



Uses of Large-Scale Assessments of Mathematics and Science in Ohio

Position Statement Summary

The Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition is a respected organization of leaders from education, business, and the public sector that draws on research and best professional practice to advocate for excellence in mathematics and science education for all Ohio students. Since 1995 OMSC has facilitated collaboration among Ohio stakeholders to create a shared statewide vision for continuous, systemic and sustainable improvement.

OMSC supports assessment as an important part of both learning and accountability systems. Both large-scale (state-wide) and classroom assessments are appropriate and necessary for a high-quality education system.

All assessments should be developed with careful attention to the objectives being measured. The OMSC supports Ohio's New Learning Standards; such standards are necessary to assure equitable access to high quality learning opportunities for all students, regardless of economic status, geographic location or other local conditions. OMSC supports valid, reliable, and state-initiated large-scale standards-based assessments, when used to provide information about student progress, evaluate programs, and provide accountability relative to the standards.

Large-scale assessments are important and useful tools for educators and for policy makers. OMSC is cautious about the use of student-growth measures from large scale assessments to make judgments about the effectiveness of individual teachers.

The practice of using results from a single large-scale assessment (even when multiple opportunities to take the assessment are provided) as the primary part of high-stakes decisions about students (promotion, graduation, etc.) is not sound educational practice. Teachers, who use a variety of data sources and who work closely with students, are in a much better position to make such high-stakes decisions.

Therefore, the Ohio Mathematics and Science Coalition advocates for a state assessment system that

- provides a variety of ways for students to demonstrate understanding and mastery of important mathematical and scientific content,
- provides information to teachers and administrators that will be helpful in making programmatic decisions that serve the needs of all students,
- supports districts in the development of a comprehensive assessment system rather than being an add-on to local assessments,
- is valid at the state level and is reliably implemented across districts, and
- does not use the results of large-scale assessments as the major component of high-stakes decisions about individuals, either students or teachers.