

# Introduction to Testing Technology

## Relevant assessments:

- **M-STEP**
- **MME**
  - » M-STEP (Science and Social Studies)
- **MI-Access**
  - » MI-Access Functional Independence (FI)
  - » MI-Access Supported Independence (SI)
  - » MI-Access Participation (P)
- **WIDA™**
  - » WIDA ACCESS for ELLs
- **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2)**



Software for  
Online Testing



How INSIGHT  
Works



How the Backend  
Software Works



Downloading the  
Software



Practical Tips

## Assessment Coordinator Training Guide

## NOTE to Reader:

The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is comprised of a series of documents published by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to provide information to District and Building Assessment Coordinators regarding their assessment-related roles and responsibilities. This guide provides the resources and knowledge base necessary to establish sound test administration practices and procedures that will allow for the reporting of valid and reliable test results. It will introduce you to Michigan's state assessment systems in general and will link you to the people, trainings, materials, tools, and resources needed throughout the process of coordinating state-provided assessments in your district.

This document is one chapter of the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** series. The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is not meant to replace assessment-specific testing manuals, guides, training resources, or other documentation associated with each assessment program.

The web pages referenced in this document are active links. For the full URLs to these pages, please see the **Assessment Coordinator Quick Reference** chapter. In that resource you will find an interactive list, along with the full URLs, of the assessment-related web pages you will need to access, as well as:

- A preface for the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide**, which includes information on how to use the guide
- An interactive **Table of Contents** for the training guide
- A reference list of acronym definitions, and
- Important contact information

It is recommended that you keep the **Assessment Coordinator Quick Reference** readily available for future use.



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# Intro

Online testing requires some technical computer setup. This chapter introduces Assessment Coordinators to the software students will be using for online testing, by answering the following questions:

- ▶ What software will we be using for online testing?
- ▶ What is the INSIGHT secure browser?
- ▶ What is the backend software that supports testing?
- ▶ Where can I get more information about and download this software?

## What software will we be using for online testing?



The testing software is comprised of two main parts:

1. **INSIGHT** is the secure browser software that delivers the online assessment to students. It is the interface used to access the online assessments, OTTs, and Online Assessment Tutorials.
2. Supplying INSIGHT in the background is the cache server, **Central Office Services (COS)**. It works behind the scenes and is usually seen only by your District Technology Coordinator. It holds the content that is presented to students through the INSIGHT interface, in addition to other functions.

NOTE: By the 2018-19 school year, most schools will be using **Central Office Services** as their backend software for managing testing sites. However, some schools may still be using the legacy **Testing Site Manager (TSM)** software. After 2019, **Testing Site Manager** will no longer be supported by the MDE vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC).

eDIRECT hosts a **Device ToolKit**, which connects the INSIGHT testing environment to Central Office Services (the cache server). WIDA AMS does the same for the WIDA assessments. When you are setting up or managing Test Sessions, you will log into **eDIRECT** or **WIDA AMS**, depending on the assessment you are managing, which you can do with your usual web browser.

Online testing requires you to be connected to the internet. If your computer loses its connection to the school network, or the school loses its connection to the internet, or there is any other problem between you and the general internet, testing stops until the connection is restored.

You will learn more about eDIRECT and WIDA AMS in the **eDIRECT Basics** and **WIDA AMS Basics** chapters of this **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide**.



Screenshot of the INSIGHT landing page.

## How does INSIGHT work?



INSIGHT uses password-protected access and a “secure browsing” system that allows the secure presentation of test directions, test content, and interactive assessment items, as well as individualized, embedded access to assessment tools, supports, and accommodations, such as calculators, text-to-speech, and color-choice functions.

INSIGHT locks down the computer and prevents students from accessing any other programs and/or web pages during testing. If a student is testing on a Chromebook or iPad, INSIGHT must be activated before the student can log onto the computer. This keeps the mobile device in “kiosk mode,” running only the INSIGHT application.

## How does the backend software work?



INSIGHT is the interface for content that is held securely behind the scenes. The backend software product is called Central Office Services (COS), a new generation of test site manager technology.

COS creates a “cache server.” A cache is a local copy of the test content, so your students’ computers can receive test material from the local cache more expediently than downloading a new copy for each test. This is like shipping a box of paper tests rather than mailing each student’s test separately.

The cache server holds an encrypted copy of all the test materials. When each student logs in, INSIGHT asks COS for the right test, along with anything else it might need, such as audio or sign language files.

For fixed-form tests (those that are not computer adaptive), COS can also serve as a response cache. This function allows students to keep testing through minor internet blips, provided the student’s computer is not entirely disconnected. Computer adaptive tests, however, are scored in real time and require a consistent internet connection.

There is a limit to how many students can access a COS at once, just as there is a limit to how many people can reach a stack of paper tests at once. For districts testing more than a few hundred students at one time, COS is really a group of test site manager cache servers. Your Technology Coordinator will install the same software on multiple servers, or maybe a local test site manager at each building.

## Where can I get more information on and download this software?



[eDIRECT](#) and [WIDA AMS](#) both provide access to the [Technology User Guide](#) and software downloads.

The [Technology User Guide](#) and other supporting documents are available even before you log in, under [All Applications > General Information > Documents](#).

The [Technology User Guide](#) walks through the software and its installation in detail. It is targeted at Technology Coordinators, but it does include an FAQ and an explanation of error messages, which may help you to communicate with your Technology Coordinator.

Other supporting documentation on [eDIRECT](#) and [WIDA AMS](#) includes system requirements, advanced guides for COS configuration, and slides from training presentations.

Downloading the testing software requires logging in with a Technology Coordinator role. Chromebook and iPad users can access INSIGHT in their respective application stores (free of charge), but please check with your Technology Coordinator before doing so. They may be mass-deploying INSIGHT to computers, and you will certainly need their help to connect INSIGHT to a caching server.

## Practical Tips



- Students and most school staff members only need to know [INSIGHT](#). If INSIGHT has been installed and connected to a caching server, you are all set.
- Your Technology Coordinator is your first point of contact for any issues.
- The universal solution to most technology problems is to restart the software or computer. Sometimes the problem involves a blip in the technology; sometimes it is a minor, unintentional user error, such as accidentally selecting an unintended link or option. Rebooting gives the computer a chance to reset itself, and it also gives you the chance to retrace your steps and, perhaps, recognize an error. If INSIGHT isn't functioning properly, try restarting it or rebooting the computer.
- If you receive an error message, please write it down or take a screenshot of it, before calling your local tech support or DRC. That will be one of the first questions they ask.
- If a student is having repeated issues with technology, pause and exit. You can seek help and then resume testing. If the test is already completed and submitted before you report the problem, the test is already done.