

# Spotlight








on Student Assessment and Accountability

## What's New

April 2, 2015

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### Opt-Out Clarification

Over the past few weeks, we have become aware of numerous conflicting messages regarding the issue of parental opt-out of students from assessments. To provide clarity regarding the Michigan Department of Education's official position on this issue, a letter from Venessa Keesler, Deputy Superintendent of Accountability Services, was distributed on March 25, 2015 to district superintendents and public school academy directors.

The letter states, "The MDE understands and respects the rights of parents to make all manner of choices regarding the education of their students. However, there is no official ability in state or federal law for parents to have their child 'opt out' of the assessments, without counting against their school and district's participation rates."

A copy of this letter is available at [http://mi.gov/documents/mde/OptOut\\_Position\\_485412\\_7.pdf?20150331141738](http://mi.gov/documents/mde/OptOut_Position_485412_7.pdf?20150331141738).

Other documents that may be helpful on this subject include:

- An informational letter for parents from State Superintendent Mike Flanagan, located on the M-STEP web page under the *What's New* and the *Parent/Student Information* section. To download the letter, please go to [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep).
- A one page overview titled Participation in State Assessment Programs for Michigan Public Schools, located at [http://mi.gov/documents/mde/Participation\\_in\\_State\\_Assessment\\_Programs\\_for\\_Michigan\\_Public\\_Schools\\_482861\\_7.pdf?20150331143151](http://mi.gov/documents/mde/Participation_in_State_Assessment_Programs_for_Michigan_Public_Schools_482861_7.pdf?20150331143151).

**Important Dates and Reminders**

**Recently Asked Questions**

**Key:**



information Tech Coordinators also need to know



supports and accommodations information

► Sign up for Spotlight at: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIMDE/subscriber/new>. Enter your email address and select Spotlight under Student Assessment.

## Michigan Awards Future Assessment System for Spring 2016 and Beyond (Excerpt from Official Press Release)

Michigan has awarded a three-year contract to both Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) and Measurement, Inc. for the future Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) system beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. The recommendation of award was made jointly by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), and Department of Technology, Management, and Budget (DTMB), which runs the state procurement process.

“Data Recognition Corporation and Measurement, Inc. were the two highest scoring bidders and are among the most experienced education service and test administration providers in the nation,” said State Superintendent Mike Flanagan. “This now allows Michigan schools and teachers to move forward and fully transition from the 40-year-old MEAP to M-STEP, a 21st Century assessment system.”

DRC and Measurement, Inc. are the same vendors that are being used for the 2015 M-STEP statewide assessment, providing a seamless transition to the statewide assessments for the foreseeable future.

“This fortunate outcome will give this year’s tests greater significance and be a foundation from which to build,” Flanagan said.

To read the full MDE press release visit [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde).

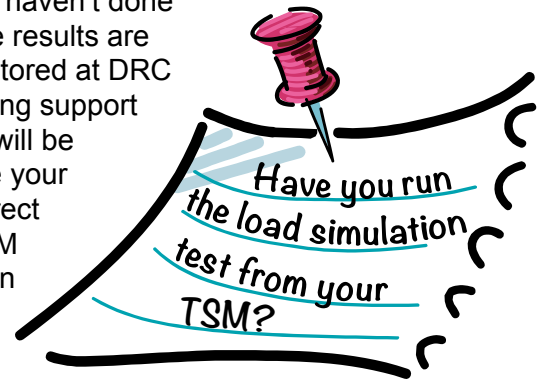
## Load Simulation Testing Resources Available

In an effort to help districts be as prepared as possible for online testing, TRIG, Division of Accountability Services (DAS), and DRC are making the following resources available. The first is a daily DRC Testing Site Manager (TSM) Load Simulation Report that districts can use to verify that their TSM installation and testing has been successful. This information will

allow districts to verify testing results and make contact with DRC if testing did not return the anticipated results.

The second is a Google Spreadsheet so that districts can communicate information related to TSM installation at the ISD, district, or building level. This information will allow DAS and DRC to support districts that have not successfully completed a test before the first day of testing without making unnecessary contacts.

To establish a pre-testing window baseline, please perform the Load Simulation Test from the TSM as outlined in the Technology User Guide pages 129–132 if you haven’t done so already. The results are collected and stored at DRC to be used during support calls, and you will be able to validate your results are correct in the DRC TSM Load Simulation Report.



Details and links to these documents can be found at <http://22itrig.org/m-step-tech/critical-tsm-load-simulation-report/>. If you have any questions on the process or what’s expected, please contact John Price at [baa@michigan.gov](mailto:baa@michigan.gov).

## Testing Begins this Month—Are You Ready?

### ONLINE Testing for M-STEP and MI-Access

On April 13, 2015, the first online testing windows open. Before any test window (online or paper/pencil) begins there are steps that need to be taken and resources that can be accessed for training and information.

*(Continued on next page)*

If your students are testing online, have you:

- Pre-identified new students
- Set up your test sessions – District and Building Coordinators can manage test sessions, set individual student supports, and print test tickets through eDIRECT beginning (by noon) April 3, 2015
- Installed TSM/INSIGHT Software Suite and run the load test
- Enabled text-to-speech (TTS) or video sign language (VSL) on your TSM, if needed. (These are not enabled by default)
- Given your students a chance to practice using the online training tools (listed below), which can be accessed directly through INSIGHT (click on Online Tools Training) or at <https://wbte.dracedirect.com/MI/portals/mi> (this link MUST be accessed through the Chrome browser).
  - ▶ M-STEP Sample Item Sets
  - ▶ M-STEP Calculator Practice
  - ▶ M-STEP Supports and Accommodations (TSM Required)
  - ▶ MI-Access FI Practice
- Accessed the available resources on the M-STEP and MI-Access web pages at [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) and [www.michigan.gov/mi-access](http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access):
  - ▶ Sample Classroom Activities and Performance Tasks
  - ▶ Supports and Accommodations reference materials
  - ▶ Test administration and directions manuals
  - ▶ Calculator and Scratch Paper Policies
- Accessed the documentation, checklists, and mini-modules for M-STEP and MI-Access

(Functional Independence, Supported Independence, and Participation) in eDIRECT at <https://mi.dracedirect.com/> under *Documents*

- Ordered MI-Access FI ELA: Expressing Ideas materials (only offered in paper/pencil format)
- Distributed parent information

### **PAPER/PENCIL Testing for M-STEP and MI-Access**

Paper/Pencil testing also begins this month on the designated dates within the testing windows.

If your students are testing paper/pencil, have you:

- Pre-identified new students
- Affixed barcode labels to answer documents
- Given students a chance to practice using the Paper/Pencil Sample Item Sets at [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) and [www.michigan.gov/mi-access](http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access) under the *Content Specific Information* section
- Introduced students to the new mathematics response grids located on the M-STEP web page
- Accessed the available resources on the M-STEP and MI-Access web pages:
  - ▶ Sample Classroom Activities and Performance Tasks
  - ▶ Supports and Accommodations reference materials
  - ▶ Test administration and directions manuals
  - ▶ Calculator and Scratch Paper Policies
- Distributed Parent Information

**NOTE:** *This is not meant to be a complete preparation checklist for the assessments.*

## Identifying Supports and Accommodations for Online Testing

Two 1-page Supports and Accommodations Companion Documents for M-STEP and MI-Access have been posted to their respective web pages at [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) and [www.michigan.gov/mi-access](http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access) under the *Student Supports and Accommodations* section. These companion documents are intended to be resources for educators to use in conjunction with the Student Supports and Accommodations Table. They will be used for:

- **Online** – set specific supports and accommodations for individual students in eDIRECT **prior** to printing the test ticket
- **Paper/pencil** – bubbling supports and accommodations used on the student answer document after testing

## Online Tools Training (OTT) for Designated Supports

Students and educators will have an opportunity in advance of testing to try out the functionality of the system for students who may need text-to-speech (TTS), masking, color chooser, or contrasting text, and coming soon, video sign language (VSL) or the online stacked Spanish translation form for mathematics.

Currently, the following supports are available through INSIGHT (once INSIGHT is open click *Online Tools Training*):

- Text-to-Speech
- Masking, Color Chooser, Contrasting Text

In order for educators and students to view sample items with these supports turned on, the INSIGHT software as well as the Testing Site Manager (TSM) must be installed (TTS needs to be enabled on the TSM as it is not enabled by default). Please go to <https://mi.drctdirect.com/> for more information on test setup as well as to review the Mini-Modules

"Accessing the Online Tools Training" and "Tools for Online Testing" which can be found under "General Information" and "Documents."

## Using Text-to-Speech Will Increase Testing Time

Test coordinators may experience longer testing times for students utilizing the text-to-speech (TTS) functionality at all grade levels. Why? Because reading content aloud takes longer. Students will, however, have full control over the text-to-speech functionality in each test question (ability to stop, starting point ability, pause/play; and can adjust speed and volume by clicking on *Options* and *Audio Settings*). Additionally, text-to-speech will read aloud various punctuation marks as well as give directional cues to students. Examples:

If the text reads, "Did you see how quickly that turtle was swimming?," the text-to-speech may read aloud the beginning and end quotation marks as "quote" and "end quote."

If the text shows a table with information, students will be told how to read the table with information such as "Reading the table left to right," or "the first column reads." There are exceptions for MI-Access (for example, when reading the content of a table would violate the construct being measured). In some cases, these are the same items in which the "Do Not Read Aloud" tables in the paper/pencil versions are marked "Do not read aloud information or data in table or graph."

## ELA Listening CDs and Scripts (Paper/Pencil Testing)

Several issues regarding the ELA Listening CDs and Scripts need clarification:

1. Districts and schools have provided feedback to DAS that CD players are not always available in schools to play the M-STEP ELA Listening CD.

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For this reason we will allow Test Administrators to use the CD player in a classroom computer **if necessary, and if the computer is equipped with speakers that enable each student to hear each of the passages**. If there is any doubt that all students can hear each passage properly, please utilize the ELA Listening Scripts. Audio files cannot be copied and the CDs must be returned promptly to the Building Test Coordinator for return with the secure, non-scorable materials.

2. ELA Listening CDs and Listening Scripts were sent to schools for paper/pencil testing at a ratio of 1:20 (one CD and one script for every 20 students). Additional CDs are not available for Additional Materials Orders. We have had several calls about ordering additional materials for small groups. If necessary, please distribute the CDs and Listening Scripts within the school as Test Administrators need only one or the other.
3. ELA Listening Scripts will be available for download by the District or Building Test Coordinator from the Secure Site General Announcements Page by April 7, 2015. An Incident Report must first be filed documenting the need for the additional Listening Scripts. Listening Scripts are secure material and cannot be copied. ELA Listening Scripts must be returned promptly to the Building Test Coordinator for secure shredding.

## English Glossaries (Paper/Pencil Testing)

English Glossaries, which are form and item specific, are available only for ELA and mathematics paper/pencil tests. The English Glossaries are secure material. The glossaries generally include all 3 sessions of the content area test. Some sessions may not have any words requiring definitions or synonyms; this varies by content area and grade level. When students are given glossaries, they should write their name on the top of the page and the glossary sheet should be collected with each student's test booklet. In this way, the glossary will be available for the

student in subsequent test sessions and will be kept secure throughout the testing experience. When all sessions are completed, test booklets will be returned to the vendor in a non-scorable box and Glossaries can be collected and shredded by the Building Test Coordinator.

**Please note:** Although schools were provided English Glossaries in ELA and mathematics, students are not required to use this universal tool. If they choose to use the tool, the English Glossary support should be bubbled on the answer document.

## Video Surveillance Cameras

We have had several questions about the use of video surveillance cameras in labs which could potentially create a test security issue. In the interest of student and staff safety, we will allow the use of video surveillance cameras in computer labs during testing. Cameras should be directed at equipment in a way that does not compromise any test item. Any tapes made during testing **MUST** be deleted as soon as possible. The video taping of any test session or material may **NOT** be archived.

## Weekly WebEx Q&A Sessions for M-STEP Test Administration – April 7th Session CANCELED

Due to most schools being on spring break, the April 7th session is now canceled. However, if you have questions that need to be answered now, please email [baa@michigan.gov](mailto:baa@michigan.gov).

Future WebEx Q & A sessions are still open for registration. Sessions will resume April 14, 2015 and will continue until June 2, 2015 provided there is sufficient interest. In addition, questions concerning technology readiness will be answered during the April 14th session.

Please register for the April 14th session by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/MITuesdayQ-A>.



## Treatment of Test Materials After Testing

Not all materials sent to schools for M-STEP testing should be returned to Measurement Inc., the M-STEP scoring contractor. Please refer to the following table for instructions on the treatment of test materials post testing.

Test Material	Return to M-STEP Contractor	Schools to Keep	Schools to Destroy
Used Answer Documents (all content)	Scorable		
Unused Mathematics and ELA Answer Documents	Non-Scorable		
Unused Science and Social Studies Answer Documents			X
Completed School/Grade Header Sheets	Scorable		
Unused School/Grade Header Sheets			X
Completed Class/Grade ID Sheets	Scorable		
Unused Class/Grade ID Sheets			X
Used Orange Special Handling Envelope(s)	Scorable		
Unused Orange Special Handling Envelope(s)			X
Test Booklets (grades 3-8, 11)	Non-Scorable		
Accommodated versions of the test (Braille, enlarged print, reader scripts, audio CDs, video DVDs, translated versions)	Non-Scorable		
ELA Listening CDs	Non-Scorable		
ELA Listening Scripts			X
English Glossaries (Mathematics and ELA)			X
LI (First language) Glossaries (Mathematics)			X
Classroom Activities			X
Student Test Tickets			X
Used scratch paper including used graph paper			X
Test Administration Manuals (available for download)		Optional	
Test Administration Directions		Optional	
Return Verification Form (store at district)		1 year	
Signed Security Compliance Forms (store at district)		1 year	

## Important Dates and Reminders

Upcoming important dates, recent topics, etc.



### Approaching Deadlines!

#### WIDA

- **April 3, 2015:** The WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs materials must be *shipped* to MetriTech by Friday, April 3, 2015. If you have questions about packing and shipping your WIDA materials, contact MetriTech at 800-747-4868.

### April 2015

#### MI-Access

- **NOW – May 22, 2015:** Paper/pencil materials not ordered previously can now be ordered on the Additional Materials Order screen on the Secure Site. **Please check your initial material order received BEFORE placing an additional material order.**

**Note:** For ALL MI-Access students being assessed in ELA: Expressing Ideas, this test is available **only** in a paper/pencil format. Materials must be ordered through the secure site. *Reminder: Expressing Ideas is now assessed in all grades.*

#### M-STEP

- **NOW – April 27, 2015—Grades 5, 8, and 11:** Additional paper/pencil materials can be ordered on the Secure Site. **Please check your initial material order received BEFORE placing an additional material order.** *Note: For schools testing online, there is no need to place an order unless a student needs paper/pencil materials because of a designated support or an accommodation that cannot be supported online.*

#### M-STEP and MI-Access

- **April 3, 2015:** eDIRECT will be available (by noon) for District and Building Coordinators to manage test sessions, set individual student supports and accommodations, and print test tickets. **Printed test tickets are SECURE materials.**

#### M-STEP

- **April 13 – May 11, 2015—Grades 4 and 7:** Additional paper/pencil materials can be ordered on the Secure Site. **Please check your initial material order received BEFORE placing an additional material order.** *Note: For schools testing online, there is no need to place an order unless a student needs paper/pencil materials because of a designated support or an accommodation that cannot be supported online.*

### May 2015

#### M-STEP

- **May 4 – June 1, 2015—Grades 3 and 6:** Additional paper/pencil materials can be ordered on the Secure Site. **Please check your initial material order received BEFORE placing an additional material order.** *Note: For schools testing online, there is no need to place an order unless a student needs paper/pencil materials because of a designated support or an accommodation that cannot be supported online.*

► To access previous Spotlight editions, go to [http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709\\_31168-280911--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_31168-280911--,00.html).

## Recently Asked Questions

### **What is the process for ordering paper/pencil materials for a homebound student? Is there an approval process? Do we follow the paper/pencil schedule?**

All off-site students must be tested using paper/pencil format and schools must adhere to the grade and content specific paper/pencil window, including the return of materials. Schools should submit an Off-Site Testing Request for approval.

All additional paper/pencil materials that were not previously ordered must be ordered during the grade-specific additional materials window. See *Important Dates and Reminders* on the previous page for these dates.

### **Can students in multiple grades test in the same room?**

Students in multiple grades or content areas should not be tested in the same room. Students must be provided the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a positive distraction-free test environment. Test lengths differ by grade and subject as do, in many cases, the directions that must be read out loud to students at the start of testing. Students can become easily distracted if directions are being read while they are trying to work or students

from other grades complete early. In addition, for those students who do not receive daily instruction in a mixed-grade setting, this can be intimidating. When developing testing schedules, always keep the best interest of the student at the forefront of your planning process.

### **Our teachers have noticed a 1,000 character limitation in the essay section of the M-STEP ELA Performance Task sample. Students are asked to write 'several paragraphs' but can not even write two with this limitation. Can you tell us if this same 1,000 character limitation will be in place on the actual M-STEP essay section?**

The M-STEP online Performance Task short answer has a maximum of 2,000 characters and the writing prompt has a 10,000 character maximum.

► *Prior Recently Asked Questions can be found at [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Recently\\_Asked\\_Questions\\_470957\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Recently_Asked_Questions_470957_7.pdf).*

### **Have Other Questions?**

For assessment questions, please email [BAA@michigan.gov](mailto:BAA@michigan.gov).

For accountability questions, please email [MDE-Accountability@michigan.gov](mailto:MDE-Accountability@michigan.gov).

For phone assistance with assessment or accountability issues, call 877-560-8378 and select the appropriate menu option.