Turtle Lake-Mercer School

250 3rd Ave W

Turtle Lake, ND 58575

March 11th, 2026

Dear Families,

Assessment is a term educators use when describing the many ways they learn about your student's educational progress and learning journey. There are several types of assessments that school districts use, including summative, interim, formative, and diagnostic (such as readiness tests and screeners). Each assessment type has a unique use and purpose.

Formative assessments are teaching tools, designed to help teachers see how well students are mastering content as the lessons are being taught. Interim assessments are designed to be given at multiple checkpoints throughout the year to measure in-year growth and student progress toward end-of-year grade-level learning goals. Summative assessments are given at the end of an instructional period to measure whether students met the learning goals.

Your student will soon be participating in a state summative assessment called the ND A+ Summative Assessment. The ND A+ Summative Assessment is the only common measuring tool for all participating students across North Dakota. The assessment is administered in the spring in grades 3-8 and 10 in English language arts (ELA – comprised of reading and writing) and math and grades 4, 8 and 10 in science. The assessment is aligned to the North Dakota Education Content Standards. Content standards serve as a model for developing teaching and learning goals and expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level. Content standards are set for each grade, beginning with kindergarten through grade 12, across various content areas. The ND A+ Summative Assessment is built to measure student performance and knowledge against the North Dakota Education Content Standards.

Student results from state assessments are only one piece of achievement evidence that should be used with other evidence when analyzing student learning. The primary use of the data produced by this assessment is to aggregate individual student achievement and allow a comparison between students, schools, and districts across the state.

How will results from the ND A+ Summative Assessments help my student:

- Results provide information that shows what your student has been learning and practicing in their classroom, and how well they are connecting with classroom instruction.
- Results for your whole school let you know how well your school is teaching all students.
- Results provide you and other families in your community with information about how local schools are meeting the needs of all students.

How does taking state tests help my student's school?

- Taking the test provides critical information to the district and state on how well all students in your student's school are doing, so the school can be supported.
- Test results allow teachers and principals to see any differences between groups of

students and make improvements to instruction, so that all students can succeed.
- The results highlight gaps in achievement, so steps can be taken to ensure all students are supported in making meaningful progress.
- The results help state policymakers and local school boards identify schools that may need more assistance or resources.

Instruction based on the standards is the best preparation for the ND A+ Summative Assessment. Student grades will not be impacted by their performance on this assessment, however the assessment does serve as a way for the school and district to analyze how well we are helping students meet the standards. We ask for your help in encouraging your student to do their very best on everything they do in school, including this end-of-year state test, and prepare for the testing experience by getting plenty of rest and eating a healthy breakfast.

Introducing the North Dakota Family Portal

This year, the state will be launching the North Dakota Family Portal, a new resource designed to help parents and guardians support their students' educational progress and learning by providing direct access to ND A+ Summative Assessment results.

The Family Portal will include access to:
- Individual Student Report (ISR)
- Video Individual Student Report (Video ISR) – an animated, step-by-step explanation of your student's results

Additional resources on the Family Portal will be available to help families interpret and understand assessment results. Beginning in late June, families will be able to access the Family Portal to view both the printable ISR and the Video ISR for their student.

We appreciate your partnership in helping [school or district name] fulfill the state and federal requirements for the state summative assessment and supporting your student to do his/her best. If you have any questions, please reach out to [teacher, school, or district representative].

Sincerely,

Kurt Ziebarth

PreK-12 Principal

Turtle Lake-Mercer School