

Comprehensive Assessment System

In the Delaware multi-tiered system of support (DE-MTSS), a comprehensive assessment system includes data-driven processes that utilize various types of valid and reliable assessment tools and data (e.g., screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and evaluation) that combine to form a system of assessments with the goal of supporting student academic and non-academic growth. Problem-solving teams at the state, district/charter school organization, and school/charter levels systematically examine data from this system to understand academic and non-academic resources and supports.

Definition

A comprehensive assessment system uses a balance of formative and summative assessments, including screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring measures, each being valid and reliable for its intended purpose and administered at specific intervals and/or as needed. All assessments within the system are used to help educators make informed instructional and programmatic decisions based on the strengths and needs of the whole child, while providing families with regular updates on student progress.

A comprehensive assessment system includes a universal screening process that

- Incorporates informal formative tools (e.g., existing data used to monitor student progress) and formal tools (e.g., brief norm-referenced tools) used with all students;
- Informs programmatic decisions about core instruction and universal practices and interventions;
- Provides information to support the identification of students who may be at risk for academic and non-academic difficulties;
- Leads to additional student-level problem solving for students identified as needing support, which may include collecting and analyzing diagnostic data or adjusting core instructional practices;
- Uses an informal screening process for all students in the first weeks of school entry and then a more comprehensive screening process in the fall after relationships have been established. For those students who are shown to be at risk on the first screening stage, a second stage of diagnostic and data analysis is used to confirm and understand students' needs; and
- Uses data-based decision making with problem-solving teams to examine screening data to understand information about the effectiveness of interventions and other supports and how well they are meeting students' needs.

A comprehensive assessment system includes diagnostic data that

- Help educators develop hypotheses about the potential cause(s) or functions of the student's academic and/or non-academic difficulties. This hypothesis is used to drive the team's decisions about how best to support the student and implement or adapt an intervention;
- Assist educators in intensifying intervention for students who do not adequately respond to targeted interventions;
- Support educators in understanding students' specific needs and strengths or in identifying the environmental events that predict and maintain students' academic and/or non-academic needs;
- Guide the team's decisions about how best to support the student and adapt the intervention as well as core instruction and universal practices, and include feedback from parents, staff, and others who work with the student.

A comprehensive assessment system includes progress monitoring that

- Systematically tracks students' progress in academic and/or non-academic areas so that educators are better able to identify student needs for additional supports;
- Documents fidelity of implementation of program or practices; and
- Repeats measurement of student performance throughout the course of the intervention to index or quantify student responsiveness and to determine, on an ongoing basis, when adjustments to the intervention are needed to improve achievement.

(Regulations Referenced: 4.0 Assessment, 5.0 Problem Solving Team, & 6.0 MTSS Framework and Procedures)