

The NEW Accountability

School quality and student learning are too complex to be captured by any single test score. It's time for Massachusetts to move away from one high-stakes, standardized test and explore alternative measures that capture the full measure of our schools and students.

High-stakes Testing:

- ☒ Narrows the curriculum
- ☒ Devalues teachers
- ☒ Misinforms the public about school quality
- ☒ Creates and maintains inequities

The **Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA)** is pioneering an assessment and accountability model that measures what our communities most value and that prepares students with the skills, knowledge, and mindsets to achieve their varied goals.

MCIEA's accountability system focuses on a **School Quality Measures** framework that includes multiple measures of student engagement, student achievement, and school environment, and emphasizes **Performance Assessments** as the primary means of assessing student learning.

MCIEA is a partnership of public school districts and their local teacher unions from **Attleboro, Boston, Lowell, Milford, Revere, Somerville, and Winchester**. MCIEA is partnering with the Center for Collaborative Education and UMass Lowell.



Approximately **1 in 10 students** in the state is in an MCIEA school

SCHOOL QUALITY MEASURES

✓ Engaging the community in defining school quality.

Students, families, and educators participated in focus groups to identify what is most important to know about their schools. This feedback, in addition to reviews of scholarly research and national polling, informed the creation of the MCIEA School Quality Measures framework with five categories: **1. Teachers and Leadership 2. School Culture 3. Resources 4. Academic Learning 5. Community and Wellbeing**

✓ Strengthening teacher practice.

The framework produces a wide array of information related to school quality through student and teacher surveys and administrative data, which is used by school stakeholders to improve teaching and learning.

✓ Restoring the broader purpose of education.

MCIEA measures school quality in a fair and comprehensive way, without relying on a narrow set of indicators and in a way that reflects the unique character of each school community.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

✓ Redefining student assessment.

Performance assessments are multi-step assignments that measure how well a student transfers and applies knowledge and complex skills. Students demonstrate proficiency in ways that will be expected of them later in college, career, and life.

✓ Supporting teacher leaders.

MCIEA teacher leaders participate in professional learning in the creation of performance assessments. Teacher leaders return to their schools to build the capacity of colleagues school-wide to design and embed performance assessments in the curriculum.

✓ Connecting assessment directly to student growth.

MCIEA supports the use of performance assessments in the classroom that are integrated into students' daily work, drive quality instruction, and assess student growth over time as opposed to an absolute score from a single, high-stakes standardized test.



What We've Done

MCIEA districts and schools collect School Quality Measures (SQM) data annually in all framework categories and indicators through teacher and student surveys and administrative data. The SQM data are designed for two broad purposes: to provide community members a more complete picture of schools and to give school and district personnel better information to drive improvement. During the last year, MCIEA districts have undertaken important work in both of these areas.

District and school leadership teams have each begun to systematically integrate SQM data into the development of annual school and district improvement plans as well as educators' personal practice goals. For example, in Revere, district administrators review the SQM online data dashboard and highlight areas of improvement across schools. Principals in turn review their school data and discuss them with school teams. Substantive conversations within schools and across schools are designed to celebrate what schools are doing well and to highlight areas for continuous improvement.

In addition, MCIEA school quality data has been used to drive engagement with community stakeholders. In Winchester, a cross-district team has been meeting monthly to examine SQM data in-depth and to plan community-wide conversations about school quality and school improvement. In Boston, results from SQM student and teacher surveys have been shared publicly on school profile pages. Since the beginning of the year, the **SQM data dashboard** has been viewed more than **5,000 times by more than 2,800 unique users**.

Early Lessons



SQM places more focus on teacher/student relationships.

"Relationships, for us, was a big focus area the past few years. Looking at the SQM data, it was good to see that students do feel connected to somebody in school. They know that somebody at school cares for them." (MCIEA Principal)



Better data makes for better leadership.

"I want to make sure that I'm addressing my teachers' needs, that I am providing them with good leadership. The SQM data is coming right from the people in my building. So it is a good source for me to say, 'Okay where do I need to grow?'" (MCIEA Principal)



Holistic data better informs school change.

"The MCIEA data has informed a lot of the plans in terms of what it is we're trying to change about the school. The dashboard gives us clear information to address things that we value as a school beyond just the outcome on test day." (MCIEA Teacher)

What's Next

1. Collecting annual surveys from teachers and students in MCIEA member districts
2. Refining our online SQM data dashboard to enable disaggregation of results by demographic subgroups
3. Making the SQM data dashboard publicly available
4. Developing leaders in each district who can facilitate conversations about SQM data—and their implications for school improvement—within schools, across schools, and in the community



QUALITY PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT UPDATE

What We've Done

MCIEA schools are moving out of the early professional development phases into widespread implementation of Quality Performance Assessments. Through a year-long institute, coaching, and cross-district support, teachers and leaders have developed a baseline literacy in performance assessments, and are now developing long-term plans to implement school-wide systems of performance assessments.

At Somerville High School, teachers are enacting a four-year plan to incorporate performance assessments into every step of a high school student's journey to fit with the school's newly developed Portrait of a Graduate. The school has made strides in creating performance assessments that are authentic and rich with real-world context, expanding MCIEA professional development opportunities to teachers in every department. One particular assessment saw students learning about the Flint water crisis, and asked students to analyze their own water sources.

Attleboro High School has made performance assessments the focus of staff professional development time. The school hosted a series of four professional development days, with shorter professional development meetings sprinkled in between, geared towards performance assessments. Teachers have been implementing performance assessments both within and across departments. This work has culminated in several student showcases, including a presentation to the school committee, highlighting the innovative work of students. Since the launch of MCIEA, **over 1,500 teachers from 52 schools have increased their performance assessment knowledge and skills.**

Early Lessons



Have a plan focused on performance assessment goals.

"We had a concerted roll-out plan over four two and a half hour PD sessions. We all wanted the teams and the facilitators to be on the same team, so there was a ton of behind-the-scenes work involved to help make the PD successful. I think that was time well spent." (MCIEA Principal)



Connect performance assessment with district priorities.

"We have tried to promote performance assessments in terms of how they fit under our district focus of inclusive practices and recognizing that different students learn in different ways, and we should give them myriad opportunities to demonstrate their learning." (MCIEA District Leader)



Make the time for professional development.

"To do more meaningful work, you need way more than two meetings per semester. I know part of our implementation work is looking at the daily school schedules and how more time can be put into schedules for [cross-department] collaboration." (MCIEA Teacher)

What's Next

1. Continuing to devote time to professional development around performance assessments
2. Tuning performance assessments through school-wide and cross-school validation and calibration activities to ensure that assessments are valid, measure what teachers intend to measure, and are scored consistently
3. Getting more students out of the classroom to engage in learning opportunities with organizations, businesses, and the community at large
4. Setting up school processes in which teachers make proficiency determinations of student learning through assessing student work from performance assessments

"We are all pushing to get these kids challenged, to ask them questions, to make them really think about the world out there, and to use the resources to solve problems. It's not a test score; it's so much more."

Adeline Bee, President, Attleboro Education Association

"MCIEA is taking a look at multiple factors to assess how well schools are doing, with the goal of not just holding ourselves accountable, but working on continuous improvement. We will learn from and with each other."

Judy Evans, Superintendent, Winchester Public Schools

"In order for our schools to be successful, it is critical that our priorities reflect those of our community and our stakeholders. The School Quality Measures data dashboard allows us to focus in these areas rather than just seeing where we rank compared to other districts."

Dianne Kelly, Superintendent, Revere Public Schools

"I gave my students the performance assessment the other day. As they were doing it, their comments made it all worth it to me. They were like, 'This is so fun. I wish all tests were like this.'"

MCIEA Teacher Leader

"It's just been so worthwhile to see the increase in student engagement. It is absolutely worth taking on the hard work."

MCIEA Teacher Leader



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