District-Determined Measures Review and Discussion Guide
Developed for the CVTE Educator and Leader Panels Held
January 15 and February 12, 2014

This discussion guide is designed to support educators and administrators in considering the extent to which CVTE program assessments may be well-suited for use as District-Determined Measures (DDMs). In particular, the guide can facilitate identification of ways in which assessments might be further developed to become more effective measures of student growth. The key questions presented in this guide are fully described in Technical Guide B: Measuring Student Growth and Piloting District-Determined Measures (September 2013), provided by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/.

**DDMs are defined as “measures of student learning, growth, and achievement related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks, or other relevant frameworks, that are comparable across grade or subject level district-wide. These measures may include, but shall not be limited to: portfolios, approved commercial assessments and district-developed pre and post unit and course assessments, and capstone projects.”**

Quick Reference Guide: District-Determined Measures
http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/QRG-Measures.pdf

This discussion guide focuses first on the two most important questions to ask when identifying and piloting District-Determined Measures:

1. Is the measure aligned to critical content?
2. Is the measure informative?

The guide then assists the reader in considering three additional questions that districts should keep in mind when piloting District-Determined Measures:

1. How effectively does the assessment measure growth?
2. Is there a common administration protocol?
3. Is there a common scoring process?

The reader is encouraged to discuss the following questions with colleagues and to record notes as they review assessments that are being considered as potential DDMs. These notes can inform next steps, as they often point to ways in which an existing assessment might be modified or adjusted to measure students’ growth more effectively over time.
## Part A: What type of measure is this?

Questions in Part A are aimed at helping readers gain a high-level view of what they are reviewing, before delving into particular aspects of the assessment.

**Please Record Your Responses:**

1. What is the core focus of this measure?
2. Record the header information:
3. For what CVTE program and strand is this measure designed?
4. What type of measure is this?

| __Unit Assessment |
| __End-of-Course Exam |
| __Capstone Project (large scale student project that represents a culmination of the work completed in a course) |
| __Portfolio (a selection of student work over time) |
| __Demonstration/Performance Assessment |
| __Other ________________________________ |

5. Which of the following components are included with this measure?

| __Student Directions: (e.g., what students can and cannot say, do, and use; how much time they have, how to complete varied sections) |
| __The Instrument (e.g., test questions, writing prompt, performance task) |
| __Teacher Directions for Administering the Measure (e.g., number of testing sessions needed and amount of time allowed for test or performance; suggested responses to common student questions about directions; allowances for test taking accommodations) |
| __Scoring Method (e.g., answer key, rubric, checklist) |
| __Scoring Directions (e.g., how to score or evaluate varied sections of the measure; whether to use single or multiple raters; a process for resolving differences in raters’ scores for a student) |
| __Additional Guidance (e.g., anchor papers or exemplars of student work, lists or links to additional resources or supports) |
Part B: Is the measure aligned to critical content?

The first guidepost for determining whether an assessment might serve as an effective District-Determined Measure is whether it is aligned to critical content in the affiliated program area. Assessments that are valuable to educators measure, as fairly and accurately as possible, the extent to which students have learned the most important content and skills taught and yield data that can then be used to inform instruction. (ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 5)

Discussion Questions

1. Does the measure assess the most important content for students to learn and be able to do in this program area?
2. Does the measure assess content that educators typically emphasize in their teaching in this program area?
3. Do the measure’s items and tasks reflect the same level of cognitive challenge conveyed in the associated CTE Framework standards?

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Consider whether the measure:

- is aligned with the most important content in this program,
- emphasizes what is taught in the program,
- reflects the same level of cognitive challenge as the target standards.

Overall, to what extent does this assessment effectively measure GROWTH?

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

Are there ways in which the content could be modified to be better aligned?

Response:
Part C: Is the measure informative?

The second guidepost for determining whether an assessment might serve as an effective District-Determined Measure is whether students’ responses will inform instructional decisions and provide insight into educators’ strengths and needs.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Will the results of this measure inform educators’ decisions about curriculum, instruction, and classroom practice?
2. Will the measure provide educators with valuable information about their students? For example:
   - Will students’ responses to the assessment items or tasks help educators identify whether students are making desired progress, falling short, or excelling?
   - Will educators be able to identify specific areas in which students are succeeding or struggling such that they can then adjust their instruction?
3. Will the measure provide valuable information to schools and districts about educators’ impact on students’ learning? For example:
   - Will students’ responses to the items or tasks help school and district leaders understand where educators are succeeding or struggling?

**Overall, to what extent is this measure informative for your designated program?**

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

**Are there ways in which the content could be modified to be more informative for your designated program?**

*Response:*
The next four considerations reflect next steps in evaluating the quality of DDMs in preparation for piloting (testing the measures). The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education acknowledges that this is not an easy process and that it will not be done perfectly the first time. By piloting DDMs, district leaders, administrators, and teachers gain a greater understanding together of where future attention needs to be directed. Over time, working through the considerations outlined below will allow districts to make important refinements that result in stronger assessments and measures. Throughout this developmental process, districts should always return to the two focus questions: Is the measure aligned to critical content? Is the measure informative to educators at the classroom-, school-, and district-levels? (ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 6)
**Part D: What assessment approach is reflected in this measure?**

An assessment that measures student growth is able to determine the “change in an individual student’s performance over time” [ESE], or “Where did my students start and where did they end?” A variety of methods and types of assessments can be used to measure growth. (ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, pp. 6 and 11)

1. Which assessment approach is utilized in this measure or, if the measure needs to be modified to be used as a growth measure, which approach is it most likely to follow or most closely affiliated?

   **___ Pre-Test / Post-Test**
   A measure of student knowledge or ability before and after instruction
   (see ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 12 for further description)

   **___ Repeated Measures**
   Short measures used three or more times throughout the course or year
   (see ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 13 for further description)

   **___ Holistic Evaluation**
   A measure that combines aspects of a pre- and post-test model with the regularity of a repeated measures approach, but uses a “growth rubric” with language that compares two or more examples of student work
   (see ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 14 for further description)

   **___ Post-Test Only**
   A measure of student performance that occurs only at or near the end of the grade or course; thus, this measure is based on different student samples. Post-Test Only measures can include credential assessments, and may also refer to indirect measures of growth, such as annual graduation and promotion rates, and rate of students achieving program-related licensure requirements
   (see ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, pp. 17-18 for further description)

   **___ Other:** ____________________________
Part E: How effectively does the assessment measure growth?

**IF this measure uses a PRE-TEST / POST-TEST approach:**

1. Which format does the test use for its pre- and post-measures?
   a. *Identical* items or tasks on the pre- and post-measures
   b. *Comparable* items or tasks on the pre- and post-measures

2. If the test uses *identical* items or tasks, can students benefit from taking an identical test twice? (For example, a writing assessment that uses an identical prompt may result in more accurate growth scores, but students may not benefit from repeating the exact same writing assignment.)

3. If the test uses *comparable* items or tasks,
   a. Do the pre- and post-measures show the *same* degree of rigor?
   b. Do the pre- and post-measures align with the *same* framework standards?
   c. Are the pre- and post-student responses both scored using the *same* scoring instrument (e.g., checklist, rating scale, rubric)?

4. Does the pre-test/post-test result in *scores* or *measures* that *can be compared* for an indication of growth (e.g., difference in points earned from pre- to post-test, percentage increase or decrease from pre- to post test)?

5. Does this pre-/post-test measure *growth only* in relation to knowledge and skills that are taught in *this* program?

Note: *Assessments of basic/foundational skills may be an important prerequisite to learning the course material, but unless the program curriculum explicitly addresses those basic skills, it is not appropriate to measure growth in those skills. Districts should pay close attention to assessments that include measures of higher-level thinking, problem solving, and creativity. While it is important to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop these skills, growth in such areas should only be measured if it was an explicit purpose of the curriculum, i.e., educators expected to see students be better able to solve problem or think more creatively after instruction. (See ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 12 for further description.*)
**Overall, to what extent does this assessment effectively measure GROWTH?**

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

**Are there ways in which this measure could be modified to more effectively measure GROWTH?**

*Response:*
IF this measure uses a REPEATED MEASURES approach:

1. Is there a way that results from this measure, which may be administered three or more times during the course or year, can be graphically represented to visually track progress over time?
2. Is there a way to mathematically calculate a simple growth score from the results (e.g., a difference between the average score in October and April)?
3. Is it likely that students may show growth on this measure simply due to familiarity through repeated exposure?
4. Is the measure relatively brief to allow the teacher to conduct it easily at multiple intervals during the year?
5. Will the teacher be able to integrate this measure into the curriculum and embed it in daily routines in the classroom?
6. Will the results of this measure provide teachers with continuous feedback about students’ learning and be likely to inform their instructional decisions?
7. Does this assessment measure growth only in relation to knowledge and skills that are taught in this program?

Note: Assessments of basic/foundational skills may be an important prerequisite to learning the course material, but unless the program curriculum explicitly addresses those basic skills, it is not appropriate to measure growth in those skills. Districts should pay close attention to assessments that include measures of higher-level thinking, problem solving, and creativity. While it is important to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop these skills, growth in such areas should only be measured if it was an explicit purpose of the curriculum, i.e., educators expected to see students be better able to solve problem or think more creatively after instruction. (See ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 12 for further description.)
Overall, to what extent does this assessment effectively measure GROWTH?

☐ A great extent
☐ A moderate extent
☐ A slight extent
☐ No extent

Are there ways in which this measure could be modified to more effectively measure GROWTH?

Response:
IF this measure uses a HOLISTIC EVALUATION approach:

1. Is this measure designed to compare two or more examples of student work or performance, collected systematically across the course or school year?

2. Does this measure include a holistic growth rubric that indicates levels of growth and includes detailed descriptions of what growth looks like across the examples of student work (rather than describing quality at a given point in time)? (See ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 14-16, for further description and example)

3. Does this assessment measure growth only in relation to knowledge and skills that are taught in this program?

Note: Assessments of basic/foundational skills may be an important prerequisite to learning the course material, but unless the program curriculum explicitly addresses those basic skills, it is not appropriate to measure growth in those skills. Districts should pay close attention to assessments that include measures of higher-level thinking, problem solving, and creativity. While it is important to provide opportunities for students to demonstrate and develop these skills, growth in such areas should only be measured if it was an explicit purpose of the curriculum, i.e., educators expected to see students be better able to solve problem or think more creatively after instruction. (See ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 12 for further description.

Overall, to what extent does this assessment effectively measure GROWTH?

☐ A great extent
☐ A moderate extent
☐ A slight extent
☐ No extent

Are there ways in which this measure could be modified to more effectively measure GROWTH?

Response:
**IF this measure uses a POST-TEST ONLY approach:**

1. What *additional information* does this measure include to determine growth? How will growth be measured?

   Note: It is critical with post-test only measures to include additional information that helps to predict the expected level of achievement. For example, if using a graduation rate, collecting comparative information about previous years’ graduation rates will be important to gauge expected growth. (See ESE Technical Guide B, 2013, p. 17 for further description)

2. Is the Post-Test Only measure *meaningful and valued* in this program area?

3. Can this Post-Test Only measure provide information about *individual* teachers’ impact on student growth?

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**Overall, to what extent does this assessment **effectively** measure GROWTH?**

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

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**Are there ways in which this measure could be modified to more effectively measure GROWTH?**

*Response:*
IF this measure uses some OTHER approach:

1. How does it measure growth?
2. What are the strengths of this approach?
3. What are the limitations of this approach?
4. Is this approach similar in any way to any of the four approaches above? If so, what questions about those approaches might be important to consider with this assessment’s approach?

Overall, to what extent does this assessment effectively measure GROWTH?

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

Are there ways in which this measure could be modified to more effectively measure GROWTH?

Response:
Part F: Is there a common administration protocol?

1. Does the measure include clear student directions that indicate what students can and cannot say, do, and use; how much time they have, etc.?

2. Does the measure include clear directions for educators that will increase the likelihood that they will administer it fairly and consistently across all students, classrooms, and schools using the same DDM (For example: How long will students have to complete the test or performance? Are there agreed-upon responses to common student questions about the directions? How much clarification is allowed?)

3. Does the measure include comprehensive guidance that will reduce the need for individual teachers to determine how best to administer it and respond to students’ varied needs and questions?

4. Does the measure describe options for accommodating students with disabilities?

**Overall, to what extent is this measure’s ADMINISTRATION PROTOCOL effective?**

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

**Are there ways in which the ADMINISTRATION PROTOCOL could be strengthened?**

*Response:*
Part G: Is there a common scoring process?

1. Does the measure provide a scoring method (e.g., answer key, rubric, checklist)?
2. If the measure includes a rubric, does the rubric clearly and specifically describe varied levels of performance in relation to critical content in the CTE Frameworks?
3. Does the measure provide clear scoring directions for educators that will increase the likelihood that they will score the results consistently across the students in their class?
4. Does the measure provide comprehensive scoring directions that will increase the likelihood that scoring will be consistent and reliable across multiple classrooms and schools? (For example, does it describe whether single or multiple raters should score the results? Does it describe a process for resolving differences in raters’ scores for a student, or a process for arriving at final scores or judgments of growth?)
5. Does the measure provide additional guidance that supports consistent scoring and interpretation of results (e.g., anchor paper or exemplars of different levels of student work; links to additional resources or supports)?

**Overall, to what extent is this measure’s COMMON SCORING PROCESS effective?**

- A great extent
- A moderate extent
- A slight extent
- No extent

**Are there ways in which the COMMON SCORING PROCESS could be strengthened?**

*Response:*