

The 3 C's* of a Balanced Assessment System

A balanced assessment system is essential for student success, using multiple opportunities to measure knowledge and skills. Each component serves a distinct purpose, but together they form a **comprehensive** and **coherent** framework that gives a full view of student performance. Assessments are not one-time events. They support **continuous** improvement—monitoring progress over time and across years to provide valuable data and longitudinal trends. Information about student performance gathered from the system is used to improve learning, guide program development, shape policy, and inform budget decisions

START OF YEAR

END OF YEAR



FORMATIVE

As a learning feedback loop, formative assessments help educators adjust teaching in **real time** by revealing student understanding and needed support. Examples of formative assessments are screeners, diagnostics, exit tickets, peer feedback, and quizzes.



INTERIM

Interim assessments are administered **multiple times yearly** to track student progress towards end-of-year goals and identify trends, helping with instructional planning and identifying curriculum gaps. Examples include school- or district-wide curriculum-aligned, standards-aligned, or custom assessments.



SUMMATIVE

A summative assessment evaluates student achievement at the **end of a specific instructional period**. End-of-unit, mid-term, or end-of-year tests are examples of summative assessments. They are essential for accountability, understanding performance across student subgroups, monitoring year-over-year growth, and identifying longitudinal trends.

*National Research Council (2001). *Knowing what students know: The science and design of educational assessment*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press