Making PreK–3rd Grade Assessments Matter

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Road Map

- The PreK–3rd Assessment Landscape
- 3 Challenges in Using Assessments to Guide Growth in Student Learning
- How Principals Can Lead
- How a PreK–3rd Effort Can Help
# PreK–3rd Assessment Landscape

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← PreK-12 Longitudinal Data Systems →
Challenge I: Managing Multiple Assessments

- Good news is we have much more data on young children and how teachers are teaching.

- New opportunities to understand children’s progress over time and relationships between teaching practices/quality and child outcomes.

- BUT: concerns about over testing and using assessments for high stakes decisions.
Challenge I: Managing Multiple Assessments

- Adding new KEA, GLR & teacher eval. assessments means teachers are assessing children multiple times.

  - Can teachers do multiple assessments, study & use assessment data, implement new standards, engage with families & in PD and still have time to...teach? (And for principals..?)
  - Children benefit the most from formative assessment, but Grade Level Reading & teacher evaluation assessments have high stakes for children and teachers.
Challenge II: When Assessment Data Isn’t Good News

- 30 million word vocabulary gap by age 3

- At school entry, low-income children are 12–14 months below national norms in language development.

- Only 34% of all 4th grade were proficient readers on 2013 NAEP assessments.
Age and Age Equivalent PPVT Kg. Scores by School District

![Bar chart showing age and age equivalent scores for Concord, Wellesley, Winchendon, Brockton, Lowell, and Springfield.](chart.png)
Challenge II: When Assessment Data Aren’t Good News

- Temptation to avoid the data

- Risks of blaming children, blaming parents, blaming ourselves

- Risks of being overwhelmed: Is it feasible to overcome such huge gaps, especially in 1 year?
Challenge III: Assessment Data Show Individual Differences

- Young children in the same class/grade level are at different places on learning trajectories.

- Huge benefits for learning when teachers can tailor materials/opportunities to the next step for individual children/groups of children.

- But do teachers know how to “differentiate” or “individualize” instruction for 20–35 children?
How Principals Can Lead

- **On multiple assessments:**
  - Do a PreK–3rd assessment audit to eliminate redundant assessments.

- **When assessments show achievement gaps:**
  - Focus on improvement over time
  - Opportunities to target chronic absenteeism, summer learning loss, family engagement

- **When assessments show individual differences:**
  - Move away from whole group instruction
  - Target this priority in curricula & professional development
How PreK–3rd Efforts Can Help

- **On multiple assessments:**
  - Spotlight the assessment experience for PreK–3rd children
  - Build opportunities to share & discuss data on children’s progress and teaching/learning opportunities, PreK–3rd.

- **When assessments show achievement gaps:**
  - PreK–3rd teams build shared responsibility for improving outcomes: every year matters/every year contributes.

- **When assessments show individual differences:**
  - PreK–3rd teams can study/share best practices from early childhood, special education, RTI, technology, curricula, professional development.