

# Credit Flexibility: Assessment

As schools and districts are working through their local credit flexibility policies and procedures, many questions arise regarding high-quality, effective assessment of new instructional delivery models. In particular, performance assessments and mastery-based systems provide the greatest challenge in the context of traditional assessment models.

The [Metropolitan Cleveland Consortium for STEM \(MC<sup>2</sup>STEM\) High School](#), a regional public high school in Cleveland, is implementing a mastery-based assessment system based on state benchmarks.

## Mastery-Based Assessment

Just like the instructional delivery system, the assessment system at MC<sup>2</sup>STEM High School is organized around 10-week [transdisciplinary capstones](#).

Students are assessed using capstone [rubrics](#) and [grade cards](#) developed collaboratively by teachers during the design of the capstone course. The rubrics and grade cards measure student mastery of course content and are broken down into the specific knowledge and tasks students must master in each content area based on the state benchmarks for each capstone.

Students receive either a grade of “M” or a grade of “I” for each benchmark or task within the capstone.

- An “M” indicates that a student has mastered a benchmark.
- An “I” indicates that a student has not yet mastered the benchmark and that further instructional support is necessary.

MC<sup>2</sup>STEM High School awards credit when 100 percent of the benchmarks have been mastered. For each benchmark, students must demonstrate competency at 90 percent or better in order to receive an “M”. Students who do not meet the expectations for mastery during a specific capstone are not required to retake that course. Instead, teachers work together and with the student to integrate those benchmarks into subsequent capstones.

## Transcription

Unlike courses in a traditional curriculum, MC<sup>2</sup>STEM High School [capstones](#) are organized by large thematic concepts and are broken down into specific units that address benchmarks. When students transfer to a new district, the high school is able to convert its mastery-based system into a traditional transcript.

The grade cards provide a real-time picture of student progress toward mastery of benchmarks. In cases where a student leaves the school and there is some question in regard to a letter grade equivalency, the teachers and administration meet to discuss the student’s performance before assigning a grade.

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“Students either get an M or an I [incomplete]. If they get an I, they don’t repeat the class. We find a way to get that content delivered...integrate that work within new areas.”

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- Getting Started
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- **Assessment**
- Instruction
- Partnerships