

# Education CONNECTION

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## M-STEP Update



After the first weeks of the statewide assessment system, M-STEP, the overall testing and response is going very well.

Our test administration call centers were busy the beginning of the testing cycle, answering primarily test administration questions and password reset requests.

While there have been a few isolated incidents reported, no wide spread test system failures or network issues have occurred, and the reported incidents have been resolved in a timely manner. What the call center found was that many of the technical issues were locally derived, and we were happy to help resolve them.

We hit the 2,500,000 test sessions mark recently and we are approaching the halfway point in terms of number of test sessions complete overall!

The technology continues to function well, with no major issues. The MDE has had an opportunity to talk with other states who are transitioning to online assessments this year, and Michigan continues to have one of the most successful transitions of any state. Schools continue to administer the test without significant technological problems. We have not had any major technological glitches or failures. The engine is working well. We have had very low uptake on the “Tiger Teams” – these are the teams that we put in place through collaborations with the ISDs so that we have “on the ground” teams that we can dispatch if schools/districts are having trouble with technology, but we have not had to deploy them very much.

We have been receiving tremendous feedback from schools across the state, which is helping us make improvements as we go. This is the first year of the full online testing statewide and we are using this feedback to help make this a better testing experience. This is why we needed everyone to take this in a transitional year – to identify areas where we need these adjustments.

The MDE would like to thank all schools and staff for turning this opportunity into a positive experience for their districts, their communities, and most importantly, their students.

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## Personalized Learning Webinar Series

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is presenting a webinar series featuring models of Personalized Learning and presented by teachers and administrators from around the state. Personalized learning occurs when the student has a degree of choice over his or her education in terms of delivery, context, and pacing. Individual outcomes and how proficiency will be demonstrated is collaboratively defined.



The student's interests, experiences, and abilities guide his or her learning, making new information more relevant and meaningful. This approach has the potential to build the student's capacity and desire to learn beyond the scope of the curriculum and the confines of the classroom.

Detailed information about the webinars can be found at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753\\_65799---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_65799---,00.html)

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## MDE ENCOURAGES DISTRICTS TO TAKE TECH-READINESS PLEDGE



The Future Ready District Pledge, developed by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) in October 2014, is a commitment by district superintendents to work with educators, families and community members to make all of their schools "Future Ready."

The Future Ready Schools effort, a USED partnership with the Alliance for Excellent Education, is designed to encourage and support local school superintendents as they transition their districts to personalized, digital learning.

The pledge is available at <http://www.futurereadyschools.org/take-the-pledge>, and pledges are eligible to attend a free Future Ready Regional Summit.

Michigan Department of Education (MDE) encourages local district leaders across the state to take a tech-readiness pledge.

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## MDE Launches Student Inspiration Project

A new statewide program, recognizing the need for more engagement in classrooms, focuses on inspiring kids in grades four through eight, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) recently announced.



The Student Inspiration Project, introduced at a recent State Board of Education meeting, is designed to help motivate students to fully engage in their education before they enter ninth grade.

An outgrowth of the MDE's support of innovative statewide school improvement initiatives, the Student Inspiration Project itself was motivated by a September 2014 survey that found a lack of educational commitment among almost 1,000 Michigan students in grades four through 12.

According to the survey by market research and strategy firm YouGov, 94 percent of surveyed students said motivation is essential to a great education, but only 24 percent said they feel motivated to learn.

A website with more information about this exciting project and detailed research findings is available at [www.StudentInspirationProject.org](http://www.StudentInspirationProject.org).

Those interested in participating may contact Kristen Harmeling at [Kristen.Harmeling@YouGov.com](mailto:Kristen.Harmeling@YouGov.com) or Ann-Marie Smith at [smitha24@michigan.gov](mailto:smitha24@michigan.gov).

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## "Treat Them Like a Star" Video Series

No one is more vulnerable to bullies than children with disabilities. Please take a moment to watch a set of brief videos aimed at helping elementary school teachers educate their students on how to approach classmates with special needs, then share them with your kids.

Recorded recently by Good Fruit Video of Lansing, the videos are intended to promote discussion and, thus, understanding.

You can find them at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJblGnJITzY>

For more information about the videos contact Justin Caine, 517-708-3809 or email [info@goodfruitvideo.com](mailto:info@goodfruitvideo.com).

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## Rare Books in the Classroom

Recently, [Library of Michigan](#) (LoM) staff, and an intriguing collection of items from the Rare Book Room, ventured out of the Library and into uncharted territory, the grade school classroom. LoM staff spent the day at Glencairn Elementary in East Lansing, presenting to each grade as a March is Reading Month celebration.

Kids from all grades, K-5, took great delight in our materials, and the LoM encourages teachers to keep the Rare Book Room in mind as a destination the next time they're making a field trip to the Capitol and Museum.

For more information about the Rare Book Room and other Library of Michigan collections, please call (517) 373-1300, or [email%20librarian@michigan](mailto:email%20librarian@michigan).

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## Upcoming Events

[Michigan State Board of Education Meeting](#), May 12, 2015

[Michigan Assoc for Infant Mental Health Conference](#), May 17-19

[Michigan State Board of Education Meeting](#), June 9, 2015

[MAISA 2015 Summer Conference](#), June 17-19, 2015

[EdCon 2015 - The Secondary Education Conference](#), June 22-24, 2015

[MiELA Network Institutes](#), June 23-25



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