

Student Assessment and Accountability Recently Asked Questions

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How do I check the testing status of my online students? (4.23.15)

There are multiple ways in which to check student testing status in eDIRECT, depending on what you would like to see. For an explanation of the various ways to check student status, please see the *Checking Student Testing Status* document found at <http://tinyurl.com/checkteststatus>. This document (for all administrations) and a mini-module (for M-STEP) can also be downloaded from eDirect → *Documents* at <https://mi.drceirect.com>.

Are students required to enter a label in the mathematics response? (4.23.15)

Items with the **Equation Builder** do not require a label. Only the numeric value of the response will be scored for mathematics items using the **Equation Builder**. If a label *is* entered it will NOT count against the student.

Can I require students to raise hands prior to submitting or turning in their test? (4.9.15)

The Student Supports and Accommodation Table at <http://www.michigan.gov/mstep> includes “Teacher provides visual, auditory, or physical cues to student to begin, maintain, or finish an assessment task” as a standard test administration practice (pg. 2). While it is not permissible to review student responses (e.g., look at the Review/End Test screen or a student’s answer document), test administrators can provide cues to encourage proper test completion if provided in a manner that is not distracting to other students and does not jeopardize the validity of the test.

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Which mode of writing will my students encounter on the M-STEP Performance Task? (4.9.15)

Students should be prepared to respond to all modes of writing according to the chart below.

ELA Performance Tasks and Rubrics	
Grade	Writing Modes
3–5	Informational: Students will write to inform an audience, making reference to the source material.
	Opinion: Students will form and defend an opinion, supported by information from the source material.
3–8	Narrative: Source material will serve as inspiration for the constructed response, text-inspired rather than text-based.
6–8 & 11	Explanatory: Students will write to explain a subject, analyzing source material in their explanation.
	Argumentative: Students will compose an argument, using evidence from the source material to form and support claims. In grades 7–11, students will also use the source material to form counterclaims.

Can I assist my students if they have problems with technology enhanced (TE) questions during testing? (4.9.15)

Many of the 2015 M-STEP online tests utilize technology to present test items and solicit responses in new and innovative ways designed to assess student’s critical thinking skills. It is imperative that schools provide their students (and staff) the opportunity to experience and become comfortable with the new items types in advance of testing through the Online Training Tools (OTT) and Sample Item Sets.

If your school has installed the TSM and INSIGHT software suite, the Online Sample Item Sets can be accessed directly in INSIGHT. Just open INSIGHT and click on the *Online Tools Training* (OTT) link.

If your school has NOT installed the TSM and INSIGHT software suite, the Online Sample Item Sets can be accessed on the M-STEP web page at www.michigan.gov/mstep under the *Content Specific Information* section, or by copying and pasting this link into **Google Chrome**:
<https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/ott1>.

The Technology Director or designated technology support staff should be available at all times when students are testing and Test Administrators should be prepared to assist students with hardware problems such as a malfunctioning mouse, keyboard, or computer during testing. Test Administrators may assist students with questions about the tools by reviewing and clarifying the tool help with the student. The tool help is accessed by clicking the Question Mark icon in upper right corner. **Test Administrators may not provide tool assistance by interacting with the items themselves.**

Please note: For students offered the scribing accommodation or designated support, Test Administrators should follow the general guidelines documented in the Scribing Protocol document

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located on the M-STEP web page at www.michigan.gov/mstep under *Student Supports and Accommodations*. In addition, for the MI-Access FI student-facing test the administrator may assist with the technology, including helping the student mark the choice, if needed.

Can students in multiple grades test in the same room? (4.2.15)

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? (4.2.15)

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.

I have received my testing materials for grades 5, 8, and 11. May I share the ELA and mathematics Classroom Activities with my teachers? (3.26.15)

Yes, the Classroom Activities (CA) are not secure material. The CA is a scripted 30-minute lesson that introduces students to the context of a performance task so they are not disadvantaged in demonstrating the skills the task intends to assess. The CAs do not address content information; instead, they focus on vocabulary and key contextual topics. They are designed to be an introduction and not an assessment. As stated earlier, CAs are nonsecure; however, they should not be supplemented with any other content. Supplementing the Classroom Activity may detract from the intended purpose of the CA and is not advised. Classroom Activities should not be shared with students in advance of the actual administration of the CA. Additional information can be found in the *M-STEP Test Administration Manual* and in the *Spring 2015 Testing Schedule* document. Both documents can be found at www.michigan.gov/mstep.

If we are not administering the Performance Task for Grade 11, do we still have to administer the Classroom Activity? (3.26.15)

No. For Grade 11, only administer the Classroom Activity if you are administering the Performance Task. For paper/pencil takers, please keep in mind that the Performance Task is administered on Day 2 of the ELA and mathematics test. If you are not administering the Performance Task on Day 2, there is not a need to administer the Classroom Activity prior to that.

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Test Administrators do not require a login for eDIRECT (from what I have read). How are they going to monitor the testing during the session? (3.26.15)

Just as in a paper/pencil administration, test administrators should actively monitor testing by moving throughout the classroom and ensuring students are in the correct session/part of test and are staying focused.

Will Testing Coordinators have to approve as students login? (3.26.15)

The INSIGHT test delivery engine does not require a test coordinator approval online for students to login to the test. Test Administrators should take care to ensure students receive the correct test ticket with the student login UserName and password for the correct test session. The test administrator should have a current copy of the M-STEP Online Administration Directions, which she/he has reviewed in advance of testing. The Online Administration Directions should be strictly followed.

Are online results still anticipated as two weeks? (3.26.15)

Online raw score data will be available two weeks after the grade-level test window closes.

Is there an answer key for the online Sample Item Sets? (3.19.15)

The answer keys for the online Sample Item Sets will be provided when all the sample items are posted. These are expected available by the end of March.

Can students use calculators on the Performance Tasks? (3.19.15)

Students in grades 3-5 are prohibited from using calculators on any portion of the mathematics test. Calculators are permitted on the performance tasks for students in grades 6-8 and 11. Please follow the grade-specific calculator guidelines in the Spring 2015 M-STEP Calculator Policy [NEW Spring 2015 M-STEP Calculator Policy 483986 7.pdf](#), located on the M-STEP web page at www.michigan.gov/mstep.

Why was the decision made to give the online M-STEP assessment in ELA and mathematics as a fixed-form test instead of a Computer-Adaptive Test (CAT)? (3.19.15)

The OSA released a *Special Edition* of the Spotlight on February 9, 2015 announcing the decision to delay the implementation of computer-adaptive testing this spring in ELA and Mathematics. Instead, the spring 2015 online assessments will be fixed form.

For more information, please visit the February 9 Special Edition Spotlight [Spotlight-2-9-15 480924 7.pdf](#), located on the BAA web page at <http://www.michigan.gov/baa>.

During the M-STEP test, do all grade level students need to take the content tests at the same time? For example, can the 8th grade mathematics Performance Task Test be taken on different days at different times? (3.12.15)

For online testing, schools have flexibility within the grade level test window to establish their own testing schedules. Not all students need to take the same content on the same day, nor at the same time.

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It is important to ensure that test sessions begin early enough in the school day to allow students sufficient time to complete that test session in a single instructional day. (e.g., the suggested time allotted for students in grades 6–8 to complete the mathematics online test session is 2 hours; please do not start the session so late in the school day that students are unlikely to be able to finish the online test session before the end of the school day.) See pages 4–5 of the Spring 2015 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition document on the BAA Web page at www.michigan.gov/baa.

For paper/pencil testing, schools are required to follow the paper/pencil testing schedule which specifies which components of which content areas must be administered on specific calendar days; however, not all students must be assessed at the same time. (e.g., the Grade 8 mathematics test must be administered on April 21 and 22. Part 1 (fixed form) must be administered on Day 1, April 21, but you do not have to schedule all of the students to test at the same time, as long as they all take Part 1 (fixed form) on April 21.

The Classroom Activity and Performance Task must be administered on Day 2, April 22. If a student is absent on April 21, but present on April 22, the student will complete Day 2 testing on April 22, and take Day 1 on a make-up day. The make-up days for administering the Grade 8 mathematics test are April 24 – May 1. See pages 8–9 of the Spring 2015 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition document on the BAA Web page at www.michigan.gov/baa.

Where do I find information on who can be an administrator or a proctor? (3.12.15)

The roles and responsibilities for district and building personnel relating to test administration are documented in the Assessment Integrity Guide www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Assessment_Integrity_Guide_291950_7.pdf

Roles for Testing

Test Administrator

1. An employee of the district who is a certified or licensed educational professional.
2. A substitute teacher who is certified and employed by the district on an “as needed” basis.
3. A certified teacher who does not currently possess a teaching certificate because of a career change or retirement and has been approved by the District Assessment Coordinator.

Note: If para-educational staff (such as teacher assistants or other non-certified persons) assist in the assessment procedures, they must be directly supervised by a certified or licensed educational professional.

Test Proctor Role

As a general rule, students do best when assessed in the typical classroom environment. If larger groups must be tested, appropriate allocation of staff will maximize student success and ensure assessment integrity. Depending on the number of students in each room, trained proctors may be assigned to assist the Test Administrator. It is strongly recommended that a proctor be assigned for any group over a typical classroom size (25 to 35 students).

A Test Proctor assists the Test Administrator in administering the tests and is typically a teacher’s aide, para-educational staff, or other paid district or school personnel. If volunteers are used, they must have appropriate training. Volunteers must not have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of

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interest, nor can they be family members of students being tested. Test Proctors must be supervised by a Test Administrator.

Test Proctors who are assessment accommodation providers must be thoroughly trained in how to provide the accommodations prior to the assessment.

Can relatives of students taking the M-STEP still be a proctor or an administrator? (3.12.15)

The roles and responsibilities for district and building personnel relating to test administration are documented in the Assessment Integrity Guide at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Assessment_Integrity_Guide_291950_7.pdf. While the Assessment Integrity Guide explicitly prohibits the use of volunteers who are family members as Test Proctors, it does not prohibit the use of relatives as Test Administrators. Having said that, it is important that schools take every step to eliminate any appearance of conflict of interest.

How do I get access to eDIRECT? (3.12.15)

Each district has a district administrator level user and some buildings have a school administrator level user for the Secure Site. These individuals are responsible for approving, creating and inactivating users for the district or school in the Secure Site. Users will need a designated role in the Secure Site for the contractor to know that they have been approved and need access to eDIRECT. Detailed instructions and descriptions of roles for accessing eDIRECT can be found at www.michigan.gov/securesitetraining under the *Quick Reference* section. This document contains instructions for the district and school administrator level user along with instructions on how a user can request access to eDIRECT through the Secure Site for approval by the district or school administrator level user.

Can a school request that text-to-speech be turned on for M-STEP for all students? (2.26.15)

Audio supports are generally listed as a designated support and should only be considered as applicable at the individual student level. To designate an audio support for an entire school makes the assumption that 100% of students are poor readers or are auditory learners. This is not likely the case. If you have a strong reader, who may not be as strong in taking in auditory information, and has the audio support turned on, it could actually be a disadvantage and distract the student from fully using their primary area of strength. It is important to remember that any support applied should be one that levels the playing field for a student based on a need (it is not meant to give an advantage) and should be something that the student uses as an intervention or strategy during instruction.

Can the Classroom Activity be “Skyped” to multiple locations at the same time? (1.22.15)

There is no rule that prohibits skyping. Because students should have a similar experience with the Classroom Activity, skyping may provide that uniformity when working with students at multiple locations.

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The Classroom Activity cannot be administered more than three days prior to the Performance Task. Does this mean calendar days or school days? (1.22.15)

This requirement refers to three school days.

Can all parts of the Performance Task be given on the same day? (1.22.15)

English language arts and Mathematics each have a Performance Task. It is recommended that the English language arts Performance Task be given in two separate sessions. Although they can be administered on the same day with a scheduled break, it is not recommended.

The Mathematics Performance Task must be administered in one day.

Can the Classroom Activity (CA) and the Performance Task (PT) be given on the same day? (1.22.15)

Yes, the CA can be administered on the same day as the PT. The Classroom Activity must be administered before the Performance Task; there should be no more than a three-day lapse between the Classroom Activity and the PT administration.

Can the Classroom Activity be video recorded and be presented via video for students absent on the day of the Classroom Activity? (1.22.15)

Yes.

Will the Spring 2015 Preview, Sample Items, and other training materials be available throughout the testing windows? (3.5.15)

Yes, there are no plans to turn off or remove these essential training materials.

When will a preview of M-STEP be available? (1.15.15)

The M-STEP 2015 Spring Preview is now available for Michigan students and teachers. The preview is intended to provide students and teachers with a brief look at the technology-enhanced item types they are likely to see for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.

Students will also have an opportunity to use the navigation tools and features of the online delivery engine. Students and teachers may log into the Early Preview as often as they like.

Please note: The M-STEP Preview is just that, a preview of the item types and system tools. It does not represent all standards for ELA and mathematics, nor all grade levels. A more complete M-STEP sample will be released later this month.

The M-STEP Spring 2015 Preview must be used in Google Chrome. Copy and paste this link into Chrome.
<https://wbte.drctdirect.com/MI/portals/mi/ott1>

In the Assessment Transition Guide for M-STEP, the online Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) is listed first in the testing sequence. Is it possible to administer the CAT after the Performance Task, or does it have to be given first in the testing sequence, prior to the Classroom Activity? (12.4.14)

For the Online Administration of M-STEP, DAS recommends following the testing sequence as provided on page 5 of the *Spring 2015 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition* document located on the

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Student Assessment web page at www.michigan.gov/baa which lists the CAT as being first in the testing sequence. However, in order to allow for scheduling flexibility, schools may administer the CAT AFTER the Performance Task. This alternate sequence would require the Classroom Activity be administered first in the sequence as the Classroom Activity must be administered before the Performance Task.

For Paper/Pencil Administration of M-STEP ELA and Mathematics, schools must follow the testing sequence as provided on page 8 of the *Spring 2015 Michigan Statewide Assessment Transition* document (located at www.michigan.gov/baa) for Days 1 and 2 of each assessment.

Please be aware that the Classroom Activity MUST be administered BEFORE the Performance Task for both Online and Paper/Pencil. Any deviation from this sequence, or administering the Performance Task without the Classroom Activity, will be considered a testing irregularity and must be reported as such. If I requested an Online Waiver for one or more schools in my district, and have since determined that some or all of those buildings are ready to test online, can I withdraw the waiver request?

The online waiver request window is open until November 7, 2014. If you determine by that date that you would like to withdraw your waiver request for one or more schools, please send an email request to baa@michigan.gov with the subject line Withdraw Waiver Request, providing the district and school information, as well as your contact information. If you have additional questions regarding submission or withdrawal of the online waiver, please call 877-560-8378, and select option 8.

Can students travel from one room to another with their test tickets? (12.12.14)

No. Test tickets are considered secure materials and must be collected by the test proctor before the student leaves the room, maintained in secured chain of custody, and re-distributed to the student when testing resumes.

Must each content area be given in a certain order? (12.12.14)

For paper/pencil testing, subjects must be administered on dates specified in the paper/pencil testing schedule: see http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Spring_2015_Testing_Schedule_Update_464310_7.pdf. The Classroom Activity must be completed prior to administration of the Performance Task.

English Language Arts

- Day 1 ELA paper/pencil test will include parts 1 and 2 (fixed-form plus a listening part).
- Day 2 ELA paper/pencil test will be the Performance Task.
- The 30-minute ELA Classroom Activity for paper/pencil may be administered the Monday before testing, on Day 1 (before or after testing), or on Day 2 (before the Performance Task).

Mathematics

- Day 1 mathematics paper/pencil test will include one part (fixed-form).
- Day 2 mathematics paper/pencil test will include the 30-minute Classroom Activity and the Performance Task.
- For more information, please see the [M-STEP Spring 2015 Michigan Assessment Transition – November 2014](#) document.

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- For online testing, not all students have to be administered the same assessment at the same time, nor on the same day. Schools have the flexibility to determine which students will be administered which subject, on which day. This flexibility extends across the entire test window for that grade level.

Are microphones required for the Spring 2015 M-STEP assessment? (12.4.14)

No, microphones are not required for the Spring 2015 M-STEP assessment.

The Spring 2015 Assessment Transition document says that the test will include “Smarter Balanced content and Michigan developed field-test items.” Can I use the Smarter Balanced items posted online with my students? (11.20.14)

The Smarter Balanced Practice Test items posted online are similar in content to M-STEP items, and may prove helpful in the classroom as students practice test items aligned to Michigan’s content standards in ELA and Mathematics. Because Michigan is using a different online delivery engine than the Smarter Balanced Practice Test, OSA is developing the following resources to help prepare your students for the Spring 2015 assessments:

- Spring 2015 Preview—sample items to provide students and teachers exposure to item types, online tools, and the functionality of Michigan’s online delivery engine—available in early December.
- Spring 2015 Grade Level Sample Items—features grade-specific ELA and Mathematics content, item types, online tools, and the functionality of Michigan’s online delivery engine— available January 2015.

Is the state able to handle the entire state testing around the same time? (10.6.14)

Yes, Michigan has taken appropriate measures to assure a successful administration.

Will there be a writing assessment in Spring 2015? (10.6.14)

Michigan is moving to an English language arts (ELA) assessment that measures our current standards. This assessment will include reading and writing at all grades (3-8 and 11). There will be a variety of item types including multiple-choice items, constructed-response items of varying lengths, and technology-enhanced items.

What standards are our students being assessed on in Spring 2015? (9.29.14)

Michigan’s education standards in English language arts and mathematics were adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) in June 2010. Michigan’s standards in social studies and science were adopted by the SBE in 2007.

Lesson plans and curriculum are developed locally by educators, building and district experts, and staff.

Michigan’s academic standards serve to outline learning expectations for Michigan’s students and are intended to guide local curriculum development. They should be used as a framework by schools for

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curriculum development with the curriculum itself prescribing instructional resources, methods, progressions, and additional knowledge valued by the local community.

These content standards provide a platform for state assessments, which are used to measure how well schools are providing opportunities for all students to learn the content outlined by the standards.

Information on Michigan standards for all content areas are located on the Michigan Department of Education website at <http://www.michigan.gov/academicstandards>.

MICHIGAN MERIT EXAM

Do foreign exchange students need to take the Michigan Merit Exam?

Yes, if a school enrolls a foreign exchange student in 11th grade. All grade 11 students will be expected to test and count in accountability calculations. If a school enrolls a foreign exchange student in 12th grade, that student is NOT expected to test.

What students are *required* to take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) and are included in accountability calculations? (12.4.14)

All grade 11 students are required to take the **complete** Michigan Merit Exam (ACT Plus Writing; WorkKeys; and the M-STEP ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies tests) **except** for those students previously included in Grade 11 accountability calculations.

Grade 12 students **who have not previously been included in Michigan's accountability calculations** are also required to take the **complete** Michigan Merit Exam.

Please see

http://www.mi.gov/documents/mde/FAQ_HS_Grade_Assignment_for_Accountability_346186_7.pdf?20141202151018 for frequently asked questions regarding this policy.

What students are *eligible* to take/retake the complete Michigan Merit Exam, even if they are not included in accountability calculations? (12.4.14)

Grade 11 students who do not have valid scores in all content areas (ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies) are eligible to retest. Grade 11 students who previously took the complete MME and have valid scores in all content areas are **NOT** eligible to retake the MME.

Grade 12 students who have never taken the MME, or who do not have valid scores in all content areas (ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies) are eligible to take/retake the complete MME.

I am a nonpublic school and want to administer the 11th grade test. Can I just do ACT? (10.13.14)

Nonpublic schools still have the option to opt into Michigan's 11th grade assessment. This assessment still includes three portions: The ACT Plus Writing, WorkKeys, and a Michigan summative component. Nonpublic schools that opt to participate in the 11th grade assessment will be included in data files reporting the results of all three portions of the assessment as they have in the past.

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STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWD)

Do students taking the M-STEP Braille ELA and mathematics tests use the online or paper/pencil Classroom Activity? (4.16.15)

For the ELA and mathematics Braille tests, you will need to administer the paper/pencil Classroom Activity and use the paper/pencil listening script or CD. You should also have accompanying paper/pencil Assessment Administrator for Braille Booklet (AABB).

Can a student with an IEP take different tests for various content areas? (1.15.15)

Yes. If a student is eligible to take a MI-Access Functional Independence assessment, their Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team has the flexibility within Michigan's assessment system to have the student participate in the MI-Access Functional Independence or M-STEP for different content areas. For example, an IEP Team might decide that its fourth- grade student will take the M-STEP for mathematics and science and MI-Access Functional Independence for English language arts (ELA), or some other combination.

Before making a determination on the appropriate assessment for your student, please read the ELA and mathematics information in the M-STEP Spring 2015 Michigan Assessment Transition document at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Assessment_Transition_FINAL_11-13-14_473989_7.pdf.

Please note the following:

- The M-STEP ELA assessment consists of reading, writing, and listening and cannot be split.
- Both the M-STEP ELA and mathematics tests include constructed response items.

Keep in mind that students taking MI-Access Participation or Supported Independence must do so for all content areas.

I have a student that requires a human reader based on the need for a familiar voice as specified in his IEP. It looks as though there is guidance for the M-STEP online ELA and math to be read aloud by a human reader, but the same option is not available for the online Social Studies or Science. Does this mean my student should take a paper/pencil version of Social Studies and/or Science? (1.15.15)

Yes, this is likely the best option, because a reader script is available for the paper versions. For these two subject areas, there are numerous variables that lead to interpretations of specific symbols, vocabulary and expressions. Allowing the human reader option without a script or specific reader guidelines opens up vulnerability to the validity of the test results. However, the good news is that different modalities can be ordered by content area for the M-STEP. So a student taking an online ELA and Mathematics assessment can take the paper/pencil version of the Social Studies and/or Science assessment which has a reader script.

There may be some isolated cases where students will require a familiar or specified type of voice. However, it may be helpful to know a little bit about the text-to- speech (TTS) option:

- It is "human-like" (it is NOT the same voice used in previous online pilots).
- While it is an artificial voice, it does sound a great deal like the voices used on our audio CD (with depth to the tone).

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- It is a male voice.
- The speed of the voice can be adjusted by the student in the engine (faster or slower).
- There are “starting points” so that if a passage or question needs to be read again, the student clicks on the “starting point” dot where they would like the TTS to start reading over.
- TTS presentation can be repeated as often as needed for a question or passage using the “starting points” mentioned above.

Please remember that a student with an IEP can take an online modality for one content area, and a paper/ pencil modality for another. Please be sure to follow instructions for such orders in the secure site.

How will the state summative assessment a student with disabilities takes impact their certificate of completion or diploma? (10.13.14)

Michigan does not place a performance level achievement requirement for state summative assessments on graduation or certificate of completion. Please remember that any guidelines governing certificate of completion are determined at the local level only. Please check local (district) policy regarding any such requirements.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS

Should students taking the MI-Access Functional Independence (FI) assessments also participate in the M-STEP Classroom Activities and Performance Tasks for mathematics and ELA? (4.16.15)

FI Students may participate in the Classroom Activity (CA) if they are in the general education classroom at the time that the lesson is presented. However, the CA is not related to the MI-Access assessment as there is no Performance Task on the MI-Access assessments.

Now that this Spring’s M-STEP will be a fixed-form test and not computer adaptive, is M-STEP still an appropriate assessment for students who had been assessed using MEAP-Access in the past?

The decision on which assessment is most appropriate for a student with a disability always rests with a full IEP team discussion and decision. However, changing from a computer adaptive test to a fixed form test does not change the guidance teams should use in making that decision.

- MI-Access, Michigan’s alternate assessment, is intended for:
 - Students who have or function as if they have a significant cognitive impairment.
 - Students whose instruction is based on the Extended Grade Level Content Expectations, Extended High School Content Expectations and Extended Benchmarks.

Students who do not have or do not function as if they have a significant cognitive impairment and whose instruction is based on Michigan’s general grade level content expectations would be best assessed using M-STEP or M-STEP with accommodations. Otherwise, students will be assessed on content standards on which they are not being instructed.

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Can we still request paper/pencil materials for students needing specific Designated Supports or Accommodations even though the Initial Material Order/Pre-ID Window has closed? (2.26.15)

Yes. It is certainly the case that many decisions about what Designated Supports and Accommodations may be best for an individual student had not yet been made by the February 18, 2015 date. Please be sure to order those materials once the Additional Material Order window has opened, which will occur shortly after materials arrive in districts.

The MI-Access assessments will be available in the spring of 2015 for students whose Individual Education Program (IEP) Team has determined that it is not appropriate for them to participate in the state's general education assessment. These assessments will continue to be based on Michigan's extended content standards.

Michigan's extended content standards for students participating in one of Michigan's alternate assessments are located at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-22709_28463---,00.html.

I have a student with a disability that requires a paper/pencil format of the M-STEP, and a student with a disability that requires a paper/pencil format of MI-Access Functional Independence. However, we are planning to assess all other students online. How do we go about ordering these paper/pencil formats for individual students before the waiver deadline? (11.20.14)

Ordering paper/pencil formats for individual students does not require a waiver and does not need to be completed before November 21, 2014. Ordering paper/pencil materials for individual students will take place during the M-STEP and MI-Access Pre-ID and initial materials order window in January 2015.

I thought we were using Dynamic Learning Maps this year. If we are using MI-Access, what standards is the assessment based upon? (10.6.14)

MI-Access measures Michigan's current alternate content standards (Extended Grade Level Content Expectations, Extended High School Content Expectations and Extended Benchmarks). A copy of the memo regarding the delay in using DLM can be found at:

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/DLM_Delay_470230_7.pdf

INTERIM ASSESSMENTS

Will there be a K-2 Pilot in the spring? (10.6.14)

The K-2 assessment is currently part of the interim assessment system and will not be required. We will not be piloting any interim assessments this spring.

TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE TESTING

Will OS X 10.10 Yosemite be supported by INSIGHT software on Mac devices? (4.9.15)

OS X 10.10 Yosemite is allowed to run. However, when you execute the System Readiness Check, or the Test itself, you will see a yellow warning on the results screen showing this version of the operating system is not fully approved. Once this version has been fully tested, this warning message will be removed. **Please note:** Yosemite may not be fully supported by the first testing window.

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If our school is using iPads for the spring 2015 M-STEP assessments, can the keyboards embedded in the devices be used instead of external keyboards, or is it recommended that we use external keyboards? (2.5.15)

The MDE requires the use of external keyboards for the spring 2015 M-STEP assessments. Without the external keyboard, the embedded keyboard that pops up on the iPad display screen will restrict the visibility of the item to which the student is responding. This could cause the student to overlook a portion of the item. The keyboard embedded in the device must be disabled.

How many devices/clients can each TSM handle? (1.15.15)

The results from vendor testing is 150 simultaneous connections.

How can we load test the network/ servers? (1.15.15)

District Technology Coordinators (DTCs) can perform load simulations to estimate the amount of time it will take during testing to download tests and upload responses. The following are the prerequisites to performing a load simulation test:

- The TSM must be installed, running, and connected to each testing computer that you plan to include in the simulation.
- INSIGHT must be installed on each testing computer that you plan to include in the simulation.
- The System Readiness Check must be active on each testing computer that you plan to include in the simulation.
- You must select a district and school name for the testing computer for your load simulation reports.

Install INSIGHT on a testing computer and specify the location of the TSM the testing computer is using to register the testing computer with the TSM. Next, you start the TSM, specify which of the registered computers to include in the simulation, and run your simulations. Then, you use the TSM to review the results of the simulations.

Can students use scratch paper for online testing? (1.15.15)

Yes, students may use scratch paper. However, all scratch paper must be collected, returned to the building test coordinator and destroyed after testing.

Will students be able to use scratch paper for the M-STEP paper/pencil ELA Performance Task? (2.26.15)

Students should mark in their test booklets. They will not need additional scratch paper.

For Part 2 of the ELA Performance Task component of the M-STEP online assessment, can students write their responses on scratch paper first and then type them into the computer? (2.26.15)

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Yes, a student may use scratch paper for pre-writing activities before entering the complete response into the computer. However, schools should take timing into consideration, as drafting and pre-writing may increase testing times. If a student "breaks" for more than 20 minutes (using this time for pre-writing, drafting, etc.), the student will need to login to the testing session again. In addition, any scratch paper must be collected before the student leaves the testing room; any scratch paper used by students must be shredded immediately per test administration guidelines.

Will graph paper be provided by the state? (1.15.15)

Graph paper will only be necessary for students in grades 6-8 and 11 taking the online assessment. Graph paper will automatically be shipped with the online test administration directions in advance of testing. Students taking paper/pencil will not be required to use graph paper because they will be able to write in their test booklets.

Is a pause available for online testing? (12.12.14)

Yes, there is a 20 minute timed pause. If more than 20 minutes elapses, the system will require students to login before resuming testing. The session must be completed on the day it was begun.

Is there a suggested limit on the number of concurrent testers per TSM for online testing in spring 2015? (12.4.14)

For planning purposes, our online delivery vendor recommends a maximum of 150 concurrent testing devices per local caching server (known as the TSM or Testing Site Manager) to maximize the student testing experience. A school can have more than one TSM. Conversely, one TSM can serve multiple schools. Additional information on the TSM will be available in the Technology Coordinator Manual.

Will keyboarding be required for the 3rd grade English language arts assessment (ELA)? (10.6.14)

While keyboarding will be part of ELA assessments for all grades 3 and up, we are aware of the concerns around our younger students and keyboarding. With the technology of online assessment there are additional ways to measure writing skills using technology-enhanced items that can reduce the keyboarding burden for our younger students.

Which testing device do you recommend for administering the spring 2015 assessments? (10.13.14)

Desktops, laptops, iPads, and Chromebooks can be used for the spring 2015 summative assessments, so long as these devices meet the minimum testing device requirements found at: http://mtrax.org/files/Michigan_Testing_Device_Requirements9-15-14.pdf.

MDE does not recommend one particular type of device over another, but strongly suggests that the devices being used for testing are familiar to both students and staff prior to testing.

PAPER/PENCIL OPTIONS

What is the process for ordering paper/pencil materials for a homebound student? Is there an approval

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process? Do we follow the paper/pencil schedule? (4.2.15)

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.

When can we anticipate results for paper/pencil testers? (3.26.15)

Due to standard setting requirements, we anticipate the combined online and paper/pencil results will be available in early fall.

What kind of hand held calculators can be used? (3.19.15)

Please refer to the Spring 2015 M-STEP Calculator Policy

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/NEW_Spring_2015_MSTEP_Calculator_Policy_483986_7.pdf, located on the M-STEP web page at www.michigan.gov/mstep.

Is the number of questions for the online assessment the same as for the paper/pencil version? (3.5.15)

Paper/pencil testing and online testing follow the same operational blueprint. This does not necessarily mean the same number of items across all forms.

Can some of the Grade 11 students using the paper/pencil version of the assessments be tested in the morning and some tested in the afternoon? (2.26.15)

You are not required to test all students at the same time. You need to ensure that you provide students sufficient time to complete all the components that must be administered on the specific paper/pencil test day as prescribed in the paper/pencil testing calendar. See the Assessment Transition Document at http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/Assessment_Transition_FINAL_11-13-14_473989_7.pdf for the paper/pencil components that must be administered on designated days.

If I requested an Online Waiver for one or more schools in my district, and have since determined that some or all of those buildings are ready to test online, can I withdraw the waiver request? (11.7.14)

The online waiver request window is open until November 21, 2014. If you determine by that date that you would like to withdraw your waiver request for one or more schools, please send an email request to baa@michigan.gov with the subject line Withdraw Waiver Request, providing the district and school information, as well as your contact information.

If you have additional questions regarding submission or withdrawal of the online waiver, please call 877-560-8378, and select option 8.

If a student with a disability needs a paper/pencil version of the assessment, does this requirement need to be listed in the IEP? (10.13.14)

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Individual students requiring a paper/pencil version do not need to have it explicitly stated in the IEP. However, keep in mind that the reason for designating the student as needing a paper/ pencil version should link back to a specified need as indicated in the IEP (based on his or her disability), or for those students for whom an online assessment creates an accessibility issue.

I am a nonpublic school and plan on testing in spring 2015, do I have to submit an online waiver? (10.13.14)

Yes, any nonpublic school that wishes to participate in the spring 2015 assessments and is not ready for online testing must submit an online waiver request. Guidance on how to submit online waiver request(s) for the administration of the assessments via paper/pencil at your school can be accessed at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Paper_Pencil_Request_470321_7.pdf.

Online testing device requirements can be found at [http://mtrax.org/files/Michigan Testing Device Requirements9-15-14.pdf](http://mtrax.org/files/Michigan_Testing_Device_Requirements9-15-14.pdf).

Who received the information about the paper/pencil waiver request? (10.6.14)

The memorandum regarding the waiver request was sent to District Superintendents, Public School Academy Directors, School Principals, and all DAS list serves. The informational memo and the Michigan Summative Assessment Request for Paper-Pencil Administration Process and Procedures document can be accessed at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Paper_Pencil_Request_470321_7.pdf.

Will my students get better scores if we stick with paper/pencil? (9.29.14)

While there is a common misperception that paper/pencil assessments are easier, in fact, these assessments now include additional elements beyond multiple-choice and are similar to the online tests.ⁱ

Will the paper-pencil forms for math and English language arts be similar to what we've seen in the past? (9.29.14)

No. As we are moving to a new math and ELA assessment the paper-pencil forms will have a different look and feel than in past years. Students will be transitioning regardless if assessments are administered online or paper-pencil.

ⁱ Clarification added