





# Understanding Assessments: A Tool for Families

The purpose of assessment for students and their families is to provide feedback about what students are learning and their progress towards their learning goals. The feedback received can be used to help students adjust their learning strategies if needed. A traditional "test" is just one type of assessment.

Assessment data can be used to help students take more responsibility for their learning because it provides them with information that can used to monitor how well they are learning and ask for help if they are having trouble. Over the course of a school year, assessments happen in a variety of ways. Each kind of assessment provides a different type of feedback about students and their learning and good teachers are also constantly assessing individual and group progress to get feedback on their teaching approaches.

When information from each of these assessments is used together, they create a complete picture of how students are learning, but parents rarely have support in making sense across different data points. The purpose of this document is to provide a general overview of the assessments that students may participate in over the course of a school year.

#### Assessments Throughout the Year

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What the Assessment May Look Like for Your Student

Student work from class and the feedback on their work that is received from teachers and peers

Mid-term reports and feedback on larger projects or assignments

Student end-of-semester report cards, scores on school or district tests, or feedback on end-of-semester projects

Standardized State Assessments (CMAS)

National Assessments (PSAT, SAT, ACT, AP, IB, NAEP)

ASSESSMENT TYPE

TEACHER ASSIGNED
WORK AND PROJECTS

Weekly

CLASSROOM BENCHMARK
OR INTERIM

End of unit/Mid-Term

SUMMATIVE SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

End of Semester

STANDARDIZED STATE

Annually

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENTS

Annually

INFORMATION PROVIDED

How Feedback Can Be Used by Students and Families

Using feedback from worksheets, small projects, papers, etc., students can understand how well they are learning specific skills and class content.

With feedback provided in the form of grades or descriptions of student performance, students can see how well they are learning class material and make changes to their learning strategies or approach if needed.

Final class grades are meant to signal to students how well they have learned the content and skills being taught in class and how well they have shown what they can do compared to school expectations.

Students and their families are provided with scores that reflect a snapshot of a what their student knows and can do compared to State expectations and standards.



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### Glossary

**Academic Standards:** In Colorado, standards are created by Coloradans for Colorado students and provide a grade-by-grade road map of what students should learn and how they learn to help ensure students are successful at each grade level.

**Artifact:** An object that allows the student and others to see evidence of student learning. Artifacts can include tests and essays and are the result of tasks, learning activities, projects, and presentations.

**Benchmarks:** Measurable standards that have been set to evaluate student learning in a specific grade. Benchmarks are used to assess student progress toward year-end goals.

**Content:** Knowledge and skills to be taught in a specific class.

**Interim Assessments:** Assessments that are used to evaluate where students are in their learning and determine if they are on track to performing well on future assessments.

**Learning Goals:** The focus of what students are supposed to learn. Learning goals help students to know where they should focus their efforts and help them to understand the knowledge and skills, they should take from a given task or activity.

**Learning Strategies:** The set of skills and tactics used by students to learn new information and finish a task or activity.

**Student Reflection:** A process where students describe their learning, how it has changed, and how it might relate to future learning experiences.

**Summative Assessment:** Assessments that are used to evaluate student learning and achievement at the conclusion of a defined instructional period, typically at the end of a project, unit, course, semester, or school year.

### Did you know?

The vast majority of parents want a better understanding of how their child is progressing and what's expected this year. For ideas and tools to help you team up with teachers based on a shared understanding of progress,

visit <u>futurereadyfamilies.org/resources</u>.