



# Helping Parents Understand Assessment



Assessment for Learning  
Newsletter Insert

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## **Change in Education**

In the educational community, research is providing scientific evidence in helping us understand innovative ways to teach and learn more effectively; that how we have taught and learned in the past is not necessarily the best way to teach and learn today. As a partnered community, we need to connect the research to educational practice. With research and changes in technology, we realize that our students think and learn differently than how we learned.

## **Formative and Summative Assessments**

1. Assessing **for** learning (Formative) happens while learning is still underway. These are the assessments that we conduct throughout teaching and learning to diagnose student needs, plan our next steps in instruction, provide students with feedback they can use to improve the quality of their work, and help students feel in control of their journey to success. For these occasions the grading function is laid aside- this is not about accountability, it is about learning better.
2. Assessments **of** learning (Summative) are those assessments that happen after learning is supposed to have occurred to determine if it did. We conduct assessments **of** learning to determine a student's report card grade.

## **The Goals With Assessing for Learning**

1. Use what is known about how the brain works, how we learn, and how we are motivated to maximize learning.
2. Students are active in thinking about they learn and how they are assessed, not just as test takers.
3. Students can answer three questions:
  - (1) "Where Am I Going?"
  - (2) "Where Am I Now?"
  - (3) "How Can I Close The Gap?"

## ***Suggestions for parents/guardians to support their child in this area:***

Ask your child's teacher what kinds of assignments and tests are being used to assess learning? Pre-tests? Performance tasks? Projects? Quizzes? Peer assessment? Student self-assessment?