

September 15, 2022

Dear Parents,

## **THE REAL PURPOSE OF ASSESSMENTS IN EDUCATION**

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Assessment is a key part of today's educational system. Assessment serves as an individual evaluation system, and as a way to compare performance across a spectrum and across populations. However, with so many different kinds of assessments for so many different organizations available (and often required) these days, it can sometimes be hard to keep the real purpose of assessing in view. So, what's really at the heart of all these assessments?

The purpose of assessment is to gather relevant information about student performance or progress, or to determine student interests to make judgments about their learning process. After receiving this information, teachers can reflect on each student's level of achievement, as well as on specific inclinations of the group, to customize their teaching plans.

Continuous assessment provides day-to-day feedback about the learning and teaching process. Assessment can reinforce the efficacy of teaching and learning. It also encourages the understanding of teaching as a formative process that evolves over time with feedback and input from students. This creates good classroom rapport.

Student assessments are necessary because:

- Throughout a lesson or unit, the teacher might want to check for understanding by using a formative assessment.
- Students who are experiencing difficulties in learning may benefit from the administration of a diagnostic test, which will be able to detect learning issues such as reading comprehension problems, an inability to remember written or spoken words, hearing or speech difficulties, and problems with hand-eye coordination.
- Students generally complete a summative assessment after completing the study of a topic. The teacher can determine their level of achievement and provide them with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. For students who didn't master the topic or skill, teachers can use data from the assessment to create a plan for remediation.
- Teachers may also want to use informal assessment techniques. Using self-assessment, students express what they think about their learning process and what they should work on. Using peer assessment, students get information from their classmates about what areas they should revise and what areas they're good at.

Some standardized assessment procedures are designed to compare the academic achievement of students from different schools, states, nationwide or worldwide. For example:

- The Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) was administered to random samples of fourth graders in 36 countries and eighth graders in 48 countries.
- The Program for International Student Achievement (PISA) was last administered in 2012. It tests functional skills in reading, math, and science on a 3-year cycle. American students scored below the international average on the last test.
- Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) focuses on reading comprehension on a 5-year cycle. It was last administered in 2011.

Before you administer an assessment, be sure you understand what its purpose is. What is it testing? Who is it testing? What entity will the results be reported to? Understanding the makeup of each assessment you give will help you better prepare your students to match up to it.

2017, Revised 9-2018

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Northport School District values the time students are spending in the classroom learning. We do our best to incorporate classroom formative and summative assessments with the learning the students are engaged in. These assessments include:

**Classroom Assessments** that align to the grade level state standards the students are learning. These assessments are ongoing and used by the teacher to identify students who are mastering the concepts and those that need small group intervention opportunities.

**Classroom Based Assessments**-These assessments are State required. These assessments can be given throughout the school year, however many teachers like to give them at the end of the school year. They are given in the subjects that are not assessed by the SBAC, (reading, math and science). These assessments include the arts, social studies, physical education, health and technology. Teachers incorporate these assessments in their units of study. In other words, they are part of the student learning therefore used at the end of the learning cycle.

**District and State Assessments:**

**NWEA MAPs** Assessment-K-11 students take this assessment three times a year, (September, January and the end of May); and grade 12 in September and January. The results of this assessment, along with classroom assessments and teacher input, qualifies students for Title I and LAP assistance. We also use these assessments as predictors to how well a student will do on the SBAC. Based on the assessment results teachers give targeted intervention or accelerate learning.

**AimsWeb**-K-8 students take this assessment three times a year, (September, January and end of May). This is a reading fluency assessment, and in K-2, students are assessed on their Letter Names, Letter Sounds and Phoneme Segmentation. Again, these assessments help teachers develop strategic intervention for students.

**SBAC** – The state assessment. These assessments are given in the spring of the year. In the spring of each year, the district develops an assessment schedule. Your child’s teacher will send a note home apprising you of the assessment schedule. To pass these assessments students should score a 3 or 4. As soon as we get the results of your student’s score we will contact you.

Quick Review:

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Dates</b>
<b>Classroom Assessments</b>	<b>All year</b>
<b>Classroom Based Assessments (CBA)</b>	<b>All year or at the end of the school year</b>
<b>NWEA MAPs</b>	<b>September, January, May</b>
<b>AimsWeb</b>	<b>September, January, May</b>
<b>SBAC</b>	<b>March-first to the first week of June</b>

If you have any questions please call the school principal, Dr. Catherine Hunt, 509-732-4430 ext. 127

Thank You,  
Dr. Hunt