# 2024-25 Benchmark Assessments MCL 388.1704h / Public Act 120 of 2024

# Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions

**November 2024**

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October updates flagged in yellow.
November updates flagged in blue

## 1. MCL 388.1704h Overview

With the repeal of [Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 388.1698b](http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-388-1698b) (http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?mcl-388-1698b), effective October 1, 2023, there is no longer a requirement to administer benchmark assessments to receive state aid. However, funding is available through Section 104h of the State School Aid Act enacted in [Public Act 120 of 2024](https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2023-2024/publicact/pdf/2024-PA-0120.pdf) (https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2023-2024/publicact/pdf/2024-PA-0120.pdf) if a district continues to administer an approved benchmark assessment. Prior to the pandemic, more than 90 percent of Michigan districts recognized the need for the administration of a benchmark assessment, and MDE strongly recommends the continued use of benchmark assessments.

If specific administration and reporting requirements are fulfilled, the law provides funding for the current academic year for districts that administer one or more of the following benchmark assessments in the fall and spring of the current school year.

- NWEA MAP
- Curriculum Associates i-Ready
- Renaissance Star

The Smarter Balanced Interim assessments (grades 3-8) and the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments (grades K-2) remain free to districts and schools.

To receive funding for benchmark assessments, the law requires the administration of benchmark assessments within the first nine weeks of school and again before the last day of the academic year. Additionally, Section 104h requires districts to provide student data to parents or guardians within 30 days after administering the benchmark assessments. Lastly, the law requires districts receiving funding to report benchmark information from all benchmark assessments administered during the academic year.

Data collection will be similar to last year:

- Districts administering NWEA Map, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, Renaissance Star, Smarter Balanced Interim, or Early Literacy and Mathematics benchmark assessments are expected to report assessment results, including growth data if available, **and** primary mode of instruction to the Michigan Data Hub (MiDataHub) within 30 days of test administration in both the fall and spring.
- For districts using local benchmark assessments or assessments that contain progress monitoring tools, information will be collected in early November using NexSys.

Districts may apply for benchmark assessment funding if they administer NWEA Map, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, or Renaissance Star benchmark assessments in reading and/or math to students in any grade K-8. Funding eligibility for this grant opportunity is based on **all** the following legislative requirements:

- administering NWEA MAP, i-Ready, or Star benchmark assessments in reading and/or mathematics in both the fall and spring of the current academic year
- reporting of NWEA MAP, i-Ready, and Star data correctly to MiDataHub **within 30 days** of each test administration
- reporting the mode of instruction correctly to MiDataHub **within 30 days** of each test administration
- applying for funding through the NexSys system **by the application deadline** in early December
- reporting assessment results to parents/legal guardians **within 30 days** of each test administration

Per student awards will be based on the number of districts meeting the administration and reporting criteria and applying by the December application deadline. Section 104h allocates $11,500,000 to be distributed evenly per membership K-8 student to eligible districts.

The Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding application will be available in NexSys in early November, with payments planned through the State Aid Management System (SAMS) in March. Failure to comply with the eligibility requirements may result in loss of funding.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What's new in the law for the 2024-25 school year?**

   The following is new for 2024-25:

   a. Benchmarks are still optional (although highly encouraged) unless funding is being requested (this is technically not a change).

   b. The $12.50 per K-8 membership student has been replaced. Now, the full allocated amount ($11,500,000) will be split evenly (on a per student basis, still K-8 membership student) among districts that apply for funding. This means the actual per student amount cannot be determined in advance of the closing of the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application in early December.

      To ensure districts receive the funding they are entitled to under the law it will be critical that close attention is paid to all deadlines and that they are proactive in ensuring MiDataHub received all required data – both benchmark score data and mode of instruction data – by the time the application closes in early December.

   c. All references to ISDs have been removed from the law.

   d. To support fall to spring growth calculations, districts must now administer the same benchmark in the fall and spring rather than just making a pledge to do so. This means previously distributed funds must be returned if the spring requirements are not met.

      i. Fall benchmark assessments must be administered in the first 9 weeks of school (no change).
      ii. Spring benchmark assessments should occur in the last marking period of the school year (to best support the fall to spring growth calculations).

   e. The Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application will now be accessed through NexSys (instead of GEMS/MARS).

2. **Will the results of the benchmark assessments be used for accountability purposes?**

   The current law does not require these data be used for accountability purposes.

3. **Will the results of the benchmark assessments be used for teacher evaluation purposes?**

   There are no requirements in the current legislation to use the results for teacher evaluation purposes. Districts could make the local decision to incorporate these results in teacher evaluations as part of Student Learning Objectives or other measurements.

4. **Where can I find information on the benchmark provisions of the current legislation?**

   Information specific to the current benchmark legislation is located on the MDE Benchmark Assessment web page (www.michigan.gov/mde-benchmarkassessments).

## 2. Benchmark Options Allowed

The benchmark legislation instructs districts, to the extent practical, to administer benchmark assessments used in prior school years. Having said that, districts have the flexibility to administer one or more of the following three benchmark assessment options. The same benchmark assessment(s) administered in the fall must be administered in the spring.

**1) Benchmark Assessments from MDE Approved Providers**

| Provider | Products | Funding | Contact Information |
|---|---|---|---|
| Curriculum Associates | i-Ready | Funding provided | **Vikki Halstead**<br>989-577-0305<br>vhalstead@cainc.com<br><br>**Jeff Tompkins**<br>313-316-0141<br>jtompkins@cainc.com |
| Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) | • Smarter Balance Interim Assessments (grades 3-8)<br>• Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (grades k-2) | Available at no cost to districts | **Christi Linton**<br>301-865-9859<br>clinton@datarecognitioncorp.com<br><br>**Smarter Interims**<br>877-560-8378, option 1, then option 1<br>misupport@datarecognitioncorp.com<br><br>**Early Literacy and Mathematics** MDE Early Literacy and Mathematics web page<br>877-560-8378 option 1, then option 2<br>mde-oeaa@michigan.gov |
| NWEA | MAP Suite | Funding provided | Fay Hartman<br>fay.hartman@hmhco.com<br>480-518-4242 |
| Renaissance | Star | Funding provided | Sarah Terry<br><br>715-315-3881<br>sarah.terry@renaissance.com |

Districts providing any of these benchmark products from the MDE-approved provider list for students in grades K-8 are required to report assessment and mode of instruction data to MDE through the Michigan Data Hub. See the **How to Report Benchmark Data** and the **How to Request Funding for the 3 Benchmark Assessments** sections of this document for more details.

Per student awards will be based on the number of districts meeting the administration and reporting criteria and applying by **the early December application deadline**. Section 104h allocates $11,500,000 to be distributed evenly per membership K-8 student to eligible districts.

Additional information provided by the approved benchmark assessment vendors is located on the MDE Benchmark Assessment web page (www.michigan.gov/MDE-benchmarkassessments).

**2. Benchmark Assessments that Contain Progress Monitoring Tools**

Districts may administer:

- a benchmark assessment in reading for students in grades K-9 that contains progress monitoring tools and enhanced diagnostic assessments, and/or
- a benchmark assessment in math for students in grades K-8 that contains progress monitoring tools.

There is no state funding available under the benchmark law for these assessments. Also, while administering a progress monitoring tool in reading to students in grade 9 is allowed, this is optional. Benchmark assessment results that contain progress monitoring tools do not need to be reported for students in grade 9. If funding for an eligible assessment is being requested, then these benchmark assessments with progress monitoring must be reported in NexSys for full compliance under the law. See the **How to Report Benchmark Data** section for details.

**3. Local Benchmark Assessments**

Districts may administer a local benchmark assessment or assessments that measure proficiency in reading and/or mathematics. There is no state funding available under the benchmark law for these assessments. If funding for an eligible assessment is being requested, then these local benchmark assessments must be reported in NexSys for full compliance under the law. See the **How to Report Benchmark Data** section for details.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Do we have to choose an assessment from the MDE-approved list?**

   No; the law gives districts broad flexibility in making choices regarding the benchmark assessment or assessments they administer. These choices are:

   - a benchmark assessment or assessments from an assessment provider on the MDE- approved provider list, or
   - a benchmark assessment(s) or tool(s) that provide progress monitoring and enhanced diagnostics in reading and/or progress monitoring in mathematics, or
   - a local benchmark assessment(s), or
   - any combination of the above

2. **Do we have to use the same assessment for all grades (K-8)?**

   No; the law does not require districts to use the same benchmark assessment in all grades.

   Districts interested in monitoring progress in state academic standards across grades and years may find it easier to perform this comparison if they use a consistent benchmark assessment in all grades.

3. **Do we have to use the same assessment for reading and mathematics?**

   No; the law does not require districts to use the same benchmark assessment in reading and mathematics.

4. **Can we administer one benchmark assessment in the fall and a different benchmark assessment in the spring?**

   No; the students must be administered the same benchmark assessment in the fall and spring to support fall-to-spring growth calculations.

5. **Do we have to administer benchmark assessments, and progress monitor virtual students as well? Does this have to be the same for in-person students?**

   The law does not differentiate between students receiving instruction in-person or virtually. The benchmark assessments administered do not need to be the same for these groups of students.

6. **If our district is using a reading or math assessment that is not provided by a vendor on the approved assessment provider list, but it addresses what we are teaching, can we use it for our benchmark assessment?**

The law allows districts the option to choose which benchmark assessment(s) to administer, including local assessments. The chosen benchmark assessment(s) must measure proficiency in reading and mathematics for students in grades K-8.

7. **Can we use <insert the name of your assessment>?**

The law provides districts with options when selecting the benchmark assessment(s) to administer. These options include benchmark assessments from a vendor on the MDE-approved provider list, assessments that provide progress monitoring and enhanced diagnostics in reading and/or progress monitoring in mathematics, local assessments, or any combination thereof. The assessment(s) must be administered at least twice a year – at the start and at the end of the school year – and the assessment must measure proficiency in reading and mathematics. If the assessment your district is using meets these requirements, then it is allowed.

8. **If our district chooses to administer a benchmark assessment that provides progress monitoring and enhanced diagnostics in reading, do we have to administer it in grade 9?**

No; while administering an assessment tool that provides progress monitoring in grade 9 is allowed under the current legislation, it is not required. No reporting or funding is available for grade 9.

9. **Is progress monitoring required?**

Pursuant to the law, districts are required to administer a "benchmark assessment" in the first nine weeks of school and again before the end of the school year. A progress monitoring assessment, or tool that provides progress monitoring and enhanced diagnostics in reading and/or a progress monitoring assessment in mathematics, is one option districts may select to meet the benchmark assessment requirements in law.

10. **If we do NWEA or iReady (or some other benchmark assessment), can we still use some of the Smarter Balanced tools that are available?**

Yes, Tools for Teachers is available at no cost to all districts regardless of the benchmark assessment(s) they administer. Tools for Teachers is an easy- to-use website with lessons and activities created by educators to enhance instruction, save time, and prepare students for college or a career. For a quick overview, watch a demonstration on YouTube (https://youtu.be/jJPAU1zOAp4).

11. **Can we do NWEA (or some other benchmark assessment) and some of the Focused Interim Blocks or Block-based assessments with Smarter Balanced?**

Yes, but you will need to carefully consider your purpose and the type of information each assessment will provide. Districts should be thoughtful and careful when choosing and administering assessments and avoid administering multiple tests that provide similar information.

## 3. Students with Disabilities (SWD) and English Learners (ELs)

The law states benchmark assessments must be administered to "all pupils in K to 8" if funding is requested and does not provide exceptions for Students with Disabilities or English learners.

### Students with Disabilities

The current legislation does not address assessment requirements specific to Students with Disabilities. Nevertheless, districts must remain compliant with students' Individualized Education Plans (IEPs).

The law requires benchmark assessments be provided within the first nine weeks of school and again before the end of the school year, to measure progress in reading and mathematics. However, although the law uses the term "benchmark assessments", districts have broad flexibility to select a benchmark assessment offered by an assessment provider on the MDE-approved Provider List, a progress monitoring tool, or a locally determined assessment.

MDE suggests districts contact the assessment providers on the approved provider list to determine if they have options for different student populations such as SWD and EL. For students for whom commercial benchmark assessments are not appropriate (such as a student with a significant cognitive disability or one who is not able to engage in an online assessment), the district should use the assessment(s) they typically use to monitor the student's progress in reading and mathematics.

### English Learners

The current law does not allow exceptions for English learners (ELs). If your district has ELs for whom commercial benchmark products are not appropriate because of their current level of language skills, there remains flexibility available to consider the current progress monitoring tools or local assessments you are currently using with this population of students for monitoring progress towards proficiency in reading and mathematics.

### Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Where can I find information on available supports and accommodations?**

   Available supports and accommodations will vary by benchmark assessment and provider. Contact your benchmark assessment provider directly for this information.

## 4. How to Report Benchmark Data

If applying for funding, districts are required to report information on <u>all</u> benchmark assessments they are administering in support of the benchmark assessment provisions in the law. Methods of reporting benchmark data differ based on the type of benchmark assessment(s) being utilized.

**Reporting Data from the Approved Vendor List (Curriculum Associates, DRC, NWEA, Renaissance)**

The law states that benchmark assessment results for these approved vendors must be reported within 30 days of test administration. Districts must give their chosen benchmark provider(s) permission to provide student level benchmark data to the Michigan Data Hub (MiDataHub). Permission will also need to be granted to allow MiDataHub to share these files with MDE's research partners the Michigan Education Data Center (MEDC) from the University of Michigan and the Educational Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) from Michigan State University who will perform the aggregations and generate the legally required reports.

In collaboration with MDE, the MiDataHub will facilitate a webinar on **September 11, 2024, at 10:30 a.m**., to provide districts detailed information on the steps to complete for submitting benchmark data through MiDataHub. The slide deck and recordings will be posted to the [Michigan Data Hub Training page](https://www.midatahub.org/support/trainings/) (https://www.midatahub.org/support/trainings/).

**Reporting Benchmark Data through the MiDataHub**

If granted permission by the district, benchmark assessment vendors will securely provide the assessment data directly to MiDataHub. Districts using this approach must provide all necessary permissions to be in compliance with the law.

1) **NWEA and Star assessments** are reported through file-based integrations built by the MiDataHub team. Districts administering these assessments provide permission through data sharing agreements with NWEA and Renaissance. This permission allows MiDataHub to receive assessment results for processing.

    Many districts already have these permissions and

integrations in place but if your district does not it is imperative that your technology team begin this process as soon as possible. **This step should be completed at least two weeks prior to the completion of your fall benchmark test administration.** Information on how to complete the integration steps to allow data sharing are located at the following links:
- NWEA MAP https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/nwea-map/
- Renaissance Star https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/star-assessments/)

2) **i-Ready, the Smarter Balanced Interims, and the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments** will be reported by Curriculum Associates and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) respectively through an API (Application Programming Interface) integration. APIs create secure direct connections between processing partners.

    Districts who have not already done so may create the API integration themselves and provide the credentials to the vendor, or they may request that MiDataHub complete those steps by submitting a ticket to the MiDataHub team at www.miservicedesk.com. **This step should be completed at least two weeks prior to the completion of your fall benchmark test administration.**

    Additional information on completing this step can be found at the following links:

- Curriculum Associates i-Ready https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/i-ready-diagnostic-and-instruction/
- DRC – Smarter Interim Assessments and MDE Early Literacy and mathematics Benchmark assessments https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/drc-smarter-balanced-assessments/

**Important note:** Make sure you used either the student's Unique Identification Code (UIC) or the District Student Number as the identifier for students in

all assessment systems when rostering. This will facilitate easier loading of assessment data to MiDataHub and avoid delays in the aggregation of data which may impact meeting the deadline for your district's submission.

3) After the data is submitted to MiDataHub, research partners, MEDC and EPIC, will perform the aggregations that will inform the legislatively mandated reports. To complete the necessary aggregations, districts must create the **Extended Benchmark aggregate API integration**, or request one be created by MiDataHub support; this will allow the research partners to access the data. Information on how to complete this process is located at: https://www.midatahub.org/pub/stories/view/med cepic-extended-benchmark-study.

Once the API integration has been completed for a current or prior submission, the Extended Benchmark Aggregation will remain active, that is this does not need to be completed more than once. The aggregation permission is in place if the line **Educational Analytics: Extended Benchmark Studies 1** is listed under API Integrations in the MiDataHub Cockpit Application.

4) The law requires benchmark results be disaggregated by "**Mode of Instruction**". Mode of Instruction data can be provided to MiDataHub in one of three ways:

a) enter data into your district SIS (Edupoint Synergy, Infinite Campus, MISTAR-Q, PowerSchool, Skyward) and have that data transfer to MiDataHub

b) use the Mode of Instruction Import process in the MiDataHub cockpit to download a list of students into a spreadsheet, allowing an end user to manually enter the Mode of Instruction data, and last upload the updated spreadsheet back to the MiDataHub Operational Data Store (ODS). Documentation is available on using this process and can be found at the following link: https://www.midatahub.org/pub/stories/view/ mode-of-instruction-import.

c) run a maintenance script in MiDataHub to mark all students as fully in-person. Note that this option can be used after steps a) and b) above to default all other students to fully in-person. This maintenance script is found in the MiDataHub Cockpit under the sub menu of **Utilities>Maintenance Scripts > RTL – Mode of Instruction – Update** and can be accessed by either a Technical Contact in your local district (typically a district technology lead) or the MiDataHub team. The effect of running this operation is that all students with assessments who do not already have a Mode of Instruction designation will be marked in MiDataHub as FULLY IN-PERSON for the aggregate. **Note: This process should only be run once!** If you prefer MiDataHub staff run this script on your behalf, please submit a ticket requesting this script to be run at http://www.miservicedesk.org/www.miservice desk.com.

To summarize, districts must complete all steps in the table below to be in compliance with the law and be eligible for funding.

**Reporting Student-level Data Through the Michigan Data Hub: Tasks and Due Dates**

| Step | Task | When to Complete |
|------|------|------------------|
| 1 | Configure your district SIS to send **student roster data** to MiDataHub for the current school year. Currently Edupoint Synergy, Infinite Campus, MiSTAR-Q, Powerschool, and Skyward (SMS/Qmlativ) can publish data to MiDataHub. If your district is not using one of these SIS tools please defer to loading a file containing the minimum amount of data to run the Aggregate API found here: MSDS Roster Import. If you need assistance with this, please contact the MiDataHub team by placing a ticket at www.miservicedesk.com. | Start of school year (each year) |
| 2 | Ensure the **superintendent** listed in the MiDataHub cockpit is current. Login to the MiDataHub cockpit and verify the superintendent authorization listed (including contact information) is accurate.  Unlike other authorizations in the MiDataHub cockpit only MiDataHub staff can update the superintendent authorization. If there are changes required to the superintendent authorization, please submit a ticket at www.miservicedesk.com. | Start of school year (each year) or when a change in superintendent occurs. |
| 3 | Provide **permission** to the assessment vendors to send benchmark assessment data to MiDataHub:<br>a) **NWEA** follow the instructions at: https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/nwea- map/<br>b) **Renaissance Star** follow the instructions at: https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/star-assessments/<br>c) **Curriculum Associates i-Ready** follow the instructions at: https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/i-ready-diagnostic-and-instruction/<br>d) **DRC Smarter Interims and MDE Early Literacy and Mathematics** follow the instructions at: https://www.midatahub.org/Core/Stories/Permalink/drc-smarter-balanced-assessments/<br>**Important note:**  Ensure only the UIC or District Student Number is used as the identifier for students in all assessment systems when rostering. If other identifiers are used this could cause delays with aligning your assessment data results. | Start of school year (first year only)<br><br>This step must be completed **at least two weeks in advance of assessment administration** to ensure the data flows to MiDataHub in a timely manner. |
| 4 | Provide **permission** to MiDataHub to share benchmark records with research partners, MEDC and EPIC for aggregation by following the instructions at: https://www.midatahub.org/pub/stories/view/medcepic-extended-benchmark-study | Start of school year (first year only) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| 6 | Provide **"Mode of Instruction" data** to MiDataHub within 30 days of test administration using one of three options:<br>   a)  enter data into your district SIS (Edupoint Synergy, Infinite Campus, MISTAR-Q, PowerSchool, Skyward) and have that data transfer to MiDataHub. Please work directly with your SIS vendor for directions on how this data needs to be entered in your SIS,<br>   b)  use the Mode of Instruction Import process in the MiDataHub cockpit to download a list of students into a spreadsheet, allowing an end user to manual enter the Mode of Instruction data, and last upload the updated spreadsheet back to your MiDataHub. Documentation is available on using this process and can be found at the following link:<br>https://www.midatahub.org/pub/stories/view/mode-of-instruction-import<br>   **c)**  run a maintenance script in the MiDataHub to mark all students as fully in-person.  Note that this option can be used after steps a) and b) above to default all other students to fully in-person. This maintenance script is found in the MiDataHub Cockpit under the sub menu of **Utilities>Maintenance Scripts > RTL – Mode of Instruction – Update** and can be accessed by either a Technical Contact in your local district (typically a district technology lead) or the MiDataHub team. The effect of running this operation is that all students with assessments who do not already have a Mode of Instruction designation will be marked in MiDataHub as FULLY IN-PERSON for the aggregate. **Note: This process should only be run once!** If you prefer MiDataHub staff run this script on your behalf please submit a ticket requesting this script to be run at www.miservicedesk.com . | Within 30 days of test administration<br><br>(each fall and spring) |
| 7 | **Verify** the roster, assessment, and mode of instruction data are flowing to the MiDataHub within 7 days after assessments are delivered. This can be checked in the MiDataHub cockpit by navigating to the Benchmark Assessment Mandate readiness tool. You will find this tool located in the MiDataHub cockpit under Features > Benchmark Assessment Mandate.<br><br>Note that only users with an authorization level of Technical Contact in the MiDataHub cockpit will be able to review this feature.<br><br>For more information on using this dashboard please follow the link below for step-by-step instructions on each section:<br>MiDataHub - Benchmark Assessment Readiness Dashboard v1<br><br>If you have any questions on the results provided on this screen, please place a support ticket with the MiDataHub team at www.miservicedesk.com. | Within 7 days of test administration<br>(each fall and spring) |
| 8 | Complete the **Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application form** available through NexSys. | Early November through early December<br><br>For the 24-25 school year, the application will **tentatively** be available: Nov. 18 – Dec. 16, 2024. |

| 9 | Last day for benchmark vendors to **provide benchmark score and growth data** to Michigan Data Hub for fall 2024. Districts must verify this is happening. | December 16, 2024 |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Last day for districts to **provide mode of instruction data** to Michigan Data Hub for fall 2024. | December 16, 2024 |
| 11 | Administer the spring 2025 benchmark assessments to all students in grades K-8. | Last marking period of the school year |
| 12 | Last day for benchmark vendors to **provide benchmark score and growth data** to Michigan Data Hub for spring 2025. | June 13, 2025 |
| 13 | Last day for districts to **provide mode of instruction data** to Michigan Data Hub for spring 2025. | June 13, 2025 |

## Frequently Asked Questions – Michigan Data Hub Reporting

1. **Where do I go to get help with getting my data flowing through MiDataHub?**

   For assistance in establishing the necessary integrations and granting permissions to share data:

   - Place a support ticket at www.miservicedesk.com.

2. **What if I am not on the Michigan Data Hub?**
   Most districts are already on the Michigan Data Hub. If yours is not and you are using one of the integrated student information systems (SIS) – PowerSchool, Infinite Campus, MISTAR-Q, Skyward, and Edupoint Synergy – then contact MiDataHub, by placing a support ticket at www.miservicedesk.com, for assistance in getting your benchmark assessment results loaded.

   If you are not on an integrated SIS, the MiDataHub Team has developed an import process to provide the minimum amount of data for a district in MiDataHub that is required for the Benchmark Assessment work. This import uses an MSDS General Collection file. Once a district has populated data from the MSDS file, they will be able to follow the procedures to load one or more assessments as indicated above. Contact the MiDataHub team by placing a support ticket at www.miservicedesk.com if assistance is needed.

3. **When can we start posting our data to MiDataHub?**

   Once the integrations and permissions have been completed, the assessment data will flow automatically to MiDataHub. **If you have not completed all steps or your benchmark data is not flowing as expected, contact MiDataHub right away** by placing a support ticket at www.miservicedesk.com. Remember, the benchmark data must be provided to MiDataHub within 30 days after the administration of these tests.

5. **What is the deadline for reporting fall data through MiDataHub?**

   The law states benchmark data must be reported within 30 days of the administration of the benchmark assessment(s). **All data must be reported to MIDataHub by the close of the Benchmark Assessment Reporting and Funding Application in early December.**

6. **I cannot locate the Benchmark Aggregation Rules and Template, where is it?**

   Benchmark assessment data is required to be submitted through the MiDataHub as outlined in the **Reporting Benchmark Data through the MiDataHub** section above. Data provided using an older version of the aggregate layout will not be

accepted. Contact [cermakk@michigan.gov](mailto:cermakk@michigan.gov) with questions.

7.  **If my district does not intend to apply for funding, do I have to report fall benchmark data through MiDataHub?**

    While MDE strongly encourages districts to continue to report benchmark assessment data, if your district does not plan to apply for funding for the administration of benchmark assessments then reporting is not required.

8.  **Does my district need to complete the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application form available through NexSys?**

    Yes, if funding is being requested then the form must be completed for **all** benchmark assessments administered to students in grades K-8, including assessments from the MDE-approved provider list. The form requests assurances that districts are meeting the requirements of the law related to implementing a benchmark assessment system and allows districts providing i-Ready, NWEA, or Star assessments the opportunity to apply for funding.

9.  **When will the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application be available?**

    Tentatively November 18, 2024 – December 16, 2024

10. **When does my district have to have the MiDataHub integrations and permissions in place to ensure our benchmark data will be received by MiDataHub by the deadline?**

    All integrations and permissions must be in place by **two weeks prior** to test administration if not sooner to ensure data is received by the reporting deadline.

11. **How does my district verify all integrations and permissions have been set up in MiDataHub?**

    To verify the necessary integrations and permissions are set up, districts will need to ensure

these four steps have been completed. Each of these steps can be confirmed on the Features > Benchmark Assessment Legislation features section in the MiDatahub cockpit (see **step 7** in the **Reporting Student-level Data Through the Michigan Data Hub** table, listed above).

1.  Ensure the [Extended Benchmark Assessment API](#) integration has been completed or is still active from a prior submission in the MiDataHub cockpit.

2.  Verify one or more of the five MDE-approved assessments (i-Ready, NWEA Map, STAR, Smarter Interim Assessments, Early Literacy and Mathematics Assessments) have been configured in the MiDataHub cockpit.

3.  Ensure the Mode of Instruction has been published to the Michigan DataHub. There are 3 different ways this data can be provided. Please see **step 6** in the **Reporting Student-level Data Through the Michigan Data Hub** table, listed above.

4.  Ensure current data has been published from the Student Information System (SIS). If your district uses a SIS not capable of integrating with MiDataHub please review the following information found at this [MiDataHub – MSDS Roster Import](#).

Contact the Michigan Data Hub [mailto:](mailto:)by placing a support ticket at [www.miservicedesk.com](http://www.miservicedesk.com) for assistance with any of the steps identified above.

## Reporting Data from a Progress Monitoring Tool or a Local Benchmark Assessment

If a district uses a local benchmark assessment, including assessments providing progress monitoring tools, information related to those benchmark assessment choices must be provided if requesting funding for assessments on the MDE approved vendor list. Districts will provide this information on the **Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application** available through NexSys. The application pertains to all local benchmark or interim assessments as well as tools that provide progress monitoring that were administered by the district to comply with the law.

In the application, districts must report the following:

1. the local assessments and assessments with progress monitoring administered.

2. the grades in which the assessments were provided.

3. how the assessment measures change, include any learning losses.

4. how the district plans to address any losses in learning

If your district uses multiple local assessments for different grade spans, you will need to list each assessment and the grades served.

To apply for funding, districts must identify all benchmark assessments including NWEA MAP, i-Ready, Star, Smarter Interim, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments. However, the results from these five assessments are reported through the Michigan Data Hub.

The Benchmark Assessment Reporting and Funding Application will be available in NexSys **mid November through mid December.**

## Frequently Asked Questions – Local or Other Benchmark Assessments

1. **If my district does not intend to apply for funding, do I have to report fall benchmark data through NexSys?**

   No, while MDE strongly encourages reporting of these types of benchmark assessments in the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application, it is not required unless your district is applying for funding due to the administration of NWEA MAP, i-Ready, or Star.

## 5. How to Request Funding for Curriculum Associates, NWEA, and Renaissance

Districts may apply for benchmark assessment funding if they administer Curriculum Associates i-Ready, NWEA Map, or Renaissance Star benchmark assessments to students in any grade K-8. Districts are eligible for funding they perform all of the following legislative requirements:

- **administer one of the 3 assessments** listed above (NWEA Map, i-Ready, Star) to students in grades K to 8 in reading and/or mathematics
- **administer the same assessment** in the first 9 weeks of the school year and again in the spring in the last marking period before the end of the school year
- **report the benchmark data results** within 30 days of test administration through the Michigan Data Hub as outlined in the *Reporting Data from the Approved Vendor List (Curriculum Associates, DRC, NWEA, Renaissance)* section of this document
- **report mode of instruction** correctly to the MiDataHub within 30 days of test administration as outlined in the *Reporting Data from the Approved Vendor List (Curriculum Associates, DRC, NWEA, Renaissance)* section of this document

Districts must apply for funding through the **Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application form.** The form will be available in NexSys in **mid November through mid December**. Once known, the exact dates of availability will be communicated through Spotlight.

Budgeted amounts are based on Fall 2024 student count data. Awards are planned to be made in February 2025 and lump sum payments are planned for distribution in SAMS in mid-March 2025. Awarded funds are meant to assist districts with overall expenses related to a system or program of benchmark assessments in the school year in which assessments were administered. Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, purchased academic testing services, staff time, support services, and supplies.

**Frequently Asked Questions – Funding**

1. **We are a private school; is there funding available?**

   No. Currently, there is no funding for benchmark assessments for private or other nonpublic schools.

2. **Can my district offer one benchmark assessment in the fall and a different one in the spring and still be eligible for funding?**

   No, the law requires growth be reported if available. To have a meaningful comparison, the same assessment must be administered in both the fall and spring.

3. **How and when do I access the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application in NexSys?**

   The **Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application** is housed in NexSys which is accessed through MiLogin for Business by authorized users.

   The application window will run from mid November through mid December 2024. All funding applications **must be made** within this timeframe. All benchmark score data and mode of instruction data **must be received by MiDataHub** no later than the close of the application.

   Tentative dates for the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding application: **November 18, 2024 – December 16, 2024**

4. **Where do I find information on NexSys:**

   The NexSys web page provides a lot of helpful information. It can be accessed at: https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/financial-management/grants/nexsys.

5. **What assurances will I be asked to make in NexSys when completing my Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding application?**

   Applicants will be asked to make the following assurances to be eligible for funding:

   a. My district administered benchmark assessments to all K-8 students within the first nine (9) weeks of the 2024-25 academic year.

   b. My district will administer benchmark assessments to all K-8 students in the last marking period of the 2024-25 academic year.

   c. My district will administer the same benchmark assessments to all K-8 students in the spring as administered in the fall.

   d. My district reported/will report **benchmark assessment data** to the Michigan Data Hub within 30 days of test administration.
       i. Fall benchmark assessment data will be provided no later than December 16, 2024.
       ii. Spring benchmark assessment data will be provided no later than June 13, 2025.

   e. My district reported/will report **Mode of Instruction data** to the Michigan Data Hub within 30 days of test administration.
       i. Fall Mode of Instruction data will be provided no later than December 16, 2024.
       ii. Spring Mode of Instruction data will be provided no later than June 13, 2025.

   f. My district provided/will provide each pupil's benchmark assessment data to the parent or legal guardian within 30 days of each test administration.

## 6. Other Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Can parents choose to opt their students out of the benchmark assessments?**

   The law requires districts to administer benchmark assessments in reading and mathematics to all students in grades K-8 at the beginning of the school year and again before the end of the school year if funding is being requested. While MDE supports parents in making education choices for their students, the law does not allow for parental opt-out. Parents should be reminded that this type of progress monitoring is especially important as Michigan students continue to recover academically from the pandemic. In addition to tracking progress, many benchmark assessments provide valuable feedback to educators (and parents), which, when used with other classroom evidence, can help teachers quickly pinpoint the instructional needs of their individual students. Districts must make their best effort to comply with the law.

2. **How does MDE apply the requirement for benchmark assessments to an ISD/RESA?**

   References to ISDs have been removed from the law. Therefore, there are not administration or reporting requirements for ISDs and no funding is available.

3. **What suggestions do you have for virtual learners and for ensuring a test is being proctored correctly?**

   Most, if not all, of the benchmark providers have issued guides on how to proctor their test from home. Work directly with your benchmark assessment provider.

4. **How do the requirements to administer benchmark assessments in the first 9 weeks of the school year under the current legislation align with the RBG3 requirement to screen in the first 30 days of school?**

   The two laws are distinct, and the RBG3 screening requirements are not modified by the benchmarking requirements. The initial and

   extensive assessments required by RBG3 are administered to identify students in grades K-3 who need an Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP). The benchmark assessments required by current benchmark law are administered to students in grades K-8 to monitor progress towards mastery of state academic standards in reading and math. Where appropriate, the same assessment tool may meet the requirements of both laws.

5. **Who do I contact for assistance or more information?**
   a. For questions on the law or this document: Kate Cermak at cermakk@michigan.gov 517-599-9722

   b. For questions regarding the Michigan Data Hub: www.miservicedesk.com or 269-250-9240

   c. For questions related to reporting the Local and Other Benchmark Assessments in NexSys: CEPI at cepi@michigan.gov

   d. For questions related to funding: Carol Skillings at skillingsc@michigan.gov

   e. General support: mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

6. **Does my district still have to publicly report benchmark data at board meetings and on our website? My district is not providing a benchmark assessment from the MDE-approved provider list. Is my district still required to publicly report data at a board meeting and on our website under 98b?**

   No, that was a requirement of 98b which was repealed starting in the 2023-24 school year.

7. **My district offers a Young-5's program. Am I required, under the Benchmark law, to assess these students with a benchmark assessment and report results?**

   No, if the young-5's (or pre-K, or begindergarten, or developmental kindergarten, and so on) program is

a precursor program to kindergarten, you are not required to administer benchmark assessments or report results under the current benchmark assessment law.

8. **Remind me, what are the application and reporting deadlines again?**
    a. <mark>Authorized users will access the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding application through MiLogin for Business.</mark>

    b. Dates for the Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding application:

       **Tentative:** <mark>**November 18, 2024 – December 16, 2024**</mark>

    c. **Fall** benchmark score data <u>and</u> mode of instruction data must be received by MiDataHub: Tentative <mark>**December 16, 2024**</mark>

    d. **Spring** benchmark score data <u>and</u> mode of instruction data must be receive by MiDataHub: **June 13, 2025**