

their needs. Local district assessment systems serve to promote student success when they serve both formative and summative information needs across all three levels of assessment use: classroom assessment, interim or benchmark assessment, and annual testing (Chappuis, Commodore, & Stiggins, 2010). Figure 2.2 identifies the purposes a balanced assessment system serves. Note in this figure that the different users at each level face different decisions and therefore need different kinds of information to do their jobs of (1) supporting and (2) certifying student learning.

FIGURE 2.2 A Balanced Assessment System

Level: Classroom Assessment		
Key Issues	Formative Context	Summative Context
<i>Key decision(s)</i>	What comes next in the student's learning?	What standards has each student mastered? What grade does each student receive?
<i>Decision makers</i>	Students and teachers; parents	Teacher
<i>Information needed</i>	Evidence of where the student is now on learning progression leading to each standard	Evidence of each student's mastery of each relevant standard
Level: Interim/benchmark Assessment		
Key Issues	Formative Context	Summative Context
<i>Key decision(s)</i>	Which standards are our students consistently not mastering; that is, where can we improve instruction right away? Which students need specific help?	Did the program of instruction deliver as promised? Should we continue to use it?
<i>Decision makers</i>	Instructional leaders and teachers	Instructional leaders
<i>Information needed</i>	Standards our students are struggling to master; identification of who is struggling	Evidence of each student's mastery of each relevant standards
Level: Annual Testing		
Key Issues	Formative Context	Summative Context
<i>Key decision(s)</i>	What standards are our students consistently not mastering? Where and how can we improve instruction next year?	Are enough students meeting standards?
<i>Decision makers</i>	Curriculum and instructional leaders	School and community leaders
<i>Information needed</i>	Standards our students are struggling to master	Percent of students meeting each relevant standard

Source: Adapted with permission from Chappuis, S., C. Commodore, & R. Stiggins, *Assessment Balance and Quality: An Action Guide for School Leaders*, 3rd ed. (Portland, OR: Pearson Assessment Training Institute, 2010), pp. 14–15.