



Kentucky Department of
E D U C A T I O N

Kentucky Department of Education

Model Curriculum Framework

Section III: Comprehensive System of Assessment

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Introduction to the Model Curriculum Framework

The **Model Curriculum Framework**, per [KRS 158.6451](#), provides guidance for schools and districts in implementing educational best practices in a way that creates curricular coherence to positively impact student success. Curricular coherence involves local alignment of standards, curriculum, instructional resources and practices, assessment and professional learning within and across grade levels in a district or school to help students meet grade-level expectations. According to research, schools that demonstrate increased curricular coherence also show marked improvements in student outcomes (Newmann, Smith, Allensworth, & Bryk, 2001). Figure 1.1 highlights the five key components of curricular coherence addressed within this document:

- **Section 1: Curriculum Development Process** – Outlines a systemwide process for articulating an instructional vision, developing a local curriculum aligned to the *Kentucky Academic Standards (KAS)*, selecting a primary high-quality instructional resource (HQIR) to anchor the local curriculum (when available) and engaging in year-over-year planning to support effective implementation.
- **Section 2: Professional Learning Communities (PLC)** – Emphasizes a systems-based approach to developing a shared understanding of the PLC process as an aspect of continuous improvement, the role of leadership in creating a supportive culture and the role of teachers as effective collaborators within a PLC.
- **Section 3: Comprehensive System of Assessment** - Emphasizes the role of curriculum-embedded assessments as a core component of a comprehensive system of assessment and provides guidance for teachers, school and district leaders on using assessment evidence to inform instructional decisions at the classroom, school and district levels.
- **Section 4: Evidence-Based Instructional Practices** - Supports leaders and teachers in understanding what constitutes an evidence-based practice in coordinating a system of effective instruction aligned to disciplinary practices and outcomes of the *KAS*.



Figure 1 Key Components of Curricular Coherence

For educators to meet the challenge of helping **all** students reach grade-level expectations, they must have a shared understanding of best practices in teaching and learning and a clear roadmap to follow throughout the year (Ainsworth, 2010). A strong local curriculum anchored in a high-quality instructional resource (when available) has the power to provide that roadmap by connecting standards, curriculum, effective instruction, assessment and professional learning (Achieve the Core, 2017). When leaders and educators work together to implement the local curriculum and HQIR, it helps ensure every student has access to the same content, knowledge and skills regardless of teacher or school they attend.



Part 1: Foundations of a Comprehensive System of Assessment

Assessment is the process of eliciting evidence of students' knowledge and skills, making sense of that evidence and using the information to guide decisions that improve teaching and learning (Hayes & Zagata, 2025). Evidence of learning, or data, is most often collected at the classroom level. Making sense of the evidence and decision making happens at the classroom, school, district and system levels. Each assessment is designed to serve a specific purpose, and the value of assessment data depends on how well that purpose is understood and honored by stakeholders across all levels of the system. Clarity about purpose, audience and use is critical to avoid misuse and reducing unnecessary assessment burden.

A **comprehensive system of assessment** is a coordinated collection of assessment tools, practices and policies that work together to provide actionable information about student learning. Rather than relying on isolated assessments, a comprehensive system ensures that assessments complement one another, are aligned to a shared vision for teaching and learning and support coherent decision-making (Hayes & Zagata, 2025).

Coherence is the foundation of an effective assessment system. **Coherence** means that curriculum, professional learning, evidence-based instructional practices and assessment all reinforce the same learning expectations. To achieve coherence, each assessment within the system must have a clear purpose, a defined audience and an intentional plan for how data will be used. When coherence is strong, assessments strengthen teaching and learning. When coherence is weak, assessment information becomes harder to interpret, more likely to be redundant and more likely to contribute to competing or misaligned priorities.

Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning

At a foundational level, assessments within a comprehensive system fall into two broad categories:

- **Assessments for learning:** These assessments provide timely evidence that students, teachers and leaders use to inform immediate instructional next steps.
- **Assessments of learning:** These assessments summarize student learning at a specific point in time. The data support describing and classifying performance (individually or in aggregate), monitoring progress toward shared goals and informing improvement planning, including adjustments to instruction, supports, systems, or structures (Wylie & Landl, 2024).

Both types of assessment are necessary within a comprehensive system, but they serve different purposes and inform decisions at different levels of the system.

The following terms provide nuance when describing the purpose of an assessment.

- **Instructional:** Assessments that provide timely, actionable information educators use to adapt instruction and curriculum in response to student needs.
- **Evaluative:** Assessments that are used to examine the effectiveness of curriculum, instruction or programs over time. Evaluative assessments support reflection and decision-making by teachers, school leaders and district staff to guide program improvement and future instructional or curricular adjustments, rather than inform immediate instructional changes.



- **Predictive:** Assessments that are used to estimate a student’s likelihood of meeting future learning expectations, such as end-of-year standards or assessments. Predictive assessments are often used at the classroom, school or district level to identify students who may be off track and may also serve as a screening tool to guide additional assessment, targeted support or intervention¹.

Types of Assessments in a Comprehensive System

The following descriptors can be used to classify the assessment type based on the level of detail or specificity of data collected, its purpose and how the data is used.

Formative Assessment

A process used by teachers and students during instruction to gather and respond to evidence of learning. Formative assessment occurs while learning is in progress, is embedded within daily instructional activities and provides immediate feedback to identify where students are in their learning, surface misconceptions and determine next instructional steps. **An assessment is formative only when the evidence collected is used to adapt or adjust instruction.**

Screening & Progress Monitoring

Systematic measures used to identify students who may be at risk of not meeting grade-level expectations and evaluate students’ responses to instruction or intervention over time. Universal screening assessments are administered to all students at designated points during the school year to identify patterns of risk, determine which students may require additional diagnostic evaluation or targeted support and monitor the effectiveness of Tier 1 universal instruction.

Diagnostic Assessment

A formal or informal assessment, utilizing valid and reliable tools that gather detailed information about an individual student’s strengths and needs relative to learning standards or goals. Diagnostic assessments are administered when more specific information is needed to inform instructional decisions or interventions and are not part of the ongoing, moment-to-moment formative assessment process.

Interim/Benchmark Assessment

Interim or benchmark assessments are administered at defined points throughout the school year to provide information about individual and group performance relative to grade-level benchmarks and content standards. They are used to monitor progress toward longer-term learning goals, examine patterns of retained learning or skill development and identify areas of strength and concern across classrooms, schools or districts.

¹ Definitions adapted from Measures That Matter: The Role of Interim Assessments in a Comprehensive Assessment System (Perie et al., 2007).



Interim assessments complement, but do not replace, the formative assessment practices embedded within daily instruction and curriculum-embedded assessments. Because they share characteristics of both formative and summative assessments, interim or benchmark assessments can inform short-cycle instructional planning, curriculum alignment, professional learning and system improvement efforts.

Summative Assessment

An assessment administered at the conclusion of a period of instruction to evaluate what students know, understand or can do relative to defined standards or goals. Summative assessments are retrospective in nature, measuring current levels of achievement based on demonstrated learning.

A classroom summative, such as an end-of-unit assessment, gives teachers and school leaders information about which students have mastered taught learning goals and standards. These assessments can serve both an evaluative and instructional purpose. School leaders use classroom summative results to monitor student achievement and evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies, the curriculum and curriculum-based professional learning structures. Teachers use the results to adjust upcoming instruction and provide students with targeted feedback.

On the other hand, state summative assessments serve an evaluative purpose at the system level, informing accountability and district improvement efforts. State summative results support leaders in monitoring achievement at the grade, school or system level and in evaluating the effectiveness of their instructional programs, systems and structures.



Part 2: Building a Strong Assessment Culture

A comprehensive system of assessment is most effective when it is supported by a strong assessment culture, in which assessment is not something done *to* students; it is something done *with* students to support learning. A comprehensive system ensures students understand what they are learning, how their progress is measured and how assessment evidence helps them improve.

Building this culture requires intentional classroom and school practices that promote student investment in learning, clear goals and meaningful feedback. When these elements are consistently present, assessment becomes a tool for strengthening instruction and advancing student learning rather than simply measuring performance.

The Kentucky Department of Education’s (KDE) [Evidence-Based Instructional Practices \(EBIPs\)](#) provide guidance for how teachers and leaders establish the conditions that support a strong assessment culture. In particular, [EBIP 1](#) (Establishing the Learning Environment), [EBIP 2](#) (Clarifying and Sharing Clear Learning Goal) and [EBIP 6](#) (Meaningful Feedback) support the practices described below.

Student Investment

Students are more engaged in learning when they understand what they are expected to learn and why it matters. A strong assessment culture helps students see the connection between daily learning tasks, assessments and their progress toward grade-level learning aligned to the Kentucky Academic Standards.

Specifically, curriculum-embedded assessments (CEAs) within high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) help make learning expectations visible. Because these tasks are aligned to grade-level standards and embedded within the curriculum sequence, they provide authentic opportunities for students to demonstrate understanding and reflect on their progress.

Teachers can strengthen student investment by clearly communicating learning goals and success criteria and by regularly discussing how classroom activities and assessments connect to those goals. When students understand the purpose of the work they are doing and the criteria for success, they are more likely to take ownership of their learning and engage more deeply in the learning process.

Goal Setting

Goal setting connects assessment evidence to student agency. When students examine evidence of their learning and set goals for improvement, they begin to see assessment as a tool for growth.

Effective goal setting is grounded in grade-level standards and curricular learning goals. Teachers use evidence from formative and classroom summative curriculum-embedded assessments to help students identify strengths and areas for growth. Together, teachers and students can set short-term and longer-term goals that support progress toward grade-level expectations.



Goal setting also strengthens coherence within a comprehensive system of assessment. When goals are aligned to the curriculum and revisited regularly during instruction, assessment evidence becomes part of an ongoing cycle of learning, reflection and improvement.

School leaders play an important role in supporting this work by ensuring that professional learning and intellectual preparation (i.e., unit and lesson internalization) emphasize clarity of learning goals and alignment between curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Feedback

Research consistently identifies feedback as one of the most powerful influences on student learning (Hattie & Clark, 2019). Effective feedback helps students understand where they are in relation to the learning goal and what steps they should take next to improve. When feedback is timely, specific, actionable and understood by the student, it can significantly accelerate learning.

High-quality instructional resources (HQIRs) often build opportunities for feedback directly into curriculum-embedded tasks and assessments. During lessons, teachers may provide feedback as students work through tasks and discussions. After classroom summative assessments, teachers and students can analyze results and reflect on strengths and areas for growth.

For feedback to have the greatest impact, it should focus on the task and the learning goal rather than the student as a person. Effective feedback helps students understand what they did well, where misconceptions exist and what strategies they can use to improve. When feedback is delayed, vague or disconnected from instruction, its effectiveness is reduced.

Teachers and leaders can strengthen feedback practices by using evidence-based instructional strategies that emphasize clear success criteria, opportunities for revision and structured reflection on learning. These practices help ensure that feedback is not simply information about performance but a tool that moves learning forward.



Part 3: Curriculum-Embedded Assessments - The Core of the System

As districts and schools adopt high-quality instructional resources (HQIRs), the assessments built into the resources, known as curriculum-embedded assessments (CEAs), become an essential component of a comprehensive system of assessment.

CEAs are assessments intentionally integrated into HQIRs to elicit evidence of student learning as it is occurring. CEAs use tasks from the curriculum to gather meaningful evidence of student understanding and skills at key instructional points, with results that can be used immediately to inform teaching and learning. CEAs are not additional assessments; they are integral components of HQIRs. **Understanding what CEAs are built into the HQIR and the purpose each assessment serves is a critical step to (1) ensuring effective implementation of the resource and (2) engaging all students in grade-level content.**

Depending on the administration timeline, grain size of data collected and how the data is used, curriculum-embedded assessments can be classified as formative, summative or interim assessments. Each assessment can serve up to two purposes: Predictive and instructional or instructional and evaluative (Perie, Gong, & Wurtzel, 2007).

Table 1: Example Curriculum-Embedded Assessments

Type	CEA Examples	Purpose	Use
Informal Diagnostic	Beginning-of-Year Assessment Pre-Unit Readiness Assessment HQIR-Specific Screeners and Diagnostic Assessments	Predictive	Teachers measure student mastery of prerequisite skills to inform upcoming instruction (e.g., just-in-time instruction, scaffolds and supports).
Formative	<p>Within the lesson Checks for Understanding Learning Tasks QuickWrites Prioritized practice problems</p> <p>After the lesson Daily Exit Ticket Quizzes</p> <p>Assessing learning goals from multiple lessons Mid-Unit Assessments Section Checkpoints</p>	Instructional	<p>Students and teachers determine progress towards or mastery of the lesson or unit learning goal(s) and identify gaps.</p> <p>Teachers provide feedback and adjust upcoming instruction to close gaps and accelerate learning.</p>
Classroom Summative	Unit Assessment (these may also be labeled Module or Topic Assessments) Performance-Based Tasks Writing Tasks	Instructional, Evaluative	Teachers use the data to understand individual student mastery of taught learning goals or standards and trends across classes. Individual data and trend data are used to plan or adjust



Type	CEA Examples	Purpose	Use
			<p>upcoming instruction to ensure mastery by the end of the year. Scores from summatives can be used to inform grades and communicate progress with families and caregivers.</p> <p>School leaders use the data to monitor student progress across grade levels and inform curriculum-based professional learning.</p>
Interim or Benchmark	Mid-Year Assessment Benchmarks	Instructional, Evaluative	<p>Teachers use the data to monitor individual, class and grade-level progress toward longer-term learning goals; identify patterns of retained learning or skill development; and determine areas of strength and concern to plan or adjust upcoming instruction.</p> <p>School and district leaders use the data to inform decisions about curriculum-based professional learning, curriculum alignment and system improvement efforts.</p>

The Importance of Curriculum-Embedded Assessments (CEAs)

CEAs help address several common challenges districts face related to assessment quality, assessment volume and the use of data to drive instructional improvement.

When teachers are asked to create or find their own assessments, the quality can vary widely. Assessment items and formats may not fully align with the expectations of grade-level standards or the prerequisite skills students need to access grade-level content. These assessments often lack clear scoring guidance and do not produce actionable data that can be easily analyzed or compared. As a result, variation in teacher-created assessments across classrooms makes it difficult for school and district leaders to identify instructional trends, compare results, and make informed decisions to improve teaching and learning.

Assessment volume can also increase when districts or schools require additional assessments outside of the curriculum. Rather than leveraging assessments embedded within high-quality instructional resources, educators may administer separate district-created assessments that are not aligned to the curriculum’s scope and sequence. This can lead to an incoherent system in which assessment data does not reflect what was actually taught and may prompt teachers to seek out disconnected resources to prepare students for those assessments.



Elevating CEAs as a core component of tiered instruction addresses these challenges and strengthens coherence across curriculum, instruction and assessment. Because CEAs are aligned to the curriculum’s scope and sequence and embedded within grade-level tasks, they reduce reliance on additional assessments and ensure that evidence of learning is gathered systematically and in direct connection to what students have been taught.

CEAs create continuous opportunities for teachers and students to check for understanding, surface misconceptions and adjust instruction in real time. Their scoring guidance and aligned resources support teachers in planning targeted instruction, intervention and remediation within the HQIR. In turn, school and district leaders can use this data to evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of instruction, curriculum and systems, including curriculum-based professional learning.

In practice, this means:

- Teachers use CEAs within the HQIR scope and sequence and daily lessons to inform immediate instructional decisions.
- Evidence of learning is gathered through lesson tasks, discussions and activities rather than separate testing events.
- CEAs provide multiple ways for students to demonstrate understanding.
- School and district leaders identify which CEAs can be used to monitor the effectiveness of curriculum, instructional resources and systems, as well as their impact on student learning outcomes.

What if CEAs are not available?

If HQIRs are not available in a content area, common formative assessments, when effectively designed and aligned to grade-level standards, can serve the same purpose as CEAs. Common formative assessments are developed by teams of teachers who teach the same grade level or content to measure student learning at shared points in the curriculum. Common formative assessments are administered to all students to determine progress toward agreed-upon learning goals, inform instructional decisions, and support timely, collective responses for students who need additional support or acceleration.

Implementing Curriculum-Embedded Assessments (CEAs)

Informal Diagnostics

Most HQIRs include beginning-of-year informal diagnostic assessments and/or pre-unit readiness assessments. These assessments measure student mastery of pre-requisite standards.

- Teachers administer informal diagnostics to determine what students know and can do.
- Teachers analyze the data from informal diagnostics and plan to provide just-in-time intervention, scaffolds and supports to ensure all students can access and engage in the grade-level content.
- School leaders protect time in PLCs for teachers to conduct analysis and plan upcoming instruction.

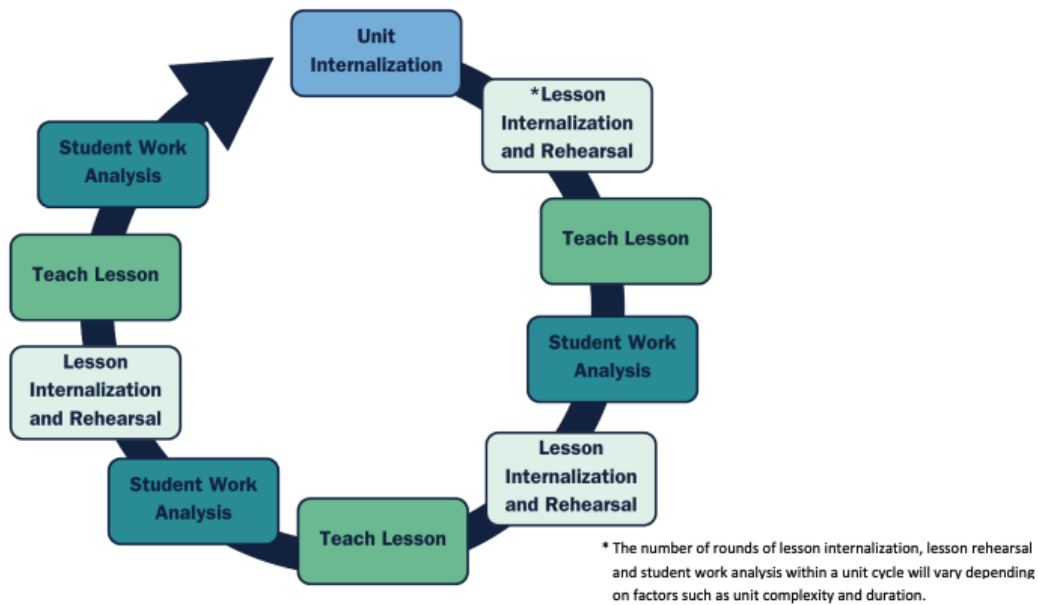
Unpacking CEAs Through Intellectual Preparation

Intellectual Preparation Cycles



Intellectual preparation cycles are part of the collaborative work that occurs within grade-level professional learning communities (PLCs) made up of core teachers, special education teachers (co-teachers and resource teachers) and support specialists (e.g., interventionists, English learner). As shown in Figure 2 below, each cycle includes the core processes of unit internalization, lesson internalization, lesson rehearsal and student work analysis. The number of rounds of lesson internalization, lesson rehearsal and student work analysis within a unit cycle will vary depending on factors such as unit complexity and duration.

Figure 2: *Intellectual Preparation Cycle*



Teachers should be given time to understand what assessments are embedded in their HQIR, the purpose of each assessment, which assessments are district- or school-required, which are up to their discretion to administer and how they will use the data. See *Part 5: The Role of School and District Leaders* for more information on how leaders support teacher understanding and use of CEAs.

Understanding Summative CEAs Through Unit Internalization

As teachers intellectually prepare to teach a unit within an HQIR, they begin by understanding how student learning will be assessed at the end of the unit. Clarity on this end goal helps teachers see how the unit is intentionally designed to build knowledge and skills over time and prepare students for success on the summative CEA.

An essential part of the *Unit Internalization Protocol* is completing the end-of-unit assessment as a learner. By doing the math, engaging in the science tasks, or completing the reading and writing, teachers develop a deeper understanding of what students must know and be able to do to meet grade-level standards within the unit. This process also clarifies how mastery is measured, including the types of tasks students will encounter, such as problem sets, selected-response items, constructed responses or performance tasks, and the different ways students may demonstrate understanding.

With this understanding, teachers can map how knowledge and skills are introduced, developed and reinforced across the unit. They can identify key moments to gather evidence of student learning through formative CEAs during and after lessons. These moments provide opportunities to monitor progress, provide feedback and adjust instruction before the summative CEA. Teaching teams may also prioritize specific formative assessments for deeper student work analysis during PLCs.

By understanding the end goal, the progression of the unit and when evidence of learning will be collected, teachers can anticipate where students may struggle and where they are likely to succeed. This allows teachers to proactively plan supports, build prerequisite skills and address misconceptions, ensuring all students have access to grade-level content and are prepared for success.

Unit Internalization Tools:

- [Mathematics Unit Internalization Protocol](#)
- [Reading and Writing Unit Internalization Protocol](#)
- [Science Unit Internalization Protocol](#)

Understanding Formative CEAs Through Lesson Internalization

Similar to unit internalization, teachers deepen their understanding of formative CEAs by engaging directly with lesson-level tasks during lesson internalization. This process begins with completing the lesson's formative tasks as a learner, applying the knowledge, skills and strategies students are expected to use. Doing this work helps teachers clarify what students are expected to know and be able to do within the lesson and how they will demonstrate mastery aligned with grade-level standards and learning goals. Additionally, teachers identify how the lesson's formative assessment(s) scaffold and prepare students for the unit summative assessment, keeping in mind the intentional design of the HQIR.

Lesson internalization also supports teachers in understanding how the lesson is intentionally designed to build student learning and where formative assessment opportunities are embedded. By reviewing the lesson sequence, instructional routines and embedded supports, teachers can anticipate how students will engage with the content and identify opportunities to elicit and gather evidence of student thinking. This includes determining when and how students will share their thinking, receive feedback and refine their understanding.

By completing formative tasks, clarifying success criteria and understanding lesson design, teachers are prepared to use formative CEAs during instruction to gather meaningful evidence of learning. This enables them to make in-the-moment instructional adjustments, provide targeted feedback and ensure all students have access to grade-level content.

Lesson Internalization Tools:

- [Mathematics Lesson Internalization Protocol](#)
- [Reading and Writing Lesson Internalization Protocol](#)
- [Science Lesson Internalization Protocol](#)



Analyzing Data from CEAs Through Student Work Analysis

After administering a lesson-level formative task or classroom summative assessment, it is not enough to simply record scores. During PLCs, teachers engage in structured student work analysis to understand how students are progressing toward the lesson or unit learning goals. This process allows teachers to identify strengths, diagnose learning needs, and determine targeted instructional next steps for both whole-group and small-group instruction.

Through analysis, teachers examine patterns and trends across student groups and consider which aspects of the curriculum, including the HQIR, and the instructional moves supported student success. They identify where students met, partially met or did not meet the success criteria and determine the underlying causes, including misconceptions, gaps in prerequisite skills or misalignment between instruction and the demands of the task. Using this understanding, teachers plan differentiated responses, including whole-group reteaching, small-group support, targeted interventions aligned to Tier 1 instruction and extension opportunities for students who met the criteria. They also consider how to leverage HQIR resources, collaborate with support specialists and ensure Tier 2 supports reinforce, rather than replace, grade-level learning. Over time, patterns in student work may also reveal needs for curriculum-based professional learning, which can be communicated to school and district leaders to strengthen instructional systems and supports.

Student Work Analysis Tool:

- [Student Work Analysis Protocol](#)

For within-lesson formative assessments, teachers may score tasks in the moment or take anecdotal notes to inform their immediate next steps. For example, a teacher may notice that over half of the students in the class made a similar error on a prioritized practice problem. The teacher brings the class together to conduct a mini error analysis lesson to address the underlying misconception and gives students an additional practice problem to apply their learning and assess the effectiveness of the error analysis mini-lesson. Or a teacher may pull a small group of students to address misconceptions if the majority of the class has demonstrated mastery of the learning objective.

Part 4: The Role of Interim Assessments

Interim or benchmark assessments are administered at defined points throughout the school year. These assessments are used to (1) monitor progress toward longer-term learning goals, (2) identify patterns of retained learning or skill development, and (3) determine areas of strength and concern across classrooms, schools or districts. Positioned between formative and summative assessment, interim or benchmark assessments inform instructional planning, curriculum-based professional learning and system improvement efforts.

Common Pitfalls

- Sometimes districts unintentionally use interim assessments in ways that produce confusing or misleading data. For example,
 - when the assessment is not aligned to the taught curriculum;



- when results are used to make conclusions about standards that have not yet been taught; or
- when interim data is treated as a substitute for daily formative evidence.
- When interim assessments are not well aligned to the curriculum and instructional sequence, results often reflect gaps in opportunity to learn rather than gaps in student understanding.

The Solution

Interim or benchmark assessments embedded within HQIR provide the most actionable data for teachers, school leaders and district leaders because they are aligned with the curriculum’s scope and sequence and reflect what has been taught.

If interim or benchmark assessments are not embedded within the HQIR, leaders should carefully examine alignment and intended data use to avoid misinterpreting results.

Questions to consider include:

1. **Alignment to instruction:** Does the scope of assessed standards align with what has already been taught in the curriculum and HQIR?
2. **Item-level alignment:** If not all items align, which assessment items reflect content students have actually been taught?
3. **Appropriate interpretation:** How will leaders ensure that conclusions about student performance are drawn only from items aligned to taught learning goals?
4. **Instructional relevance:** How will the data be used to understand the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and instructional practice?
5. **Purpose alignment:** Is stakeholder data use aligned with the intended purpose of the interim assessment (e.g., monitoring progress toward longer-term learning goals rather than evaluating daily instruction)?
6. **Decision-making value:** Is the data yielding insights that lead to actionable decisions about instruction, professional learning or system supports?

Part 5: The Role of School and District Leaders

Audit Curriculum-Embedded Assessments (CEAs) to Strengthen System Coherence

District and school leaders must understand what CEAs are built into the adopted HQIR and the intended purpose of those assessments in the strategic design of the resources. Leaders must consider what decisions the data from CEAs should inform at all levels of the system and how data insights will flow from the classroom to professional learning communities to school instructional leadership teams and up to district leaders.

The following process supports district and school leaders to audit available CEAs to strengthen the comprehensive system of assessments.

Step 1: Identify what CEAs are available.



- As a leadership team and/or alongside teacher leaders, identify what CEAs are available at the yearlong, unit and lesson level.
- Classify the assessment type and determine the purpose of the assessment based on who is using the data. For example,
 - The HQIR includes daily exit tickets or Cool-Downs.
 - These are formative assessments that serve an instructional purpose for teachers and students.
 - School leaders can also use daily exit ticket data to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction and curriculum-based professional learning.

Step 2: Develop guidance.

- Determine which CEAs all teachers must administer and which are up to the teacher's discretion to administer and why.
- Consider how the data from required assessments will be used by key stakeholders.
- For CEAs administered by all teachers, develop guidance for scoring CEA assessments to calibrate proficiency or mastery and timely data entry.
- Set the expectations for how teachers will use CEAs during the Intellectual Preparation Cycle within and outside of PLCs.
- Set grading policies - Which CEA data will inform student grades?

Step 3: Ensure data access and visualizations as part of the comprehensive system of assessment.

- Determine how to track CEA data and how it will be visualized to support analysis and action planning.
 - Will data be tracked in a vendor-published or district-created system?
 - Who needs access to the data? At what level (e.g., student, class, grade, etc.)?
- Data systems should be flexible enough for teams to be able to combine, disaggregate and display the information as needed to answer the questions being asked across the continuum of instruction, intervention and supports.²
- Put systems in place to monitor assessment completion rates and score entry.

Step 4: Establish data analysis rhythms and protocols.

Based on intended data use:

- Determine when, where and how teachers will analyze data and student work.
- Determine when, where and how leaders will analyze data and student work.

Tool: [How to Conduct an Assessment Inventory](#)

Use Data to Drive Decision Making

Once classroom summative and interim assessments are administered, educators at multiple levels of the system analyze the resulting data and student work to guide instructional and system-level decisions. The following sections describe how school leaders and district leaders use assessment evidence to strengthen teaching and learning.

² KyMTSS Implementation Guide 2nd Edition, March 2025.



Effective data analysis goes beyond reviewing scores. It requires leaders to examine assessment items and texts, study student work and consider how curriculum, instruction and supports influence student performance. When used in this way, assessment data becomes a powerful tool for strengthening instruction and improving student outcomes.

The following guiding principles describe the mindsets leaders should bring to the data analysis process and model for teachers.

Guiding Principles of Data Analysis³

- **Solving assessment items deepens understanding of standards.** Analyzing assessment items helps teachers and leaders better understand the demands of grade-level standards and the knowledge and skills students must demonstrate for grade-level learning. Taking time to solve and discuss assessment items can strengthen educators' content knowledge and support stronger instruction. Teachers can refer back to this step of the Unit Internalization Protocol.
- **Student work provides a window into student thinking.** Student work reveals how students approached a problem, what strategies they used and where misconceptions may exist. Requiring students to show their thinking and preserving that work for analysis allows teachers and leaders to better understand how students reasoned through tasks.
- **Building on students' strengths is essential when adapting instruction.** Data analysis should identify not only areas of challenge, but also what students already know and can do. Understanding students' strengths and current levels of understanding helps teachers design instruction that builds on existing knowledge while addressing gaps.
- **The goal of analysis is improved learning opportunities for students.** Assessment data should ultimately lead to action. Classroom summative and interim or benchmark assessments reveal patterns in student performance that can guide feedback, instructional adjustments and targeted learning opportunities.

The role of data analysis differs slightly depending on an educator's role within the system. School leaders and district leaders each examine assessment data from different vantage points to support instructional improvement.

School Leader Analysis

Purpose: School leaders analyze classroom summative and interim/benchmark assessment data to identify patterns, reflect on root causes, and plan or adjust upcoming curriculum-based professional learning.

- Leader analysis focuses on patterns across classrooms, grade levels and student subgroup trends rather than individual student performance.
- Leaders reflect on the root causes of trend strengths and areas of challenge before planning next steps.
- The root cause analysis directly informs curriculum-based professional learning planning, including

³ Adapted from Achievement Network Guiding Principles of Math Data Analysis/Adapt Instruction



shared learning workshops, professional learning communities (PLCs), peer observations and coaching.

Process:

Step 1: Identify Trends.

Step 2: Zoom in - conduct text, standard and item level analysis.

Step 3: Analyze root causes or contributing factors.

Step 4: Name prioritized next step(s) coming out of analysis.

Step 5: Evaluate the impact of the actions taken.

District Leader Analysis

Purpose: District leaders analyze classroom summative and interim/benchmark assessment data to identify system-wide trends across grade-level bands and campuses.

- Analysis focuses on the grade-level and campus level to identify bright spots and areas of need.
- Leaders analyze systemwide trends and investigate potential root causes or contributing factors across schools and grade-level bands.
- Leaders capture areas of investigation where the root cause is unknown or where more information is needed to fully articulate the root cause.
- The root cause analysis informs district guidance, support, and curricular and systems adjustments.

Process:

Step 1: Identify Trends.

Step 2: Analyze root causes or contributing factors.

Step 3: Name prioritized next step(s) coming out of analysis.

Step 4: Evaluate the impact of the actions taken.

Tools:

- [School Leader Classroom Summative, Interim/Benchmark Analysis Protocol](#)
- [District Leader Classroom Summative, Interim/Benchmark Analysis Protocol](#)



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