



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



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PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

January 24, 2008

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Mike Flanagan   
**SUBJECT:** Approval of Accountability Workbook Amendments for 2007-08

At the January 2008 State Board of Education meeting three Accountability Workbook amendments were described and discussed. The proposed amendments are presented in full detail in the attachment to this memo. The third amendment was modified, as discussed, to include all alternative schools and programs in an effort to keep attention focused on this issue. The amendments must be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education by February 15, 2008.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the Accountability Workbook Amendments for 2007-08 as presented in the document attached to the Superintendent's memo dated January 24, 2008.

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## **Michigan Accountability Workbook Amendments 2007-08**

**1. Application for interim flexibility** - While the alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards is being developed, MDE must apply for interim flexibility for calculating AYP for students with disabilities.

**Section 5.3** How are students with disabilities included in the State's definition of adequate yearly progress?

Students with disabilities participate in the State Board approved Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS) in one of three ways:

- MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program;
- Participation in the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) or Michigan Merit Exam (MME) with accommodations; or
- Participation in the MEAP or MME without accommodations.

All students are assessed. The State Board of Education's Michigan Education Assessment System (MEAS) policy requires all students, including students with disabilities, be assessed at the state level.

The Single Record Student Database (SRSD) keeps track of students with disabilities and allows the disaggregation of student scores. Data field definitions for students with disabilities can be viewed at this link:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cepi/FldDscrpF07\\_193890\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/cepi/FldDscrpF07_193890_7.pdf) Pages 82 through 121 contain the definitions of the fields used to gather subgroup data through the SRSD.

Documentation of assessment procedures and protocols for students with disabilities for MEAP is contained in the MEAP Assessment Administrator Manual at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MEAP\\_Admin\\_Manual\\_F07\\_FINAL\\_2053\\_51\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MEAP_Admin_Manual_F07_FINAL_2053_51_7.pdf) and for MI-Access in administration materials at [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709\\_28463---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_28463---,00.html). If a student with a disability is also an English language learner (ELL), the student must be coded for both subgroups in the SRSD. When protocols for assessing students with disabilities are followed for an ELL student and the protocols indicate that the MEAP and MME assessments are the most appropriate for that student, then procedures for assessing ELL students must be followed including assessing the student's English language proficiency.

In Michigan, students with disabilities constitute one of the subgroups whose successful achievement of AYP will be required (along with other subgroups) in order for a school or school district to be classified as making AYP.

Michigan has an alternate assessment – MI-Access – for students with significant cognitive impairment. Performance categories have been approved by the Michigan State Board of Education for the MI-Access tests.

All students with disabilities not taking the MI-Access assessment will participate in the regular MEAP or MME assessments or in the MEAP or MME with accommodations.

It has been the policy of the Michigan Department of Education and the State Board of Education that students be allowed to use nonstandard assessment accommodations on the MEAP and MI-Access assessments but the results cannot be counted because nonstandard accommodations invalidate the test results. The policy remains in place. If an assessment is given in such a way that it invalidates test results, the student will not count as either proficient or tested.

According to the final regulations for NCLB, students with disabilities participating in MI-Access, Michigan’s Alternate Assessment Program, will count as being assessed, but no more than one percent (1%) of each student test cohort will count as proficient when tested on alternate assessment standards for the purpose of calculating AYP. School districts will be allowed to apply for exception to the 1% cap. Exceptions will be granted, if warranted by the evidence presented, until the statewide cap of 1% is reached.

**Transition Flexibility**

Michigan requests approval to continue to use the Transition Flexibility (Option 1 - proxy) procedure for the 2007-08 testing cycle to determine the percent proficient and adjusted AYP decision for schools that do not make AYP solely due to achievement of the students with disabilities subgroup. The following information is provided in response the federal request for documentation needed for approval of the Transition Flexibility:

**95% participation rate for students with disabilities**

The following table shows the enrollment of students with disabilities in Michigan for school year 2006-07 and the participation rate.

Content Area	Number of Students		Participation Rate
	Enrolled	Tested	
English Language Arts	117,719	114,240	97.0%
Mathematics	117,719	115,443	98.1%

Complete data are found in the Comprehensive State Performance Report and in the State Performance Plan.

- **Compliance with IDEA**

USDoE requires states that apply for interim flexibility to have approval for IDEA funds with no special conditions. Although Michigan received IDEA Part B funds with conditional approval, the state agency has lobbied for a change in the state statute that caused the condition. The state statute that caused conditional approval, MCL 380.1311, was amended on November 13, 2007. This link to the state legislature’s website provides an analysis of the bill that

made the amendment: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2007-2008/billanalysis/House/pdf/2007-HLA-0571-3.pdf>

### **Appropriate Accommodations**

Michigan uses the principles of universal design in order to minimize the number of accommodations students need to use in order to access the state's general and alternate assessments. In addition, Michigan has an accommodations summary table, which includes a comprehensive list of 81 standard or nonstandard accommodations that have been approved by the Michigan State Board of Education (SBE) for both the general and alternate assessments. The SBE accommodation summary table was included in the assessment system peer review evidence.

In addition to the accommodation summary table, Michigan provides training sessions on accommodations at its fall Assessment and Accountability conferences and includes information on accommodations in its guidelines for determining participation in state assessment and in the administration manuals for both the general and alternate assessments.

- **Improving Student Achievement**

The following are examples of initiatives that are designed to improve the academic achievement of both students with disabilities and other students with low academic achievement who might otherwise become identified as students with disabilities.

The Michigan Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi) is designed to increase elementary and middle school student achievement in reading, as measured by Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) outcomes measures, and the MEAP. Other primary goals include improved school climate, social skills, and culture; a decrease in disruptive behavior as measured by office discipline referrals; and a decrease in suspension/expulsion rates. Features of the program include:

- Site developed action plans for continuous improvement
- Regional team and local coach training to support local schools
- School support and personnel training in the use of research-based prevention and intervention strategies
- Web-based statewide support
- Annual statewide conferences supporting continuous improvement and ongoing personnel development.

The Michigan Mathematics Program Initiative (MMPI) provides secondary district/school based teams (including both general education and special education staff) with instructional tools and strategies tied directly to the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE) in order to raise achievement levels for all students, as well as to meet AYP goals for special education subgroups.

Reach and Teach for Learning is a building based initiative designed to improve learning results for middle and high school students who are hard to reach and/or hard to teach. This includes both students with disabilities and other struggling learners. The work is rooted in the Michigan School Improvement Framework and is hosted in collaboration with teacher, administrative, and curriculum professional organizations. It was initiated as part of an IDEA Partnership grant to the Michigan Department of Education, funded through the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

### **Approved Assessment System**

Michigan's assessment system has "full approval" status.

- **Evidence of Progress in developing an assessment based on modified achievement standards**

The development of an Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards (AA-MAS) will fulfill an important need in the MEAS. Michigan has received approval for a federally funded grant project which has dual purposes:

1. To design a replicable process for modifying the existing MEAP English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments in grades 3—8 by reducing length and difficulty level while maintaining appropriately challenging content that reflects the state's general education Grade Level Content Expectations; and
2. To create a Michigan Online Professional Learning System (MOPLS) that can be adopted and adapted by states, school districts, and individual educators.

Through the collaborative efforts of four major Michigan Department of Education (MDE) offices, Michigan educators, assessment experts, and other stakeholders, Michigan has constructed a continuum of assessments that reflects a tradition of high technical quality; a foundation in robust state content standards; and the knowledge and skills of a diverse population. The AA-MAS will complete the continuum, providing a valid, reliable, and fair measure of the achievement of students who struggle with academic content in one or more subjects and currently do not meet grade level expectations for the grade in which they are enrolled. The MI-Access AA-MAS, combined with guidance for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams, high quality professional development, and enhanced teaching and learning, will accelerate academic achievement for these students and empower them to attain full independence and success in their adult roles.

### *Timeline*

#### **Year 1 (2007-08)**

- Define student population (write draft guidelines)
- Develop item review process

- o Select items for pilot
- o Start the design of MOPLS

**Year 2 (2008-09)**

- o Pilot MFL (winter 2009)
- o Field review of draft guidelines
- o Continue work on MOPLS including BETA testing
- o Committee review of pilot results
- o Operational Fall 2009

**Year 3 (2009-10)**

- o Operational Fall 2009
- o Develop MFL Performance Level Descriptors
- o Standard-setting
- o Complete MOPLS
- o Dissemination to Michigan and other states

**2. Science assessment** - USDoE requested that each state add a description of science assessment implementation to Section 6.1 of the Accountability Plan.

**Section 6.1** How is the State’s definition of adequate yearly progress based primarily on academic assessments?

Michigan had developed content standards and a complete state assessment system in science prior to the deadline of 2007-08 as established in the No Child Left Behind Act. Content expectations and extended content expectations have been developed for science to identify topics and skills that are the basis for the MEAP, MME and MI-Access science assessments at grades 5, 8 and 11. These content expectations also guide the development of field-test items for new assessments, which are embedded in multiple operational forms of the assessments. The embedding of field-test items enables the release of operational assessment items and eliminates the need for stand-alone pilot testing.

Science assessment content is based on grade-span benchmarks. The State Board of Education recently approved revisions to the content standards and assessment design. These content revisions will be incorporated in future science assessments.

At the high school level, assessments are also based on benchmarks that cover the high school grade spans of the Michigan Curriculum Framework. In late 2004, the Michigan Legislature adopted state legislative bills (Senate Bills 1153-1157) that replace the MEAP High School Assessment (HSA) with the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), a college entrance and/or college readiness assessment augmented, as necessary, to fully assess Michigan standards and benchmarks.

Alignment of the MEAP science assessments to the content expectations was documented in Michigan’s peer review of the standards and assessment system. The alignment of the MI-Access Science assessments was recently conducted by

the National Alternate Assessment Center and the final alignment study report is currently being produced.

**3. Extended graduation cohort for alternative education programs and schools** - MDE is seeking approval to allow more than four years to be used as the "standard number of years" for graduation, on a case by case basis, for alternative education programs and schools.

**Section 7.1** What is the State definition for the public high school graduation rate?

In calendar year 2007, Michigan submitted an amendment to the Accountability workbook which described the cohort graduation rate, which will be first used for AYP determinations in school year 2007-08. The description of the cohort graduation calculation was approved. Michigan specifies the minimum required credits for high school graduation. For most students the "standard number of years" for graduation will be four years or less, and the four year cohort formula will be used. In the 2007 amendment, Michigan identified the following groups of students where the "standard number of years" for graduation may be five years, based on a case-by-case review of specific information about individual students. The specific groups of students identified in the 2007 amendment were:

- Students with Disabilities;  
English Language Learners;  
Students who have been unable to attend school full time or for a full year due to health problems or mandatory expulsion; and  
Students in Migratory Status.

The request to include students in migratory status was denied, but the other three categories were accepted on a case-by-case basis.

The requirements of Michigan's Merit Curriculum are rigorous and the state statute includes a provision to create a personal curriculum modification that could result in a student taking extra time to meet the credit requirements.

Data show that, while there are many schools that have students in alternative programs, the students in those programs account for less than 4% of the high school student enrollment.

	Number of Schools	% of Schools	Number of Students	% of Students
All high schools	1128	100%	538,642	100%
High schools with Alternative students	366	32%	18,263	3.4%

Data from Center for Educational Performance and Information.

The four-year on-time graduation rate does not accommodate students who leave school and seek to return. It is important to not exclude any student who is graduating; this is especially important since graduation rate is a critical factor in

determining AYP. By including this additional group in an extended graduation cohort, schools and districts will benefit from the good work they are doing in helping students stay in school to complete their education. Michigan seeks to reduce barriers for schools serving such students who remain in school beyond 4 years. Michigan proposes to allow case-by-case consideration of extending the "standard number of years" for graduation for individual students that are attending alternative education schools, are behind in credit-earning toward graduation, but will graduate earning all required Michigan Merit Curriculum credits. Some programs that serve alternative education students may be labeled as "dropout recovery." For alternative education programs that serve as dropout prevention or dropout recovery, we will include extra time, through the year a student turns 20, to allow students to complete all required credits.