

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Principals and Headmasters

FROM: Nicole Wagner, Executive Director of the Office of Data and Accountability

CC: Tommy Chang, Superintendent
Instructional Superintendents

DATE: July 28, 2017

SUBJECT: 2017–18 Formative Assessment Strategy and Expectations

BPS Instructional Vision

Boston Public Schools students are the citizens, leaders, scholars, entrepreneurs, advocates, and innovators of tomorrow. BPS must ensure that 100% of students are ready for college, career, and life in the 21st century.

In order to realize our vision, BPS is making a multi-year commitment to transforming teaching and learning in our schools. The four educator competencies, the Essentials for Instructional Equity, can catalyze the type of transformation that is required. These competencies are:

1. Create and maintain safe, healthy, and sustaining learning environments
2. Design learning experiences for access & agency
3. Facilitate cognitively-demanding tasks and instruction
4. Assess for learning

Essential Competency 4: Assess for Learning states that, “Learning is an ongoing process. Assessing for learning is not about testing. When an educator assesses for learning he or she gathers information about student thinking in order to determine next steps (a new question, a deeper discussion, a link to prior learning, etc.) and to provide instructive feedback to students... Educators use information gathered through formative and summative assessment to monitor student progress and design appropriate supports or opportunities for acceleration.” Building a comprehensive assessment system is a critical component for facilitating assessment for learning

Building a Comprehensive Assessment System

To help educators transform teaching and to ensure students are on track to succeed, every district needs a clear, coherent, and aligned system of high-quality assessments. A comprehensive assessment system has the fewest assessments possible, but still has multiple assessments, each with a clearly defined and understood purpose. Depending on the time of administration and intention of the teacher, assessments can serve different purposes.

The primary emphasis should be on utilizing assessments in a formative manner. Formative assessment is assessment for student learning, rather than assessment of student learning. Assessments that are used for formative purposes are intended to help students and teachers make adjustments during the lesson cycle to increase student learning. Ultimately, assessments that are used formatively are "no stakes" assessments used to facilitate continued learning and growth.

In the past year, BPS has made investments to build a comprehensive assessment system that meets the varying needs of students and educators throughout our diverse district. While this critical endeavor is still underway, there are several key components already in place, including diagnostic early literacy assessments (i.e., EVT, PALS, DIBELS, and TRC) for students in grades K0–2 and standard-aligned interim assessments for students in grades 2–11. As we prepare for school year 2017–2018, we are codifying the expectations for assessment administration and use.

Assessment Expectations

All students in grades K2–2 should take an early literacy diagnostic at least 2–3 times per year, depending on grade level. All students in grades 3–11 should experience rigorous, standards-aligned common assessments¹ in ELA and mathematics at least three times per year. Students should also experience rigorous, standards-aligned common assessments in science (grades 5, 8, and high school) and history (grades 6–11) at least three times per year.

For SY 2017–18, BPS will provide three interim assessments per stated grade level in ELA and mathematics, two interim assessments per grade level in history, 20 science formative assessment item sets that may be flexibly administered for students in grades 5 and 8, and three MCAS science practice tests per subject². A [schedule of assessed standards \(SAS\)](#) for each subject and grade level is available by test form to facilitate alignment of instruction and assessment³. In addition, BPS will provide end-of-year assessments for these content areas and grade levels.

BPS has partnered with Measured Progress to design ELA, mathematics, and science assessments for the listed grade levels, while the BPS History/Social Studies Department has developed the content for history assessments. All of these assessment tools may be accessed using the Illuminate Education platform for easy administration and immediate analysis. Every BPS teacher and student already has an Illuminate account. Users may access Illuminate via the [Clever](#) backpack or the [Illuminate portal](#).

Schools that select "other" as the assessment option for a given grade level/content area will be asked to submit the schedule of assessed standards, administration calendar, and a copy of the actual assessment for review and approval by their Instructional Superintendent. Excellence for All classrooms are strongly encouraged to integrate the EFA capstone into their assessment plan. Similarly, schools planning to partner with the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA) around designing performance assessments should plan to include those assessments when planning. Please reference the common assessment [quality indicators](#) when determining which assessments your school will administer.

¹ See list of common assessment [quality indicators](#).

² See [implementation recommendations](#) for introducing the Illuminate platform and BPS Interim assessments.

³ For mathematics, BPS developed unique interim test forms for all BPS-approved curricula, including *Investigations 3*, *Everyday Mathematics 4*, *CMP3*, *EngageNY*, *CME*, *Glencoe*, and *Interactive Mathematics Program (IMP)*.

Using Data to Make Decisions

As school teams continue refining their assessment practice and strategy, they may consider leveraging various resources aligned with *Leadership Competency 3: Use data to make decisions* (“Develop, implement, monitor, and adjust implementation of shared vision, strategies, and core values using relevant data sources and appropriate research.”) Please refer to the [Office of Data and Accountability website](#) for more information about coaching services, professional development opportunities, and turnkey materials available for your use.

Please complete [THIS SURVEY](#) by no later than August 31, 2017 to inform your Instructional Superintendent and the Office of Data and Accountability of your strategic assessment choices for students in each grade level and subject for SY 2017–18. If you have any questions, please contact your Instructional Superintendent or Mary Dillman, Deputy Executive Director of Data and Accountability (mdillman@bostonpublicschools.org).

APPENDIX

About Measured Progress and Illuminate Education

Measured Progress has been developing high-quality items and assessments for over 30 years, including the development and design of Massachusetts' MCAS program, PARCC, and Smarter Balanced assessments. The BPS interim assessment content is developed by the same experts behind the Next Generation MCAS assessments. Each interim is aligned to BPS scope and sequence documents and curriculum. Schools have access to more than 10,000 ELA and mathematics items for students in grades 2–12, including performance assessment tasks and technology-enhanced items. Teachers may use the item bank to create custom assessments for a broad range of skills or for a particular cluster or standard. For Science, the STEM Gauge Formative Assessment tools include 20 item sets that teachers may flexibly administer in order to weave assessments into their curriculum.

All content is accessible through the easy-to-use online Illuminate Education platform. This includes the interim assessments, formative content bank, assessment creation tools, automatic and custom data reports, and parent and student portals. Illuminate also offers the option for custom reporting for other assessment data, including the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), PALS, and EVT. Practice MCAS assessments are also accessible via Illuminate for online or paper-based administration. Grading for machine-scored items may be done through a scanner or using a computer webcam, with data reports generating instantly. Another customizable feature of the platform is the ability to model Next Generation MCAS accessibility features.

About BPS Early Literacy Assessments

The *Expressive Vocabulary Test (EVT)* is given to all K0, K1, and K2 students to measure their expressive vocabulary. The EVT is administered two times per year—fall and spring.

The *Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS)* is administered to typically developing four-year-old students attending a K1 program or an Integrated K0/K1 program. PALS measures preschoolers' developing knowledge of important literacy fundamentals that are predictive of future reading success (i.e., letter recognition, letter sound, beginning sound production, print and word awareness, and rhyme awareness). PALS should be administered two times per year—fall and spring—only to K1 children in the K0-K1 classrooms.

The *Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)* is given to all K2, grade 1, and grade 2 students to measure basic early literacy skills including phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, accuracy and fluency with connected text, vocabulary, and comprehension. DIBELS benchmarks are administered three times per year—fall, winter, and spring.

The *Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC)* is given to all K2, grade 1, and grade 2 students to assess early literacy comprehension. Students in K2 are assessed two times per year (winter and spring), while students in grade 1 and grade 2 are assessed three times per year (fall, winter, and spring).

District-supported early literacy assessments by grade level

Grade Level	PALS	EVT	DIBELS	TRC
K0		✓		
K1	✓	✓		
K2		✓	✓	✓
1			✓	✓
2			✓	✓

Interim and end-of-year assessments offered by grade level and content area

Grade Level	ELA/Literacy (3 + EOY)	History (2 + EOY)	Mathematics (3 + EOY)	Science (20 item sets)
2	✓		✓	
3	✓		✓	
4	✓		✓	
5	✓		✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓	
7	✓	✓	✓	
8	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓	
10	✓	✓	✓	
11	✓	✓	✓	

2017-2018 BPS Assessment Calendar FOR GRADES K-2

As of 7/7/2017, dates are subject to change

SEPTEMBER 2017						
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OCTOBER 2017						
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NOVEMBER 2017						
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DECEMBER 2017						
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JANUARY 2018						
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September / October 2017			
Sept 18 - Oct 20	DIBELS & TRC	K-2	
Sept 18 - Oct 20	PALS	K1	
Sept 18 - Oct 20	LAP-D	K0-K2 students new to BPS	
Oct 16 - 27	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 2	ELA

November 2017			
Oct 30 - Nov 9	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 2	Math
Oct 30 - Nov 17	EVT	K0-K2	

December 2017			
Dec 11 - 21	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 2	ELA

January 2018			
Jan 4 - Feb 7	ACCESS for ELLs	K-12	
Jan 8 - 19	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 2	Math

February / March 2018			
Jan 22 - Mar 2	DIBELS & TRC	K-2	
Feb 26 - Mar 9	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 2	ELA
Mar 12 - 23	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 2	Math

May / June 2018			
May 7 - June 8	DIBELS & TRC	K-2	
May 7 - June 8	PALS	K1	
May 21 - June 15	EVT	K0-K2	
June 4 - June 15	End of Year Assessments	Gr 2	ELA, Math

More information on Early Childhood assessments can be found here:
<https://sites.google.com/bostonpublicschools.org/earlychildhood/assessments>

The ACCESS for ELLs Test Additional administration details can be found on the DESE website. Recommended Interim assessment administration window	DIBELS & TRC (Optional)
	LAP-D
	EVT
	No School

★ = First/Last Day of School (or day 180) ★ = First day for Kindergarten

○ = Major Religious & Cultural Holidays

Sept. 21..... Rosh Hashanah Feb. 16..... Chinese New Year
 Oct. 19 Diwali begins May 16..... Ramadan begins
 Dec. 13-20.... Hanukkah June 15..... Eid al-Fitr

FEBRUARY 2018						
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MARCH 2018						
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APRIL 2018						
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MAY 2018						
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JUNE 2018						
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2017-2018 BPS Assessment Calendar FOR GRADES 3-8

As of 7/7/2017, dates are subject to change

SEPTEMBER 2017						
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OCTOBER 2017						
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NOVEMBER 2017						
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DECEMBER 2017						
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JANUARY 2018						
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October / November 2017			
Oct 2 - 11	TerraNova (AWC)	Gr 3-5	ELA, Math
Oct 16 - 27	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 3-8	ELA, History (6-8)
Oct 30 - Nov 9	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 3-8	Math

December 2017			
Dec 11 - 21	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 3-8	ELA, History (6-8)



January / February 2018			
Jan 4 - Feb 7	ACCESS for ELLs	K-12	
Jan 8 - 19	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 3-8	Math

March 2018			
Feb 26 - Mar 9	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 3-8	ELA
Mar 12 - 23	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 3-8	Math
Mar 29	MCAS-ALT	Gr 3-8	Deadline for submission

April / May 2018			
Apr 2 - May 4	MCAS	Gr 3-8	ELA
Apr 3 - May 25	MCAS	Gr 3-8	Math
Apr 4 - May 25	MCAS	Gr 5, 8	Science

June 2018			
June 4 - 15	End of Year Assessments	Gr 3-8	ELA, Math, History (6-8)

For additional information on the ACCESS for ELLs test, check the DESE website.	No School	MCAS
Recommended Interim assessment administration window		MCAS Alt
		Advanced Work Class (AWC)

-  = First/Last Day of School (or day 180)
-  = Major Religious & Cultural Holidays
- Sept. 21..... Rosh Hashanah
- Oct. 19 Diwali begins
- Dec. 13-20.... Hanukkah
- Feb. 16..... Chinese New Year
- May 16..... Ramadan begins
- June 15..... Eid al-Fitr

FEBRUARY 2018						
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APRIL 2018						
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MAY 2018						
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JUNE 2018						
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2017-2018 BPS Assessment Calendar FOR GRADES 9-12

As of 7/7/2017, dates are subject to change

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OCTOBER 2017						
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DECEMBER 2017						
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JANUARY 2018						
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October / November 2017			
Oct 11	PSAT/NMSQT	Gr 10-11	
Oct 16 - 27	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 9-11	ELA, History
Oct 30 - Nov 9	Interim Assessment 1	Gr 9-11	Math
Nov 8, 9 & 14	MCAS Retest (Nov 17 Makeup) Eligible Gr 10-12 ELA		
Nov 15 - 16	MCAS Retest (Nov 17 Makeup) Eligible Gr 10-12 Math		

December 2017			
Dec 11 - 21	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 9-11	ELA, History

January / February 2018			
Jan 4 - Feb 7	ACCESS for ELLs	K-12	
Jan 8 - 19	Interim Assessment 2	Gr 9-11	Math
Feb 5 - 6	MCAS (Feb 8 Makeup)	High School Biology	

March / April 2018			
Feb 26 - Mar 9	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 9-11	ELA
Feb 28 - Mar 6	MCAS Retest (March 7 Makeup) Eligible Gr 10-12 ELA, Math		
Mar 12 - 23	Interim Assessment 3	Gr 9-11	Math
Mar 27	MCAS (Apr 5 Makeup)	Gr 10	ELA Composition
Mar 28 - 29	MCAS (Apr 10 Makeup)	Gr 10	ELA Reading Comprehension
Mar 29	MCAS-ALT	Gr 9-12	Deadline for submission

May 2018			
May 23 - 24	MCAS (May 30 Makeup)	Gr 10	Math

June 2018			
June 4 - 15	End of Year Assessments	Gr 9-11	ELA, Math, History
June 6 - 7	MCAS (June 12 Makeup)	HS	Science

For additional information on the ACCESS for ELLs test, check the DESE website.	No School	MCAS
Recommended Interim assessment administration window		MCAS Alt
		PSAT

- = First/Last Day of School (or day 180)
- = Major Religious & Cultural Holidays

Sept. 21..... Rosh Hashanah Feb. 16..... Chinese New Year
 Oct. 19..... Diwali begins May 16..... Ramadan begins
 Dec. 13-20.... Hanukkah June 15..... Eid al-Fitr

FEBRUARY 2018						
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MARCH 2018						
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APRIL 2018						
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JUNE 2018						
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