

# WHY TEST?

**Assessments play a key role in the teaching and learning process.**

They answer the questions: "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?" and "Are students learning what they are supposed to be learning?"

## Different tests serve different purposes.



**Formative assessments** help teachers gain insight into what students are learning so they can tailor instruction. These may be formal, like chapter tests or screeners, or they may be casual moments where a teacher polls the class to check for understanding.



**Summative assessments** inform students, teachers, parents, and the community of achievement at a certain point in time in order to celebrate success, plan interventions, help educators improve their practice, and support continued progress.



**All assessments** help students develop an awareness of how they learn and what they have mastered, so they can take an increased responsibility for their academic success.

**Assessment plays a role in supporting student learning. But testing should never dominate a school culture. Instead classrooms should be focused on high quality instruction every day.**

## WHY WE HAVE STATE TESTS

In every Tennessee classroom, teaching and learning looks different based on the textbooks, curricula, and lessons that school and teacher has chosen. State leaders have a responsibility to make sure these varied learning opportunities are preparing all students for college, career, and life.

### Our state tests serve multiple objectives:

- Provide feedback about students' academic progress and how it aligns with grade-level expectations
- Give parents and teachers a big-picture perspective about how a student is progressing compared to peers across the district and state, including a student's strengths and growth opportunities
- Build confidence and transparency about students' readiness for college and the workforce among Tennessee universities and employers
- Help educators strengthen instruction and reflect on their practice
- Hold us accountable to serving all students fairly
- Highlight schools where students are excelling, so we can learn from those who are doing well

