



# Overview of the Arizona Department of Education's Formative Assessment Framework

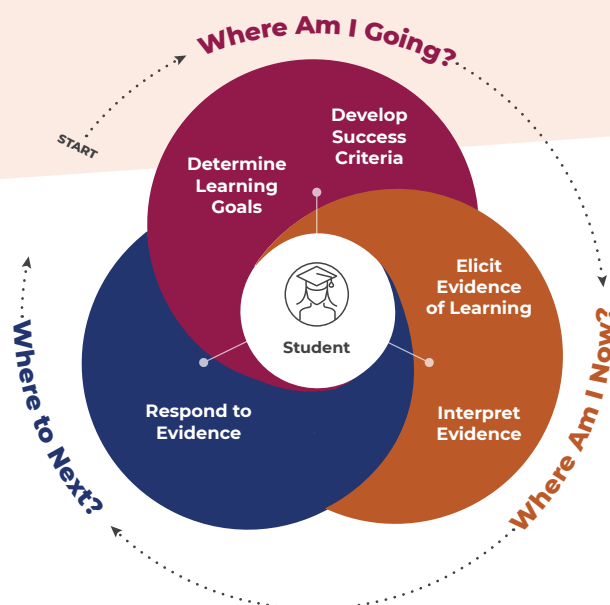
Formative assessment is a powerful process that grounds decision-making in evidence to improve teaching, learning, and leading. A central goal of the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) is for every individual in the state's education system to work in concert to enhance student achievement. To that end, the ADE has developed a formative assessment framework, which is available online to support engagement in this process at every level. The framework articulates a vision for using formative assessment principles to help systemically shift toward greater collaboration and coordination across the state education system. Formative assessment is a core element of several statewide initiatives because of its focus on evidence to plan next steps. By centering evidence of learning in educational decision-making, the framework aims to promote system-level change for the purpose of elevating students' educational achievement, creating lifelong learners, and securing positive future outcomes for Arizona. This document provides an overview of the framework.

## Defining Formative Assessment

Formative assessment<sup>1</sup> is a daily process of evidenced-based inquiry that individuals engage in together to better understand the status of learning in the moment to inform next steps. It involves setting goals, developing success criteria, and then eliciting, interpreting, and responding to evidence.

## Formative Assessment Values

- Personal and collective responsibility
- Learning in partnership
- Decisions grounded in evidence
- Valuing of individual learning progressions
- Targeting learning: not too hard or too easy
- Momentum through feedback loops
- Opportunities for all to have a voice
- Culture of trust



## Purpose of the Framework

The framework aims to support the application of these ideas, specifically how formative assessment can be enacted within various levels of the state education system. It guides educators and leaders in Arizona to better understand what formative assessment is and is not, what it looks like when practiced by various role groups, and how individuals use it to manage their own learning.

The framework envisions a system in which next steps are informed by a daily practice of evidence

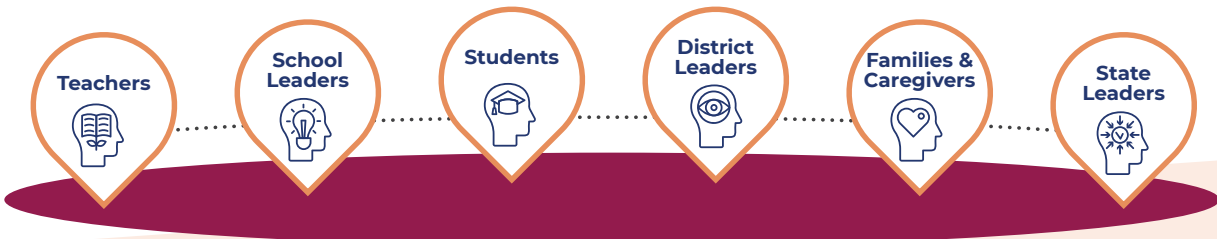
<sup>1</sup> An Arizona Department of Education working group defined formative assessment in a way that would be applicable to the department's wide range of work.

gathering through strategies such as observing, listening, questioning, and analyzing. In this way, individuals and teams use formative assessment processes to ascertain where they are in their learning and to determine the efficacy of their work and systems.

The framework supports teachers to structure learning opportunities to meet the needs of all

students and supports leaders to shift to a learning stance in support of students and staff. This collaborative work is intended to create professional learning communities, with individuals supporting each other by reflecting on their learning status and ways of working. The intended outcome is a learning culture that increases teacher, leader, and student efficacy and positive achievement outcomes.

## In a Formative Assessment System:



### Teachers

- **Plan** for learning, setting learning goals and success criteria.
- **Collect** evidence of learning continually through listening, observing, and providing feedback to drive learning forward.
- **Share** responsibility for learning with students by supporting them to conduct formative assessment.
- **Reflect** with peers on the status of their teaching practice and work with leaders to set expectations for support, observation, and formative evaluation practices.

### Students

- **Act** as leaders of their own learning by taking ownership of the learning goals and success criteria.
- **Understand** their progress and take action to move learning forward.
- **Notice**, recognize, and respond to each other's learning, are open to giving and receiving feedback, and seek support to advance their learning.
- **Value** each other's strengths and leverage the group to achieve goals.
- **Engage** with each other through collaborative discussion and problem-solving.

### Families and Caregivers

- **Engage** with school staff to learn about formative assessment principles and processes.
- **Reflect** with their children, asking what they have learned, where they are in their learning, and about their next steps.
- **Share** with educators what they notice about their children's current learning and provide context.
- **Position** themselves as advocates for their children and are empowered to take on roles on campus and in classrooms.

### School Leaders

- **Promote** collective responsibility for everyone at a school site (i.e., staff, students, and families) to practice formative assessment by engaging in observation, discussion, and feedback cycles.
- **Share** a vision for what it means to implement formative assessment practices and create a culture of collaborative inquiry and reflection as a learner among learners.

### District Leaders

- **Create** the time, resources, and funding for formative assessment to be understood, practiced, and implemented with sustained fidelity.
- **Help** build collective will by providing school communities with clear expectations for formative assessment practices.
- **Build** teacher capacity by providing professional learning opportunities that focus on instruction informed by formative assessment.

### State Leaders

- **Establish**, codify, and use a common language grounded in formative assessment principles.
- **Address** misconceptions about what formative assessment is and is not.
- **Offer** training for leaders and teachers on formative assessment practices to increase their understanding, facilitate a shift in ownership, and support them in fostering formative assessment practices throughout the system.