Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities

IMPORTANT NOTE

NO MORE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR PHASE 2
MI-ACCESS STUDENTS

In order to meet No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements, starting with the 2003/2004 school year, IEP Teams will no longer be able to use locally developed assessments or "progress toward annual goals and objectives" as an alternate means of assessing students who are eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access.

As a result, when your IEP Team meets to determine, among other things, what state assessment your student should take next school year, the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services recommends that you use language similar to the following in the assessment portion of your plan:

> As an alternate to the general education assessment (MEAP) for the content areas of [*insert the MEAP content- area assessments the student will not be taking*], the team recommends that the student take Phase 2 MI-Access. Until it is developed, the student will be administered the [*insert name of other commercial, district, or local standardized assessment*] or the standardized assessment designated by the state.

At this time the state has not designated a standardized assessment, but this language will prevent teams from having to reconvene if it does.

Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in
State Assessment for Students with Disabilities

In fall 2002, the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) disseminated *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* in its MI-Access 2002/2003 training materials. Its goal in doing so was to provide districts and Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams with the information they need to determine which state assessment is most appropriate for students with disabilities.

Before the guidelines are finalized and submitted to the Michigan State Board of Education for approval, the MDE would like to get feedback on them from stakeholders with an interest in students with disabilities. Therefore, after reviewing the draft guidelines, please provide us with your input through our on-line survey at **http://www.michigan.gov/documents/MI-Access_Index_13923_7.html**. Or go to the "Whats New" button on the MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM. The survey will be available now through May 31, 2003.

"Show me how this helps teachers teach and children learn."
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION DECISION MAKING RULER - 2001   MICHIGAN Education

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR DETERMINING PARTICIPATION IN STATE ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

IEP Teams are responsible for deciding which state assessment a student should take. These draft guidelines include several tools—all of which should be shared with parents prior to IEP Team meetings—that will help with making that decision.

Determining a Student's Level of Independence

The Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS)—which is designed to assess *all* students—includes the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP); Phase 1 MI-Access; and ELL-Access (for English Language Learners). It is up to a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team to determine which of these assessments is most appropriate for the student.

One way for IEP Teams to begin determining which assessment the student should take is to identify his or her "level of independence," or how independently he or she will function as an adult. To do that, an IEP Team may want to begin by asking a set of general questions, including:

1.   Where will this student live and with what supports?

2.   In what daily activities will this student be involved and with what supports?

3.   In what community experiences will this student be involved and with what supports?

4.   What post-secondary educational opportunities will this student have and with what supports?

5.   In what environment will this student be employed and with what supports?

These questions relate directly to a student's *transition* from school to adult life roles. (For additional information about transition, contact the Transition Services Project at 517-332-3587 or visit the project Web site at **www.mitsp.org**.)

The *Addressing the Unique Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities* (AUEN) documents, (which were used as a framework for developing MI-Access Performance Expectations), describe four levels of independence students may reach in adult life roles: (1) Full Independence, (2) Functional Independence, (3) Supported Independence, and (4) Participation. (Please note that the AUEN—in addition to helping IEP Teams determine which assessment a student should take—can be used as a tool to help students with disabilities access the Model Content Standards and Benchmarks in the *Michigan Curriculum Framework*.)

The four levels of independence in the AUEN are described below, followed by key considerations that will help IEP Teams determine the level that best fits their student. Once decided upon, the student's level of independence should help IEP Team members determine the appropriate state assessment for their student.

Full Independence

Full Independence addresses the educational needs of students with physical, emotional, or learning disabilities who function in the normal range of intelligence. These students are capable of becoming fully independent as adults. They are also able to *apply* their knowledge to any task, problem, or activity they may confront in life.

Full Independence students have the cognitive abilities necessary to be successful in traditional educational settings. Although daily living and adult functioning may be included as part of their educational program, the *primary* educational emphasis for these students will be on academic or technical subjects. They also are likely to be successful in post-secondary education areas specific to their aptitudes and interests.

For a "fully independent" student, the IEP Team would consider, at a minimum, the five general questions posed on page 1 and would most likely provide answers similar to those that follow.

Considerations:

1. This student may be able to find suitable living arrangements, complete rental or purchase agreements, and arrange for services (electricity, gas, etc.) *independently*.

2. This student may be able to maintain a household, launder clothing, plan meals, and manage finances *independently*.

3. This student may be able to vote, obtain a driver's license, join community clubs, and access recreational facilities *independently.*

4. This student may be able to apply to and attend college or trade school, and/or pursue other educational opportunities *independently*.

5. This student may be able to *independently* complete a job application, participate in an interview, and be competitively employed.

Functional Independence

Functional Independence addresses the educational needs of students who have, or function as if they have, *mild* cognitive impairment. These students are capable of meeting their own needs and living successfully in their communities with *minimal* support from others. With this assistance, students should be able to assess their personal strengths and limitations, and access resources, strategies, supports, and linkages that help them maximize their potential effectiveness.

The instructional approach for these students must include concrete/authentic experiences in the settings in which the student is expected to function. Their instruction will most likely be balanced between functional academic skills and functional daily living skills.

For a "functionally independent" student, the IEP Team would consider, at a minimum, the five general questions stated earlier and would most likely provide answers similar to those that follow.

Considerations:

1. This student may be able to find suitable living arrangements, complete rental or purchase agreements, and arrange for services (electricity, gas, etc.) with *minimal* support.

2. This student may be able to maintain a household, launder clothing, plan meals, and manage finances with *minimal* support.

3. This student may be able to vote, obtain a driver's license, join community clubs, and access recreational facilities with *minimal* support.

4. This student may be able to apply to and attend college or trade school, and/or pursue other educational opportunities with *minimal* support.

5. With *minimal* support, this student may be able to complete a job application, participate in an interview, and be competitively employed.

Students whose expected level of independence is "Functional" in major life roles (post-secondary education, adult living, community participation, and employment) will typically receive instruction based on a combination of Michigan's Model Content Standards and the strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN.

Supported Independence

Supported Independence addresses the educational needs of students who have, or function as if they have, *moderate* cognitive impairment. These students will require *ongoing* support in major life roles. They may also have both cognitive and physical impairments that limit their ability to generalize or transfer learning; however, they usually can follow learned routines and demonstrate independent living skills.

The instructional approach for these students must be direct, in context, and targeted toward specific, essential independent living skills. The focus of their instruction is on completing tasks and activities of daily living, enhancing quality of life, and maximizing personal effectiveness. All of these require the student to follow previously learned routines and demonstrate an acceptable level of independent living.

For a "supported independent" student, the IEP Team would consider, at a minimum, the five general questions stated earlier and would most likely provide answers similar to those that follow.

Considerations:

1. This student may be able to live in a supported or supervised environment, such as a family house or supported independent living arrangement, with *ongoing* support or supervision.

2. This student may be able to cook, clean, care for him or herself, and launder clothing with *ongoing* support or supervision.

3. This student may be able to access community programs and facilities, shop for pleasure, and go out to eat with *ongoing* support or supervision.

4. This student may be able to participate in post-secondary educational opportunities for his or her own personal growth with *ongoing* support or supervision.

5. This student may be competitively employed or employed with various levels of *ongoing* support and supervision (such as supported employment).

Students whose expected level of independence is "Supported" may receive instruction based on Michigan's Model Content Standards and the instructional strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN.

Participation

Participation addresses the educational needs of students who have, or function as if they have, *severe or profound* cognitive impairment. These students are expected to require *extensive* ongoing support in adulthood. They may also have both significant cognitive and physical impairments that limit their ability to generalize or transfer learning, and thus make determining their actual ability and skills difficult. Their impairments cause them to be dependent on others for most, if not all, of their daily living needs and will impact any future involvement in major life roles.

The instructional approach for these students targets opportunities for them to participate, even partially, in age-appropriate tasks and activities. The focus of their instruction is on participating, to the maximum extent possible for each individual student, in tasks and activities related to daily living skills.

For a "Participation" student, the IEP Team would consider, at a minimum, the five general questions stated earlier and would most likely provide answers similar to those that follow.

Considerations:

1. This student will need a supervised supported living environment.

2. This student may participate in routine tasks, such as brushing teeth and sorting laundry, but only with *extensive* ongoing support.

3. This student may participate in community activities, such as attending sporting events, going to the movies, and going out to eat, but only with *extensive* ongoing support.

4. This student may participate in post-secondary educational options for his or her own personal pleasure, but only with *extensive* ongoing support.

5. This student may participate in some type of work activity, but only with *extensive* ongoing support (such as supported employment).

Students whose expected level of independence is "Participation" typically receive instruction focused on the non-core Michigan Model Content Standards (career and employability, technology, health and physical education) and the instructional strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN.

The following table is provided as an overview of the four levels of independence in adult life roles just discussed. It may be a helpful, quick reference tool when determining a student's level of independence.

"Four Levels of Independence" at a Glance				
Factors	*Full Independence*	*Functional Independence*	*Supported Independence*	*Participation*
Cognitive Ability	Students with disabilities who function in the **normal** range of intelligence	Students who have, or function as if they have, **mild** cognitive impairment	Students who have, or function as if they have, **moderate** cognitive impairment	Students who have, or function as if they have, **severe** cognitive impairment
Supports	Students capable of **fully independent** living	Students capable of meeting their own needs with **occasional** assistance	Students who require **ongoing support** in adult life roles	Students who require **extensive** ongoing support in adult life roles
Skills and Knowledge	Students who can **apply knowledge** to any task, problem, or activity	Students who can **assess their own strengths** and **access resources**	Students who can **follow learned routines** and **demonstrate skill** although they may be limited somewhat by their impairment	Students whose cognitive and physical **limitations significantly impair their ability** to generalize and transfer learning

State Assessment Options for IEP Team Consideration

A student's level of independence, as determined by the IEP Team, should help in deciding which state assessment—the general or the alternate—is most appropriate for the student to take. There are three state assessment programs and within these programs there are a number of options from which IEP Teams can choose. The following will describe each option.

The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

For almost thirty years, the MEAP has been the statewide assessment program used to provide information on the status and progress of Michigan education in specific content areas, including English language arts, mathematics, science, and now social studies. The MEAP is administered to students in grades 4, 5, 7, 8, and 11. Its content is linked to the Model Content Standards of the *Michigan Curriculum Framework.*

\ MEAP Assessment Grades by Content Area *(The shaded areas with an "X" indicate the grade in which the assessments occur.)*					
Content Area	**4th Grade**	**5th Grade**	**7th Grade**	**8th Grade**	**11th Grade**
English Language Arts	X		X		X
Mathematics	X			X	X
Science		X		X	X
Social Studies		X		X	X

The MEAP with Assessment Accommodations

If IEP Teams determine that the MEAP is the most appropriate assessment for their students, they may decide that assessment accommodations are necessary to help minimize the impact of the student's disability(ies) on his or her performance. For example, they could recommend accommodations, such as a change of location, audiotapes, readers, or assistive or adaptive aides. Assessment accommodations are intended to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in the assessment without giving them an unfair advantage over other students.

There are two places, or situations, in which accommodation decisions can be made—in IEP Team meetings for students who are eligible for special education, and in 504 Plans for students who are eligible under Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act of 1973). Selecting an accommodation should be based on the accommodation's relative appropriateness to the disability and its impact on the student. It is important that decisions about accommodations be made well in advance of testing and recorded in IEP/Section 504 plans. It also is imperative that accommodation information be provided for each content area assessed by the MEAP.

While IEP Teams are allowed to make decisions regarding the use and necessity of assessment accommodations, states retain the authority to determine whether scores received under accommodated circumstances qualify for certain state programs or initiatives. For example, in Michigan, scores received using what is referred to as "standard" accommodations are eligible for Merit Award consideration while scores received using "nonstandard" accommodations are not.

Following is a list of standard and nonstandard accommodations taken directly from the Merit Award Resolution (2001-02) Establishment of Standard Assessment Accommodations for Purposes of the Michigan Merit Award.

STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS

Scheduling
- Provision of additional testing time
- Allowance of frequent or extended supervised breaks
- Administration of the test at a time most beneficial to the student, with appropriate supervision by a school district professional

Location
- Provision for test administration at home or in a care facility with appropriate supervision by a school district professional
- Provision for distraction-free space or alternate location (e.g., study carrel, front of classroom)
- Placement of student where he/she is most comfortable (e.g., front of classroom, back of classroom)
- Administration of test in a special education classroom
- Provision for individual test administration (supervised)
- Provision of special lighting
- Provision of adaptive or special furniture
- Provision for freedom to move, stand or pace during an individualized test administration
- Provision of special acoustics
- Provisions for test administration in a small group
- Provision of soft, calming music to minimize distractions

Assistance with Test Directions
- Reading directions to student
- Re-reading directions for each subtask, as required
- Use of directions that have been highlighted
- Simplification of language in directions (paraphrase)
- Emphasis on verbs in directions
- Provision for student restatement of directions in his/her own words
- Use of sign language or oral interpreters for directions and sample items
- Clarification of directions by asking students to restate them

Assistance During Assessment
- Administration of test by special education teacher or similarly qualified person
- Reading of assessment content and questions to student **(except for the reading test)**
- Signing of assessment content and questions to student **(except for the reading test)**
- Use of page-turner
- Recording of student responses (writing or audiotape)
- Placement of teacher/proctor near student

Equipment and Assistive Technology
- Use of talking calculator **(mathematics test only)**
- User of sign language to indicate student response, except for constructed response items
- Use of text-talk converter **(except for the reading test)**
- Use of visual magnification devices
- Use of auditory amplification devices
- Use of masks, overlays or markers to maintain place
- Use of tape recorder for audiotape version of tests **(except for the reading test)**
- Use of Braille writer for recording responses
- Use of communications device to indicate responses
- Use of calculator **(mathematics test only)**
- Use of rulers as provided by Michigan Educational Assessment Program
- Use of pencils adapted in size or grip
- Use of list of formulae as provided by Michigan Educational Assessment Program
- Use of noise buffers
- Use of computer or word processing equipment (spell check, thesaurus and grammar check must be disabled)
- Use of bilingual translation dictionary
- Use of Braille ruler
- Use of acetate colored shield to reduce glare and increase contrast
- Use of voice-activated word processor **(except for the writing test)**
- Use of devices or equipment to secure paper to desk

Test Format
- Use of lined or grid paper for recording answers
- Provision of Braille or large print editions of the assessments
- Permission to mark answers in test booklet, to be transferred to answer document by teacher or proctor
- Use of computer for task presentation
- Communication of test questions by audiotape **(except for the reading test)**
- Use of scribe for constructed response items (student must indicate punctuation and spell all key words)
- Permission to accomplish sub-tests in different order

Accommodations not on this list will be considered "nonstandard" and MEAP test scores achieved using nonstandard accommodations will not be considered eligible for Michigan Merit Award purposes. Examples of nonstandard accommodations follow.

NON-STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS

- Any accommodation not included as a standard accommodation that violates the Michigan Merit Award Test Administration Ethics Procedure
- Use of a calculator on any MEAP assessment other than mathematics assessments
- Use of electronic spell checkers, thesaurus or grammar check
- Use of a dictionary, thesaurus or spelling book for mathematics, science, social studies or reading assessments
- Any test administration not directly supervised by a school district professional

It should be noted that accommodations not included on the "Standard Accommodations" list—which in the opinion of school officials, parents, teachers or other interested parties do not violate the MEAP Test Administration Ethics policy and do not interfere with the intent of the assessments—may be approved by the Michigan Merit Award executive director, pending review by the Michigan Merit Award Board.

Phase 1 MI-Access

Phase 1 MI-Access, is designed for students who have, or function as if they have, severe or moderate cognitive impairment and whose IEP Teams have determined that the MEAP, even with assessment accommodations, is inappropriate for them. MI-Access is based on observations of student performance during specific assessment activities, all of which were developed using AUEN performance expectations as a framework.

ELL-Access

ELL-Access is designed to include all limited English proficient students in the state assessment system. It responds to the Title 1 requirement that students be able to take assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate and reliable information on what such students know and can do**.**

Phase 2 MI-Access

In 2005, IEP Teams will have a fifth statewide assessment option—Phase 2 MI-Access—to consider. These assessments are designed for students with disabilities whose IEP Teams have determined it is not appropriate for them to participate in the MEAP, the MEAP with assessment accommodations, or Phase 1 MI-Access. Until Phase 2 MI-Access is developed, however, IEP Teams will need to determine *how else* students who fall into this category will be assessed, such as district- or teacher-developed assessments, or other commercially available assessments.

> *If an IEP Team determines that none of the current statewide assessments are appropriate for its student, it must fill out a form titled, "Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access." This form must be returned with all other MI-Access assessment materials during or at the conclusion of the MI-Access assessment window. On that form, the student's teacher of record must indicate (1) that the student is not taking part in the general education assessment, and (2) how else the IEP Team has determined to assess the student's progress.*

Using Levels of Independence to Determine the Appropriate State Assessment for Students with Disabilities

Although all students are different, understanding their level of independence may help in determining which assessment they should take.

Full Independence

Full Independence students typically receive comprehensive instruction relating to Michigan's Model Content Standards and, would, therefore probably participate in the *MEAP* or the *MEAP with assessment accommodations*. There may be instances in which a Full Independence student would take Phase 2 MI-Access assessments once they are developed, but that would be a rare occurrence.

Functional Independence

Functional Independence students typically receive instruction based on a combination of Michigan's Model Content Standards (academic and life skills) and strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN. Student progress toward the content standards could be assessed through the *MEAP* or the *MEAP with assessment accommodations*. If, however, those options are not appropriate for the student, he or she may be assessed using alternate assessments—most likely *Phase 2 MI-Access*. Since Phase 2 is not yet available, IEP Teams for these students are required by IDEA 1997 to determine what other options will be used to assess them.

Supported Independence

The instructional approach for Supported Independence students must be direct, in context, and targeted toward specific, but essential, independent living skills. The focus of instruction for these students usually is on completing tasks and activities of daily living, enhancing quality of life, and maximizing personal effectiveness. These activities require students to follow previously learned routines and demonstrate an acceptable level of independent living. Since Supported Independence students typically receive instruction based on Michigan's Model Content Standards *and* the instructional strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN, student progress most likely will be assessed using *MI-Access Supported Independence*.

Participation

Students whose expected level of independence is Participation typically receive instruction focused on (1) the non-core (health education, physical education, and career and employability skills) Michigan Model Content Standards, and (2) the instructional strategies provided in tools such as the AUEN. Student progress, therefore, will most likely be assessed with *MI-Access Participation*.

Summary

There are two important concepts to keep in mind when determining a student's expected level of independence and the most appropriate state assessment. First, this is not an exact science. There will be many gray areas and unanswered questions, particularly during the early stages of administering MI-Access. To that end, it is recommended that those who know the student best use their own professional and personal judgment to decide which assessment is most appropriate for the student.

Second, the assessment an IEP Team chooses is not written in stone. If the team decides that a student could have been more appropriately assessed with a different option, that decision can be changed in future years.

Remember, developing and implementing a state alternate assessment is new and unique for everyone involved. Choosing the most appropriate state assessment for a specific student can be a difficult decision. Making such decisions, however, should become more routine as team members become more experienced and familiar with the state assessments. As time passes, additional adjustments in assessment choices may be needed to better serve a student's changing needs. Such adjustments are acceptable and should enhance the assessment process without penalizing the student.

Additional IEP Team Decisions: MI-Access Participation

Once the most appropriate assessment is determined, there are some additional decisions that must be made prior to conducting and scoring an observation. For example, following are some unique scoring considerations that must be taken into account when administering MI-Access *Participation*.

The Scoring Guide

The scoring guide for MI-Access Participation is based on a four-point scale and measures how a student responds to the *opportunity* to participate in an assessment activity (*not* on how well he or she performs it). The scoring guide asks whether the student's response is *more than* expected for this student, *as expected* for this student, *less than* expected for this student, or not evident.

MI-Access Participation Scoring Guide

Score Points
4	More than expected for this student
3	As expected for this student Specify: *waves hands and vocalizes*
2	Less than expected for this student
1	Not evident

The Participation assessment scoring guide is unique in that it must be individualized to the student. Next to score point number three, the teacher—with the IEP Team's guidance—fills in how he or she "expects" the student to respond to the opportunity to participate.

Score point 3—or the "as expected for this student"—is meant to reflect what is referred to in the assessment as the student's individual *participation/response mode* or, essentially, how the student generally responds or behaves in specific settings and during specific activities. This concept is key to scoring Participation assessments because each student will probably respond in ways that are both predictable (by parents, staff, and caregivers who are familiar with the student) and unique to the student (due to his or her disability/ies).

> *It is important to keep in mind that a student's behavior—even if expected—cannot interfere with the completion of the assessment activity or cause harm to the student or others in the classroom. If it does, the student should be scored a 2 ("less than expected for this student") or a 1("not evident") depending on what takes place during the observation*

Determining "As Expecteds for This Student"

The following questions can be used during IEP Team meetings to guide discussion about determining a student's participation/response mode or "expected" behavior. The questions and possible responses are organized and listed according to the *performance requirements* for each performance expectation of MI-Access Participation. Please note that the responses are suggestions only and are not intended to be the only responses possible. The IEP Team meeting is the most appropriate forum for such determinations.

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to *Participate*:

The student…
- ☐ cooperates, with full physical manipulation/assistance
- ☐ cooperates, with partial physical assistance
- ☐ moves toward others, uses body language to indicate awareness
- ☐ voluntarily moves
- ☐ other:_____

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to *Communicate*:

The student…
- ☐ vocalizes
- ☐ verbalizes
- ☐ makes eye contact
- ☐ changes facial expressions or smiles
- ☐ changes body posture or movement
- ☐ gestures or signs
- ☐ uses augmentative communication
- ☐ other_____

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to demonstrate safe and appropriate *Conduct*:

The student appropriately…
- ☐ behaves for the specific activity/setting
- ☐ does not interfere with the activity
- ☐ interferes but does not prevent the conclusion of the activity
- ☐ other_____

The student inappropriately…
- ☐ prevents the conclusion of the activity
- ☐ behaves in ways that are harmful to self or others
- ☐ other _____

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to *Initiate*:

The student…
- ☐ touches someone
- ☐ smiles and makes eye contact
- ☐ makes a soft or loud sound to get someone's attention
- ☐ calls someone by name
- ☐ acknowledges someone is in proximity (by nodding, gesturing, reaching out)
- ☐ gestures
- ☐ other_____

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to *Convey*:

The student consistently communicates either verbally or non-verbally his/her…
- ☐ physical needs
- ☐ wants
- ☐ feelings
- ☐ discomfort
- ☐ other_____

QUESTION: What are the student's frequently observed behaviors when—in a normal, familiar school environment—he or she is given an opportunity to *Respond*:

The student…
- ☐ recognizes a familiar person (by smiling, making eye contact, moving toward)
- ☐ follows directions
- ☐ acknowledges a greeting
- ☐ indicates a selection
- ☐ other_____

After the IEP Team completes these questions, teachers can use the responses to determine "as expected for this student" when administering MI-Access Participation.

Additional IEP Team Decisions:
MI-Access Supported Independence

If the IEP Team determines that MI-Access Supported Independence is the most appropriate assessment for its student, it is recommended that the team *review* how its student will be scored.

The Scoring Guide

The scoring guide for MI-Access Supported Independence is based on a four-point scale that measures whether a student performs the assessment activity with *less* than allowable assistance, an *allowable* level of assistance, *more* than allowable assistance, or not evident.

MI-Access Supported Independence Scoring Guide

Score Points

4	Less than allowable assistance
3	An allowable level of assistance
2	More than allowable assistance
1	Not evident

In order to determine what amount of assistance is "allowed" during the assessment, teachers and IEP Team members must refer to the table below titled "Levels of Allowable Assistance," which has been modified for assessment purposes. (The original table—without modifications—is explained in greater detail in Appendix B, page 81, of the AUEN Supported Independence document.)

It is recognized that during *instruction*, teachers may employ a variety of aids, assists, prompts and directions to teach and reinforce skills. During the MI-Access Supported Independence *assessment*, however, only certain "levels of allowable assistance" are permitted. It should be noted that these levels are determined by the student's chronological age.

Levels of Allowable Assistance *MI-Access Supported Independence*	**Ages: 9,10, 13, 14, 17**	**Age: 18**
Assistive/Adaptive aids – Materials to help the student perform the target behavior without the intervention of another individual at the time the student is participating in the activity.	Allowable	Allowable
Prompting – Verbal or physical cues from another person in order to encourage the student to continue effort or get back on track (e.g., saying "good" or "keep going,")	Allowable	No
Specific step-by-step directions	No	No
Physical assistance - Physical help from another individual*	No	No

*Physical help from another individual is allowable only when the student is physically limited and/or sensory impaired, and is capable of directing and then receiving assistance from another person. (This may include the use of assistive or adaptive aids.)

Additional Information for Those Who Administer MI-Access Assessments

Three concepts are embedded in MI-Access: *age appropriate*, *socially acceptable*, and *safe and appropriate*. The first concept—*age appropriate*—is important to consider when selecting materials, situations, and surroundings for use during MI-Access assessments. Assessment administrators need to make sure that all of these are appropriate given the student's age. For example, in regard to materials, a middle school student should probably not be assessed using picture books without words or with foam puzzles since his or her chronological peers would not typically be using these materials.

The other two concepts—*socially acceptable* and *safe and appropriate*—come into play during scoring, particularly on the Supported Independence assessment. Assessment administrators need to look not only at the student's ability to complete the activity within levels of allowable assistance, but also make sure that the student's behavior is socially acceptable and does not cause harm to others.

A clarification of each of these three concepts is presented below.

Age Appropriate

The term *age appropriate,* in the context of MI-Access, refers to the *materials, situations,* and *environmental surroundings* used to assess each student at his/her chronological age level. The materials, situations, and surroundings should be those that are typically used with or by peers of the same chronological age. Further, they should allow each student to function as independently as possible within a familiar school environment. It is assumed that the teaching of these students takes place within the same contexts.

Examples of age-appropriate materials, situations, and environmental surroundings are provided below.

❖ **Materials**
   (toys, games, and school materials that would be of interest to a typical non-disabled student within a specific age level)

   Elementary (9-10 year olds)
   - Interlocking blocks used to construct familiar objects
   - Books with print and pictures rather than board books or picture books
   - Books and toys with themes suitable for typical 9-10 year olds
   - Worksheets and/or flashcards that use pictures of young children rather than babies or pre-schoolers
   - Puzzles, board games, or computer activities with elementary age themes, such as movies, sports, fashion, or school-related subjects

   Middle School (13-14 year olds)
   - Sketch pads and paint-by-number activities
   - High-interest, low-vocabulary books and magazines, not picture books
   - Puzzles or games with teen themes, such as movies, sports, fashion, or school-related subjects
   - Worksheets and flashcards using pictures/stories of teens and teen activities

- Backpacks and folders with teen themes or popular colors
- Board or computer games

High School (17-18 year olds)
- Crossword puzzle books, mazes, or sketch pads
- High-interest, low-vocabulary books and magazines dealing with subjects of adult life, careers, and community
- Emphasis on computer technology and electronic games
- Folders and backpacks designed for organization of school and work in subdued colors and themes
- Scrap books

❖ **Situations**
(school and community situations that would be typical of non-disabled peers of the same age)
Elementary (9-10 year olds)
- Recess or indoor free time
- Washing hands before lunch
- "Sharing time" in the classroom
- Taking messages to the office or other classrooms
- Putting on paint shirts for an art activity

Middle School (13-14 year olds)
- Leisure time in the classroom
- Passing between classes
- Preparing for a cooking activity
- Dressing for gym class
- Extracurricular activities or "clubs"

High School (17-18 year olds)
- Leisure time in the classroom or on the school campus
- Passing between classes
- Preparing for a cleaning job
- Completing job/work assignments
- Extracurricular activities or clubs

❖ **Environmental Surroundings**
(school and community settings that would be typical of non-disabled peers of the same age)

Elementary School (9-10 year olds)
- Art, music, library, or physical education class
- Field trips and assemblies
- Classroom instruction time
- School lunchroom
- Recess

Middle School (13-14 year olds)
- School library, art, music, or physical education class
- Life Skills classroom or kitchen
- School cafeteria
- School dance or social activities
- Athletic facilities
- Computer lab
- School store

High School (17-18 year olds)
- School library, art, music, or physical education class
- Recreational activities, such as bowling, swimming, or team sports
- School dance or social/recreational functions
- Life Skills classroom or kitchen
- Workshop or job setting
- Athletic facilities
- Computer lab
- School store
- Cafeteria/student lounge

Socially Acceptable

The term "socially acceptable" in the context of MI-Access refers to the personal behavior a student exhibits during assessment activities. This behavior ideally should be what one would typically observe in non-disabled students of the same chronological age, and which is generally accepted as the norm by mainstream society. When applied to students with disabilities, one must consider the nature of the student's disability and cognitive level; however, it is expected that the personal behavior of the student will not draw undue attention in the school or in other community environments.

Because the description above says what *is* socially acceptable, some examples of behaviors that *are not* socially acceptable have been provided as comparisons.

- Talking or laughing loudly when the situation or environment calls for quiet (such as in the classroom, school library, office, or in community activities, such as movies or restaurants)
- Moving the body excessively to the point of distracting others, such as hand flapping or rocking
- Touching others inappropriately, such as grabbing, hugging, or kissing
- Using inappropriate or infantile language, such as teasing, obscenities, or expressions usually used by younger children
- Choosing materials, activities, or clothing that are inappropriate for a particular setting or are not considered age appropriate or socially acceptable
- Violating personal space

Safe and Appropriate

The phrase "safe and appropriate" used in the context of MI-Access refers to a student's behavior while engaging in assessment activities. The intent is that a student's behavior does not cause harm to him/herself or others.

An Additional Tool for IEP Teams

In addition to the tools already described, the MDE has produced a video called *In Michigan, All Kids Count! PREVIEW.* The videotape explains MI-Access, why it was developed, and how the assessment is administered. It may be helpful for IEP Team members to view the videotape prior to the meeting at which a state assessment determination is made. The MDE provided all District and School MI-Access Coordinators with a copy of the videotape during the 2001/2002 school year. It is highly recommended that districts and schools keep copies of the videotape in their lending library or duplicate it, as needed, for wider distribution. (These draft guidelines may also be duplicated for use in Michigan schools until the final ones are approved.)