Assessment involves the process of collecting, analyzing, and organizing information or data for the purpose of monitoring and evaluating instruction and student learning. Reliable assessment information, procedures, and techniques must be used in planning for improved student achievement. Typically, planning effective instruction for all students requires two kinds of information: information to guide instruction for individual students and information to guide overall planning and resource allocation.

The past twenty years of research on teacher decision making about cognitive learning and student motivation has revealed important findings in relation to assessment. Fundamentally, effective teachers continually assess students relative to learning objectives and adjust subsequent instruction on the basis of the assessment information.

In CCSD, assessment is designed to inform instruction and promote student learning of established standards, concepts, and skills. There are several types of assessment practices, and many practices can be used to serve multiple purposes.

Types of Assessments

Assessments can be classified into two separate categories, "assessments **of** learning and assessments **for** learning" (Torgesen, J. and Miller, D., 2009). Assessments **of** learning are summative assessments which indicate a student's level of proficiency in a given subject area. In contrast, assessments **for** learning are formative assessments that are "intimately connected" to instruction and can assist students with improving their learning and teachers with improving their effectiveness (Torgesen, J. and Miller, D., 2009).

> **Summative assessments** provide information about student achievement toward standards.

Summative assessments provide information about student achievement toward standards and information useful to program/instruction evaluation. These types of assessments can help teachers determine not only the effectiveness of a unit of study but, more importantly, the effectiveness of Tier I instruction. They often take the form of end-of-unit/end-of-course tests, norm-referenced, standardized tests, or criterion-referenced measures.

> **Formative assessments** are ongoing and aligned to student progress within the instructional process.

Formative assessments are ongoing and aligned to student progress within the instructional process. They are actively used to adjust teaching and learning while it is occurring. They include day-to-day informal and formal classroom-based assessments. Best practices include the use of curriculum-based measurement (CBM) in tracking student progress on a regular basis. Formative assessments include screening, progress monitoring, diagnostic measures, observations, and other classroom-based assessments.

Making Assessments Complementary and Purposeful

Assessment data is vital for instruction and intervention within Response To Instruction (RTI). Assessments allow teachers to identify a student's skill base and assist in determining specific skill deficits. Teachers use the results to target deficits through instruction and intervention, and periodically re-evaluate student progress in order to determine whether or not the instruction/intervention should be continued, modified, or stopped (McCook, 2006). Best practices in assessment call for decisions to be made based on data obtained from multiple types of assessments.

The following assessments serve specific purposes and should be used cohesively in determining how best to address the needs of **ALL** students at the group and individual level.

Screening measures provide basic information about the skill base of a student in relation to grade-level peers and general instructional standards. This information can also be used to identify students who are struggling and require additional support. This essential data is gathered and analyzed at the beginning of the year as well as throughout the year to determine appropriate placement and course work. In addition, "they are useful in determining the most appropriate starting place for instruction and planning for groups" (Consortium on Reading Excellence, 2004). Universal screening measures, often referred to as "benchmarks," are administered three or more times a year during established testing windows (e.g., fall, winter, spring) to all students in the core academic areas (i.e., reading, writing, and mathematics).

> **Screening measures** provide basic information about the skill base of a student.

Diagnostic measures pinpoint students' specific skill deficits and guide decisions about instruction. Diagnostic tests are necessary to help determine the "why" behind a student's lack of academic progress. Periodic use of these measurements show the student's skill deficits and help a teacher determine appropriate corrective instruction and interventions.

> **Diagnostic measures** pinpoint students' specific skill deficits and guide decisions about instruction.

Progress monitoring measures, usually CBMs, help determine whether students are making adequate progress toward grade-level goals. Progress monitoring may occur at the group or individual level. These measurements are important to help determine if current instruction (Tier I, Tier II, or Tier III) will result in satisfactory student improvement. For example, utilizing this data, a decision can be made to keep a student in Tier I or move them to Tier II (Mellard, D. & Johnson, E., 2008). For instructional planning purposes, progress monitoring data should be frequently analyzed to yield meaningful results.

> **Progress monitoring** measures, usually CBMs, help determine whether students are making adequate progress toward grade-level goals.

When progress monitoring, grade-level measures should be considered first; however, if a student is performing below grade level, progress monitoring at the student's instructional level may be necessary. Instructional level is generally defined as the student's successful performance (e.g., accuracy, comprehension, conceptual knowledge, metacognition) at meeting grade-level standards with limited instructional support (Farstrup, A. & Samuels, S., 2002). For example, if a fourth grade student cannot read connected text because he is working on letter sounds, the results from a fourth grade Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) may not be useful. Additionally, if a ninth grade student is having difficulty reading multisyllabic words, then administering an assessment that provides only a lexile level may not be as beneficial as administering a diagnostic measure. If this is the case, then the student's progress is monitored at his/her instructional level and/or the highest level that yields the most meaningful results for instructional decisions.

Different time frames can be used for progress monitoring, but the frequency of progress monitoring should increase when a student is not responding adequately to instruction. The recommended frequency for monitoring students' progress in Tier II is once or twice a month, while students' progress in Tier III should be monitored on a weekly basis. Additionally, if a significantly low-achieving student's progress is monitored weekly at his or her instructional level, then the student should also be strategically monitored at grade level once per month for comparison of student performance to grade-level peers. **Note:** For students with Individualized Instruction Programs (IEP) and identified academic deficits, repeated assessments of student performance should also occur.