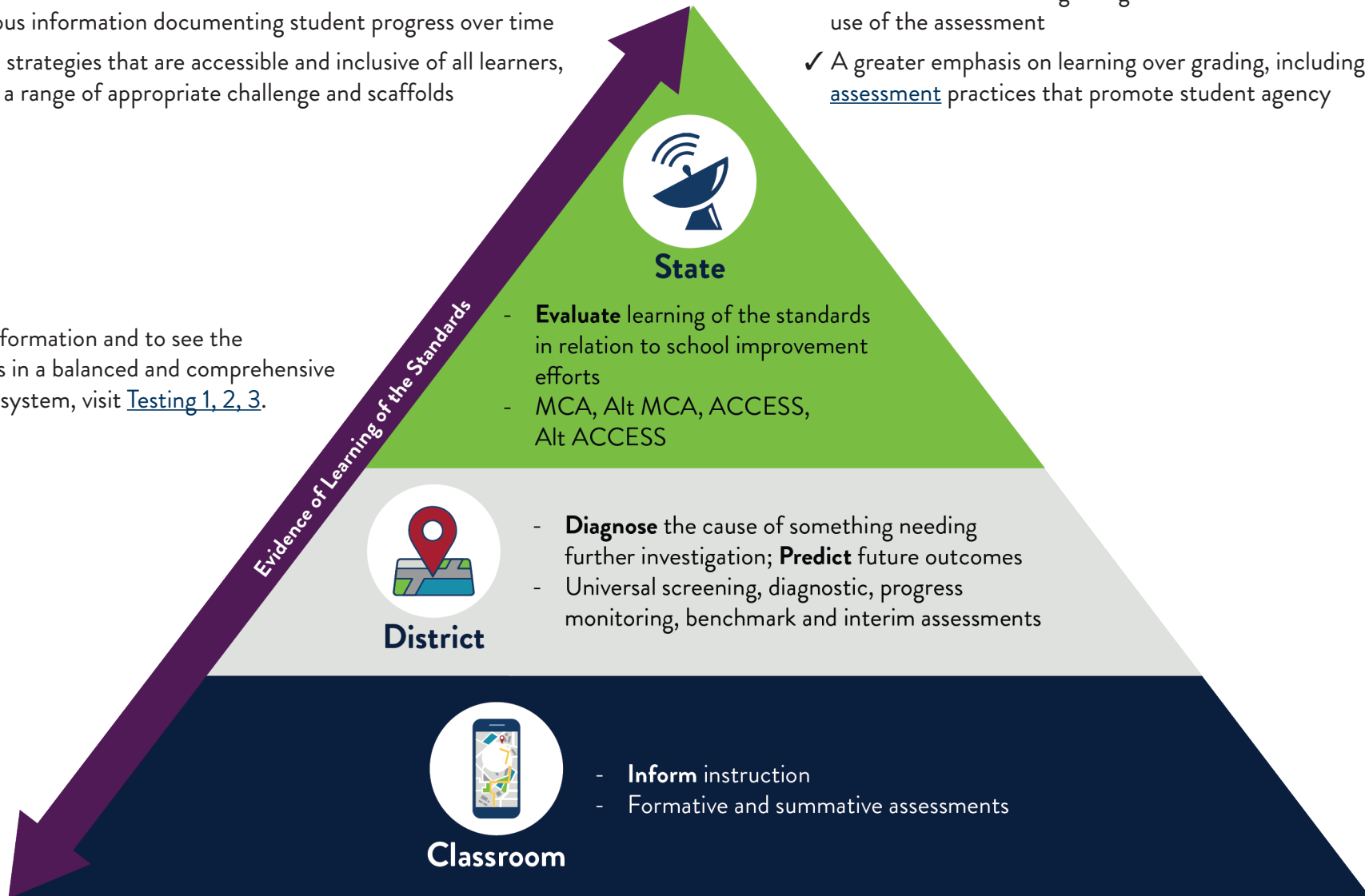
A **comprehensive** assessment system includes:

- ✓ Multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning, reflecting the depth and breadth of the standards
- ✓ Assessments 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



For more information and to see the components in a balanced and comprehensive assessment system, visit [Testing 1, 2, 3](#).






# Components of a Balanced, Comprehensive, and Equitable Assessment System

**Assessment** is the process of gathering evidence of student learning to guide educational decisions. 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 educational system (classroom, district/schools, and state) 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 layer should describe the learning expectations defined in the standards.

## Primary Purpose Key:

-  Inform immediate next steps in learning for teachers and students
-  Measure individual student achievement

-  Inform instruction and planning
-  Program and policy evaluation
-  Indicator of students who may need additional supports

## Classroom



## District/School



## State



### **Formative Assessment Process** Ongoing, during learning

Teachers use evidence during lessons to guide feedback and next steps in learning  
Students use evidence during peer feedback, self-assessment, and discourse

- Shows evidence of learning as it is developing
- Both teachers and students use evidence to inform next steps in learning

### **Formal Classroom Assessments** Weekly, monthly

Classroom summative assessments, curriculum-embedded assessments

- Evidence of retained learning across a few related lessons or a group of lessons or standards over a period of learning
- Most useful to teachers, students, and their families as evidence of what a student has recently learned; given during a pause in learning and may contribute to grades

### **Interim/Benchmark** 2-3 times per year

Benchmark, common assessments

- Evidence of retained learning at various benchmarks throughout the year or progress in specific skills
- Most useful to groups of teachers and school leaders for identifying concerns or allocating resources

### **Screening and Intervention Assessments** As needed

Diagnostic assessment, universal screener, and progress monitoring

- Evidence of student strengths and needs in specific skill areas to inform instructional supports
- Most useful to inform targeted instruction and intervention in specific skill areas

### **Standardized Summative Assessment** 1 time per year, after learning

State summative assessments (e.g., MCA, ACCESS for ELLs)

- Summarized evidence of retained learning of the standards
- Most useful to school and district leaders as one piece of information to evaluate curriculum and program alignment to standards and to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-based content