



## ACTIVITY 2.5

### Local Assessment System Self-Evaluation

We have transformed to five actions described above into of 5-point rating scales (see Figure 2.18). Each scale represents a continuum of development for an action. We provide this as a summary of key ideas on Part 2 and as the basis for you to conduct a self-evaluation of the current status of your district for each.

Read through the items in the District Assessment System Self-Evaluation for each of the five actions. Discuss each item within your team and come to agreement about where you would place your school/district along the item’s accompanying 5-point rating scale. Consider the following prior to completing the activity:

- The larger, more diverse team you can assemble that is representative of your school/district, the more accurate your profile is likely to be. Or your team can do the profiling activity first and then repeat it with a larger group to create more understanding of the issues and gain a larger representation of opinion.
- If a larger district or school team is assembled, coming to consensus about each item may be more difficult because people will bring not only different perspectives but also very different realities. For example, one person’s school may deserve a high rating on one action while another school in the district hasn’t even considered that scope of work and therefore admittedly gets a lower mark. How can that be reconciled to reflect the work the district needs to accomplish? Or the district may be doing well overall in one area but that work has not filtered into the schools. How should the team rate the district overall?
- What one knows and doesn’t know when asked to make judgments or evaluations influences one’s answers to questions. In this activity—as in many others in this guide—participants’ responses are directly related to their level of assessment literacy.

Figure 2.18 School/District Assessment System Self-Evaluation

#### Action 1: Balance Your Assessment System

<b>Definition:</b> Balanced assessment systems serve different users at different levels of assessment by providing them all with the information they need to fulfill their responsibilities. Such a system balances effective assessment use at the classroom level with interim/benchmark assessment and annual accountability assessment to serve both formative and summative purposes. This action advocates examination of current levels of balance and movement toward greater balance if needed.				
<b>5</b> <b>Implemented</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Progressing</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b> <b>Getting Started</b>
All faculty and staff are aware of differences in assessment purpose across classroom, common, interim/benchmark, and annual level and know how to use each to support and to verify student learning.		There is inconsistency among the staff with how we use assessments to improve our school; we are aware of the need for balance and have begun to plan for balanced assessment.		There is little awareness in the district of differences in purpose, assessment users, or assessment uses across classroom, interim and annual levels of use.

Our highest assessment priority is to help students develop the capacity and disposition to assess their own achievement and to use their assessment results to improve their own learning.	Faculty and staff recognize that students are important assessment users who make data-based instructional decisions that impact their own success and have made some progress in helping them do so.	Students have not been regarded as key assessment users, and there is little awareness (or support) of the need to bring them into the assessment process.
We have an assessment system in place that is meeting the information needs of classroom, interim, and annual assessment users.	We have an plan we are working on and have begun to design this balanced system	As yet no such system has been conceived, designed, or developed.
We have an information management system in place to collect, house, and deliver achievement information to the intended users at classroom, interim, and annual assessment levels.	We have an tentative plan in place and have begun to investigate available information management systems for this use.	As yet no such system has been conceived, designed, developed, or purchased.
Our school board and community are aware of the need for balanced assessment and are supportive of this priority.	We are currently educating our staff, policy makers, and community of the need to development an assessment system to meet diverse information needs across levels.	Our policy makers and community are unaware of the need to think of assessment in this manner.

## Action 2: Continue to Refine Achievement Standards

<b>Definition:</b> It is not possible to dependably assess achievement targets unless they have been completely defined; that is, clear learning targets are needed to underpin all levels of assessment. This action calls for the development of clear targets as a foundation for balanced assessment.				
<b>5 Implemented</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3 Progressing</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1 Getting Started</b>
We have reviewed and refined our local achievement standards to align with state/CCSS standards and to represent our highest priority learning outcomes.		We are aware of the need for us to refine and make clear our own academic standards and are in the process of doing so.		We have only adopted state standards or are using externally developed curriculum.
Our curriculum presents learning progressions in which our expectations unfold over time within and across grade levels in a manner consistent with state standards and the way learning unfolds.		We are developing our grade-level and subject-area maps in the form of progressions that link learning prerequisites throughout the learning.		We have grade level standards, but they are not articulated or connected with one another in a unified manner.
We have deconstructed each of our priority standards into the scaffolding necessary for clarity; that is, we know the foundations of knowledge, reasoning, performance skills, and product development capabilities at each subject and grade level that build to success.		We are in the process of deconstructing each of our standards into the scaffolding leading to competence.		The deconstruction process has not been initiated.

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We have further refined standards into learning targets that will guide daily classroom instruction and assessment and have developed student- and family-friendly versions to share with stakeholders as appropriate.	We are in the process of making those changes and additions.	This transformation process has yet to be initiated.
We have verified that each teacher in each classroom is a master of the achievement standards that their students are expected to master.	We have identified contexts in which professional development is needed to assure teacher competence regarding content area knowledge.	There has been little or no investigation of teacher preparedness in their own content area(s).

### Action 3: Ensure Assessment Quality

**Definition:** Because many decisions are made based on assessment results, it is necessary that all assessments at classroom, interim, and annual levels of use yield dependable information about student achievement. This action asks for the evaluation of all current assessments to verify quality.

5 Implemented	4	3 Progressing	2	1 Getting Started
We have established and understand the criteria by which we should judge the quality of our assessments.		We are aware of the need for standards of assessment quality upon which to evaluate our work and are working to establish our criteria.		No such criteria have been identified; no quality control framework exists for us at any level.
We have conducted the professional development needed to learn to use those assessment quality criteria in a consistent manner.		We have a plan in place for conducting that training process to prepare us to evaluate the quality of our assessments.		No such professional development has been conducted.
We have conducted (and regularly conduct) a local evaluation(s) on the quality of our assessments.		We are aware of the need to conduct such an evaluation and are planning to conduct it.		There is no awareness of the need for or plans to conduct such an evaluation.
As a result of our evaluation for quality, we know that the level of assessments quality throughout our systems and implemented plans for them all to be of high quality.		We have found that our assessments vary in quality across contexts but we know where the inadequacies and gaps are.		The quality of our assessments may be poor—we haven't checked.

### Action 4: Build Effective Systems for Communicating Assessment Results

**Definition:** When feedback to students takes certain forms and is delivered in certain ways, it can positively impact student confidence, motivation, and achievement. This action asks that feedback delivered to students satisfy the conditions necessary to make that happen.

5 Implemented	4	3 Progressing	2	1 Getting Started
We understand and embrace the characteristics of feedback that permits it to support learning or to certify it accurately when that is the purpose.		We are starting to understand the role descriptive feedback can play in helping students learn but have not taken systemic action to ensure it is present in every classroom.		The feedback we provide is in the form of grades and test scores that judge or evaluate student achievement.

We have completed the professional development needed to understand and implement classroom communication strategies that support student learning and have provided training in sound grading practices.	We plan to offer or are in the process of conducting the professional development needed to balance evaluative and descriptive feedback.	No such professional development has yet been considered or implemented.
In our classrooms, we a balance the use of descriptive feedback that supports learning and evaluative feedback (e.g., grades).	Our teachers are starting to use descriptive feedback during student practice to help students improve before they are to be held accountable for their learning.	Evaluative feedback is the predominate form of communication in our classrooms.

### Action 5: Link Assessment to Student Motivation With Assessment *for Learning* Strategies

**Definition:** The common practice of relying on the anxiety and intimidation of accountability to motivate learning works for some students. It can energize those who have hope of success. But for students who have experienced chronic failure, anxiety can drive them further away from a desire to learn or a belief they can succeed. For them, success at learning is the motivation they need. This action urges educators to embrace the emotional dynamics: the link between assessment and student motivation.

5 Implemented	4	3 Progressing	2	1 Getting Started
Our faculty, staff, leaders, policy makers, and community all support the use of student-involved assessment to help all students experience the kind of academic success needed to remain confident and engaged.		We are in the process of helping all stakeholders understand and embrace the power of student-involved assessment during their learning.		We motivate students largely by holding them accountable for learning.
We have conducted the professional development needed to build our capacity and dispositions needed to use assessment <i>for learning</i> to motivate all students to strive for success.		That professional development is planned or underway that will result in the development of capacity and dispositions throughout the faculty.		As yet no such professional development has been considered or offered.
The classroom assessment practices we use rely heavily on student involvement in assessment during their learning to maintain their confidence and motivation.		The proportion of our teachers who involve their students in ongoing self-assessment as a motivator is increasingly steadily.		Our classroom practices rarely include student-involved assessment practices.