

Student Testing

What Parents Can Do to Help Students Prepare

As a parent and your child's first teacher, you can help your child understand and prepare for the assessments they will take in school. Here are some points that will help your child perform their best:

Find out the facts: To start, review the Michigan Department of Education's Parent/Student Information at: www.michigan.gov/mstep, which includes valuable information on state assessments and the Spring testing calendar.

Talk to your child about testing: Let them know that assessment is a regular part of learning. Make sure they understand why they are being tested and how it is important to their future.

Keep state tests in perspective: Reduce your child's anxiety about the test by reminding them that it is just one measure of learning, and another way to find out where their academic strengths and weaknesses are. Remind them of what they do well, and how they have improved with effort.

Take a look at the state practice opportunities and encourage your child to practice at home: Not only will this help you better understand the types of questions your child will be answering, it will help familiarize your child with the test format and features. If your child is struggling, let the teacher know so when your child takes the test, the focus can be more on test content and less on test navigation. Links to the below information can be found at www.michigan.gov/mstep in the parent/student section.

- Elementary and middle school M-STEP sample test items can be found at: www.michigan.gov/mstep/
- High School PSAT and SAT sample test items can be found at: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat> or the MDE assessment high school page: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/practice>

Make sure that your child is well rested and eats a high protein, low sugar/carb breakfast: Children who are tired, hungry or have too much sugar and carbs are less able to pay attention in class or to handle the demands of a test.

Remember—Attending school matters: Tests reflect children's overall knowledge and achievement. Missing school means missing instruction.

Meet with your child's teacher as often as possible to discuss progress: Ask the teacher to suggest activities for you and your child to do at home to increase and reinforce student learning.

Learn what your child should be learning in English language arts, math, social studies, and science: Michigan learning standards can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/mistatestandards>. In addition, the PTA has developed the PTA Parents' Guide to Success, which gives descriptions of the skills and knowledge your child is expected to gain every year.



Testing Facts to Share with Your Child

- Tests are just one way teachers, schools, districts, and states use to measure what students know and how well they are learning what is taught.
- The purpose of a state assessment is to ensure our state's schools do the best job possible in preparing students to become successful, based on a set of agreed-upon standards.
- Because the state test is exactly aligned with Michigan's standards, test questions should be a natural extension of what students are learning every day in their classrooms.