maisa | michigan association of intermediate school administrators

Leadership Innovation Results

General Education Leadership Network

Michigan ASCD and the General Education Leadership Network (GELN) of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators are both educational organizations dedicated to high quality teaching and learning in Michigan schools.

Michigan ASCD is an affiliate of ASCD and share a common vision to provide expert and innovative solutions for addressing opportunities and challenges learners face in the 21st Century. GELN is a pro-active, key decision-making group in the state that develops collaboration and efficiencies on projects, issues and policies regarding student learning among Michigan ISD's and RESA's.

With our combined focus on supporting Michigan schools, and our network of Michigan educators, we are well positioned to understand the unique needs and challenges of students and educators in the current educational context and to influence problem solving and decision-making to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Both organizations operate and make decisions based on data and researched- based information, especially as it applies to increasing student achievement. Multiple studies have demonstrated increased improvement in student performance when there is intentional alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instruction in the learning cycle.

It is essential for leaders who make policy and program decisions to understand the critical relationship among standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment. In collaboration, as well as alignment with the Michigan Assessment Consortium's Principles and Practices for Creating Effective State-wide Student Assessments (http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/news/principles-and-practices-creating-effective-statewide-student-assessment-systems) we provide the following components for clarity and guidance to help inform decisions:

The Critical Alignment of
Standards, Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Condition 1 – Standards are the foundation of coherent and aligned educational practice.

Standards are statements of what students should know and be able to do in their work, personal, and civic lives.

Condition 2 – Curriculum, the designed, locally approved, and implemented instructional content must be aligned to standards.

- Curriculum encompasses the means, methods, and materials which students will interact with for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes that must be aligned with the standards.
- Effective curriculum may look different from district to district, but it is always aligned to standards, progressing from one level to the next to ensure growth in student skills and knowledge.

Condition 3 – Assessment must be aligned to the curriculum and measure the degree of student proficiency of the standards.

- Measures of students learning should reflect the curriculum, indicating the degree of student mastery of standards-based skills and knowledge, and be used to help identify gaps in learning.
- *Please reference the Michigan Assessment Consortium Standards previously cited for additional information.*

Condition 4 – Effective instruction is matched to student needs, aligned to the curriculum, and used to support learners as they move toward the identified target to be measured.

- Quality instructional frameworks are research-based and proven to promote student growth and facilitate the learning process.
- Quality instruction involves assessing students' prior knowledge, implementing instruction and measuring the results, intentionally.
- Educators calibrate instructional decisions based on the needs of individual and groups; students shift their performance based on feedback.

Condition 5 – A quality system of assessment incorporates multiple forms of assessments, and is used for multiple purposes.

- Classroom feedback is provided in a timely manner to help students and inform educators about classroom practices.
- Feedback for the school, district, and state provides information and accountability related to curriculum, instruction and assessment, and informs organizational policies and decisions.

Condition 6 – A state educational system should be coherent beginning with state adopted standards leading to a state aligned system of measuring those standards.

- A quality state assessment system informs districts and the state of the progress being made in achieving the standards through the intentional alignment of the curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- Data used to make decisions related to student growth, policy and evaluations must be accurate.
- The system needs to be efficient and adaptive.
- Adaptive assessments provide a more accurate measure of student learning.

In summary, Michigan ASCD and GELN see critical implications related to the conditions above in making a quality decision related to assessment practices in our state.

1. Quality assessment impacts the quality of instruction.
2. Coherent systems are efficient and effective.
3. Clear alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices allows resources to be used intentionally and judiciously.
4. Student growth measures must be accurate and aligned to the states adopted standards.