



# Michigan School Accountability: Planning and Response to COVID-19

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# Michigan School Accountability: Planning and Response to COVID-19

## Foreword

Accountability and related reporting are one of many topics impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As we enter the second year (and second accountability reporting cycle) of the pandemic, new issues have come up, and some of the original issues regarding accountability have been resolved. Unlike more immediate matters caused by the pandemic, accountability and reporting issues will mainly become more visible months and even years later. Our goal for this document is to provide timely and updated information to users of Michigan's school accountability systems and reporting. Please note this is a living document and represents the most up-to-date knowledge at the time of publishing.

## Background

Requirements concerning state assessment systems and the accountability systems using those assessment results are governed by federal and state law. Due to challenges raised by COVID-19, some of these requirements have been waived for 2019-20 and/or 2020-21.

The table below shows by governance level (federal or state), requirement type (accountability or assessment), and whether the requirements have currently been waived.

Governance Level	Requirement Type	2019-20 Waiver Status	2020-21 Waiver Status
Federal	Accountability	Waived*	Waived*
	Assessment	Waived	Not Waived
State	Accountability	Not Waived	Not Waived
	Assessment	Waived	Not Waived

\* The approved federal accountability waiver still requires public reporting of some measures (e.g., graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, etc.) for transparency purposes.

In reviewing the table above, please also be aware of the following:

1. Even with an approved federal accountability waiver, MDE is still required to publicly report some measures for transparency purposes (e.g., state assessment participation rates, graduation rates, chronic absenteeism, etc.).
2. School accountability requirements inscribed in state law, such as Michigan School Grades, have not been waived by the Governor and Legislature at this time and as such are anticipated to reported on with available school data for the 2020-21 school year.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Assessments

For 2020-21, are state assessments planned to proceed, or have those been waived?

- On April 6, 2021, the United States Department of Education (USED) formally denied Michigan's request to waive the federal requirement to administer the state summative assessments in Spring 2021. Therefore, local school districts are expected to administer the state summative tests as scheduled. Further information on state assessments can be found in the [Assessment FAQ](#).
- These tests include M-STEP for students in grades 3-8, 11; PSAT 8/9 for students in 8th grade; MME, including SAT with Essay and ACT WorkKeys, for students in 11th grade; MI-ACCESS for students receiving special education services in grades 3-8 and 11; and WIDA for students in English learner programs in grades K-12.
  - For students who are receiving remote-only instruction, districts must **offer** these students the opportunity to take the appropriate summative assessments. Remote-only students are **not required** to come into school or a testing location for the sole purpose of taking the assessments.
- In addition, PSAT 10 for students in grade 10, and PSAT 8/9 for 9<sup>th</sup> graders must be offered to all students.

Will 2020-21 seniors unable to test in 2019-20 be eligible or expected to test in Spring 2021?

- There are no accountability calculations associated with testing 12th graders in the 2020-21 school year.
- Schools that were established for SAT with Essay testing in Spring 2020 were expected to administer the SAT with Essay to their 12th-grade students in Fall 2020.
- 12th Graders who were unable to take the SAT with Essay in the Fall 2020 administration may take, but are not required to take, the entire MME in Spring 2021. (Schools must be established to administer both the SAT with Essay and the ACT WorkKeys and provide the M-STEP assessment for science and social studies.)
- Students who took the SAT with Essay on a school testing day in Fall 2020 are not eligible to take the SAT with Essay again in Spring 2021.

What if a student is unable to test due to COVID-related reasons?

- OEAA is implementing a COVID reason for this year's "Answer Documents Received and Not Tested Students" window. Most students that do not test will have this reason pre-loaded for them in the Secure Site. OEAA is collecting this information in anticipation of transparency reporting for assessment results and participation rates.

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## Accountability Systems

For 2019-20 and 2020-21, which accountability systems have been waived, and which have not?

- The table below lists each of Michigan's accountability systems, grouping them by whether they are governed by federal or state law/policy and indicates whether the system was waived for 2019-20 and/or 2020-21.

Accountability System Type	Accountability System Name	2019-20 Waiver Status	2020-21 Waiver Status
Federal	School Index	Waived	Waived
	Annual Education Report (AER)	Partially Waived*	Partially Waived*
State	Parent Dashboard	Not Waived*	Not Waived *
	School Grades	Not Waived*	Not Waived*
	At-Risk (31A)	Not Waived*	Not Waived*

\*Metrics may have limited or no data depending on what is waived, and participation/reporting rates

For 2020-21 accountability systems and reporting that have not been waived, what data will be available?

- The 2021-22 **Annual Education Report (AER)**, which will use 2020-21 data, is still required under federal law; however, some portions will not be required to report. The 2021-22 AER **will** contain the following information from the 2020-21 school year:
  - Student performance on state summative assessments
  - Student participation on state summative assessments
  - High school graduation rate (4-year cohort)
  - On-track Attendance (Students not chronically absent)
  - Professional qualifications of public elementary and secondary school teachers
  - Inexperienced teachers
  - Inexperienced principals and other school leaders
  - Teacher emergency or provisional credentials
  - Out-of-field teachers
  - NAEP results from 2019
  - Section 1003 School Improvement Fund information
  - School-level expenditures
  - Civil Rights Data Collection information
  - Postsecondary enrollment
- The **Parent Dashboard** will continue to be updated with available information. Most metrics can be updated with data reported through CEPI's existing data collections. Metrics that utilize state assessment data will potentially be updated with 2020-21 data, including:
  - Performance Summary
  - Progress Summary
  - English Learner Progress
  - Test Participation
  - Percent of High School Graduates Proficient on the SAT

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- The **School Grades** system is required by state law (380.1280g) and has not been suspended or waived. MDE is required to release 2021-22 School Grades results at this time. The School Grades system contains the following set of indicators:
  - Proficiency (uses state assessment data)
  - Growth (uses state assessment data)
  - Performance Among Peers (uses state assessment data)
  - Assessment Participation (uses state assessment data)
  - Student Subgroup Comparison to the State (uses state assessment data)
  - Graduation Rates
  - Chronic Absenteeism
  - English Learner Progress (uses state assessment data)
  - Compliance with State and Federal Law (Alternative Education Campuses [AECs] only)
- The **At-Risk Student (31a)** system is required by state law (388.1631a) and has not been suspended or waived for 2020-21. Depending on the outcome of MDE's assessment waiver, the 2020-21 At-Risk Student (31a) report in MI School Data may show Not Applicable (NA) for all potential data points.

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## Accountability Topics

How will schools identified for support under federal law be impacted by the 2020-21 federal accountability waiver?

- The approved 2020-21 federal accountability waiver extends the "pause" of federal support categories: comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), additional targeted support (ATS), and targeted support and improvement (TSI). As such, any school previously identified for CSI, ATS, or TSI that was not exited prior to the 2019-20 school year will maintain that identification status and continue to receive supports and interventions through the 2020-21 and 2021-22 school years.

Please note schools with existing identification in 2019-20 were identified using 2018-19 data for TSI, 2017-18 data for ATS, and 2016-17 data for CSI.

Have 2020-21 School Grades (State law) been waived?

- No, School Grades is a state accountability system and would require action by the governor and the Michigan state legislature to be waived.

How will Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) be impacted by waived federal accountability requirements?

- AECs are a group of school types (e.g., Alternative Education, Special Education Centers, etc.) within the School Grades system that meet specific reporting requirements in state data systems and receive a summary status of "Met" or "Not Met" in lieu of grades or rankings. For 2020-21, provided School Grades are not waived, AEC eligibility and performance outcomes based on state assessments will be determined using normal collections (i.e., Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) and Educational Entity Master (EEM) data collected in Fall 2020 and the assurance of legal compliance task in GEMS that will be collected in January 2021) and will be published in Fall 2021.

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## Accountability Measures

Will state assessment student growth measures be available for 2020-21? If so, will they be valid, and will they be comparable to previous years?

- MDE will have the technical capability to run 2020-21 assessment student growth. However, until these data can be run and analyzed, it is difficult to make specific comments on validity and/or whether trendlines will need to be broken.

Will new indicators specific to COVID-19 or remote/distance learning be added to reports?

- At this time, no new accountability indicators are planned however there is interest nationally to investigate potential indicators that may be able to provide context around virtual instruction, temporary closures, and other issues this pandemic has brought to the forefront.

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## Data Collections

What do school districts need to submit in 2020-21 state data collections to allow for continued and required public reporting?

- All school districts need to continue reporting data as in a normal year in the appropriate CEPI collections. This will ensure the continuation of required reporting elements, even outside of the waived federal accountability requirements for 2020-21.
- For future Michigan School Grades reporting, Alternative Education Campus (AEC) schools will need to continue to accurately report students participating in a Special Education or Alternative Education program in MSDS and will need to accurately report School Emphasis and Educational Settings in EEM. These schools will also still be required to respond to the assurance of compliance with all applicable laws task in the Grant Electronic Monitoring System (GEMS).
- The Parent Dashboard will continue to be updated as new data become available. Many Parent Dashboard metrics rely on non-assessment data. MDE anticipates greater public focus on the Parent Dashboard in the return of assessments results reporting after the absence of assessment-based accountability results in 2019-20.

Do schools and districts need to submit attendance data for 2020-21?

- Yes, student attendance data are required to be submitted for 2020-21 to fulfill pupil accounting requirements around student membership, for instructional time resulting in the number of hours and days (1098 hours and 180 days) necessary to deliver educational or course content leading to the course completion, and for accountability purposes.

How should schools and districts submit attendance data for 2020-21?

- Attendance data must be submitted in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) in the End of Year (EOY) collection, as well as any time a student is exited from enrollment. Note that the MSDS continues to collect attendance data by days – that is, days attended and days possible.

For schools providing fully remote instruction, two two-way interactions per week are required throughout the school year. A fully remote school having two, two-way interactions during a week will constitute the student has been in attendance for five school days. This will allow the school to meet the requirement to provide the equivalent of 180 days of instructional content.

Example calculation for days possible using the two, two-way interactions per week:

- Rosa Parks High School has 36 weeks of school scheduled for 2020-21.
- $36 \times 5 = 180$  days possible

Note: For a pupil who transitions from an online environment where weekly two-way interactions are required, to a seated environment where regular attendance is required, physical attendance in scheduled courses may be considered when determining if this requirement is satisfied. For pupils transitioning from a virtual environment to homebound or hospitalized services or to home-based instruction, the participation requirements of the applicable section begin at the point of transition in the program.

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## What if a student only has one two-way interaction in a week?

- A student that only participates in a single two-way interaction in a week will count for three days of attendance for that week. Two two-way interactions need to occur per week for a student to count in attendance for five days.

## How should virtual programs be reported in the 2020-21 school year?

- Within EEM, three different types of virtual education can be denoted at the building level: Full Virtual, Face Virtual, and Supplemental Virtual. A school building can include multiple virtual educational settings to reflect the variety of virtual programming available to students there.

For directions on how to add these educational settings to your schools, please refer to the How to Add or Remove an Educational Setting in the [EEM guide](#). Definitions of the various educational settings can be found in the EEM Glossary. For help establishing local reporting, we recommend working with your software vendor to develop local reporting/group/class codes that will enable you to meet your goals.

Additionally, virtual courses are required to be reported in CEPI's Teacher Student Data Link (TSDL) collection. More information on the TSDL can be found on CEPI's [TSDL page](#).

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## General Reporting

Will the waiving of state assessments in 2019-20 be a short-term issue or a long-term disruption?

- The waiving of state assessments in 2019-20 will have long-term impacts on reporting and analyses done by MDE, school districts, and researchers.

Will 2020-21 data be valid, and can they be used in trendlines, or will new trendlines be needed?

- Until these data have been collected and analyzed, it is not known how concerned to be with validity or whether trendlines will need to be broken.

How is MDE putting context around reporting and data for 2019-20 and 2020-21?

- MDE is working with CEPI to create disclaimers on reporting done through MI School Data. Resources available on MDE's website will also include similar disclaimers.
  - For 2019-20 reporting, disclaimers began appearing on MI School Data by the end of August 2020 to make users aware of unavailable data due to 2019-20 testing being waived.
  - For 2020-21 results, disclaimers are likely to be displayed depending on the data to be reported.

What are questions school districts can use to help them plan on how to report data to their communities?

Some guiding questions that have helped MDE make decisions regarding reporting may be helpful to districts facing similar decisions:

- What data will be available (in secure portals, public websites)?
- Will the data be reliable? Will the data be complete?
- Does providing data benefit students, parents, teachers, school leaders, or the public?
- How can we provide the data?
- How will the data be used?
- How will the data be interpreted?
- What format should we use?
- What is a practical format for this year only?
- How will we communicate the data?
- What resources should accompany the data?
- What messages should accompany the data?

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## Helpful Links

- [MDE COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Spotlight on Student Assessment and Accountability Newsletter Repository](#)
- [Accountability Best Practices: Data Reporting Guide for Trouble-free Accountability](#)
- [EEM guide](#)
- [A-F Business Rules](#)

## Contact

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: State and Federal Law(s) Impacting Accountability Reporting

#### Federal Accountability Laws

- [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) of 2015](#)
  - 1111(c) – school accountability system requirements (Michigan School Index System)
  - 1111(d) – frequency of accountability results reporting (annual differentiation) and identification of low performing schools and underperforming student subgroups
  - 1111(h) – reporting of assessment and accountability results

#### State Accountability Laws

- [MCL 380.1280g](#) – School Grades accountability system
- [MCL 388.1631a](#) – At-Risk reporting

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## Appendix B: Waivers of State and Federal Law(s)

### 2020-21 Federal Accountability Waiver

[USED Approval Letter of Michigan's 2020-21 Federal Accountability Waiver](#), which specifically waives:

- Accountability and school identification requirements in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D): the requirements that a State measure progress toward long-term goals and measurements of interim progress; meaningfully differentiate, on an annual basis, all public schools, including by adjusting the Academic Achievement indicator based on a participation rate below 95 percent; and identify schools for comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement based on data from the 2020-2021 school year.
- Report card provisions related to accountability in section 1111(h) based on data from the 2020-2021 school year. These include:
  - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i)(I)-(IV) and (VI) (Accountability system description, other than the list of comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement schools).
  - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(I) (Other Academic indicator results for schools that are not high schools).
  - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(v) (School Quality or Student Success indicator results).
  - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(vi) (Progress toward meeting long-terms goals and measurements of interim progress).
  - Section 1111(h)(2)(C) with respect, at the local educational agency (LEA) and school levels, to all waived requirements in section 1111(h)(1)(C).

As part of this waiver, Michigan assures that:

- The State will make publicly available chronic absenteeism data, either as defined in the State's School Quality or Student Success indicator, if applicable, or *EDFacts*, disaggregated to the extent such data are available by the subgroups in ESEA section 1111(c)(2), on State and local report cards (or in another publicly available location).
- The State will make publicly available data on student and/or teacher access to technology devices and high-speed internet, disaggregated by the subgroups in ESEA section 1111(c)(2), to the extent such data are collected at the State or LEA level.
- Any school that is identified for comprehensive, targeted, or additional targeted support and improvement in the 2019-2020 school year (i.e., any school that was in that status as of the 2019-2020 school year), except for comprehensive support and improvement schools identified based on low graduation rates that meet the State's exit criteria, will maintain that identification status in the 2021-2022 school year, implement its support and improvement plan, and receive appropriate supports and interventions.
- The State will identify comprehensive, targeted, and additional targeted support and improvement schools using data from the 2021-2022 school year in the fall of 2022 to ensure school identification resumes as quickly as possible.

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## 2020-21 Federal Assessment Waiver

- Michigan has submitted a request to waive the 2020-21 federal assessment requirements. However, USED has not yet rendered a decision regarding that request at this time.

## 2020-21 State Waiver(s)

- No state laws covering school accountability have been waived for 2020-21 at this time.