

Policy Points

MULTIPLE MEASURES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

States and districts across the United States are in the process of revising, piloting, and implementing new evaluation systems for students, educators, and schools. States that have received waivers from the prescriptive No Child Left Behind proficiency requirements are busy developing new educator evaluation systems. Still others are moving beyond one-size-fits-all standardized tests as their primary measure of student achievement. Evaluations based on test scores alone are narrow and complex and force schools to prioritize school instruction time toward tested subjects, usually math and English language arts, to the detriment of the whole child. Standardized test scores certainly have their place in a student assessment system, but should never be the sole measure of student achievement or the basis for determining educator effectiveness or school success.

ASCD believes that any comprehensive determination of student proficiency, educator effectiveness, or school quality must be based on more than just standardized test scores and should use a variety of measures appropriate to the individual or entity being measured.

MEASURING STUDENTS

Student test scores alone do not meaningfully track student learning and growth throughout the school year, nor do they provide the information necessary to address nonacademic student needs crucial to student success. A primary goal of measuring students should be to assess their learning progress on an ongoing basis so that instruction can be designed to further enhance their academic performance throughout the school year. Schools should ask not just what students know, but also what they know how to do with what they know.

Student performance can be measured by

- Standardized tests only



OR

- Summative assessments
- Progress on individualized growth objectives
- Student-centered evidence of learning
- Standardized tests
- End-of-course tests
- College-readiness tests
- English language proficiency gains
- Alternative assessments for students with special needs



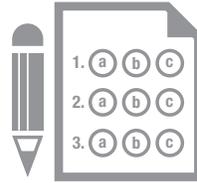
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MEASURING EDUCATORS

The goal of evaluating educators should be to identify their strengths and weaknesses so that professional development can be targeted appropriately to improve student outcomes. The most effective educator evaluation measures will allow for immediate instructional shifts in the classroom with direct impact on student subject mastery.

Educator effectiveness can be measured by

- Standardized tests only



OR

- Student growth data
- Observations
- Student feedback
- Certifications
- Leadership initiatives
- Parent surveys
- Self-reflection
- Mentor input
- Teacher portfolios



Many of these measures are subjective, each has limitations, and none should be used as the sole measure of students, educators, or schools. Using a variety of measures can alleviate each measure's imperfections and limitations and provide a more comprehensive evaluation. Prior to implementing new evaluation methods, evaluators should be trained in how to use the evaluation measure, including the purposes,

MEASURING SCHOOLS

The goal of assessing schools is to inform teachers, administrators, parents, and the public on whether schools are sufficiently meeting their students' academic, social, and emotional needs and whether schools are providing sufficient adult support and guidance. Increasing schools' capacity for supporting student success is dependent on collecting data that allow for appropriate and differentiated interventions. Student test scores are a single piece of data that do not provide a comprehensive picture of a school nor help inform comprehensive school improvement strategies.

School success can be measured by

- Standardized tests only



OR

- School report cards
- School climate surveys
- A well-rounded curriculum
- Advanced courses and dual enrollment
- Extracurricular activities
- Modern technology
- Graduation rates and postsecondary education enrollment
- Parent and community engagement
- Social and emotional supports



benefits, and drawbacks. Information derived from any assessments should be analyzed carefully. School evaluation data should be made public, as should aggregate student test scores, so that parents and the public can evaluate for themselves how well a school is meeting their needs. Each school and district should weigh the measures according to their own goals and requirements.