MEAP-Access

Eligibility Criteria and Guidelines for Participation

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MEAP-Access – Michigan's Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Achievement Standards

Background

On April 7, 2007, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) issued regulations describing Alternate Assessments based on Modified Achievement Standards (AA-MAS). The regulations permit a state to develop an assessment aligned with modified academic achievement standards as part of its assessment and accountability system under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These regulations can be downloaded at http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/speced/toolkit/index.html.

The assessment must be based on modified academic achievement standards that cover the same grade level expectations as the general assessment. In Michigan, the general assessment for grades three through eight is the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). According to the regulations, only the academic achievement standards are modified, ***not*** the content standards upon which the assessment is based. In Michigan, the content standards for the general assessments are the Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs). For more information on the GLCEs, please visit the Office of School Improvement Web page at www.michigan.gov/osi.

The requirement that modified academic achievement standards be aligned with grade level content standards is important in order for students to have an opportunity to achieve at grade level. Therefore, students must have access to and instruction in, grade level content. For more details related to this regulation, the USED has published a guidance document that is in a question and answer format. It can be downloaded at the same Web site listed above. It is also posted on the MI-Access Web page at www.michigan.gov/mi-access.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) was awarded a grant from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs to develop AA-MAS that will fulfill an important need in the Michigan Educational Assessment System. This project has dual purposes: (1) to design a replicable process for modifying the existing MEAP English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics assessments in grades 3-8 by reducing length and difficulty levels while maintaining appropriately challenging content that reflects the state's GLCEs; and (2) to create an online professional development system that can be adopted and adapted by states, school districts, and individual educators.

Through the efforts of the MDE and its collaboration with the offices of Educational Assessment and Accountability; Special Education and Early Intervention Services; School Improvement; Educational Technology and Data Information; as well as local district educators; assessment experts; and other stakeholders; Michigan has a continuum of assessments that reflects a tradition of highest technical quality, which is founded in robust curriculum standards and the knowledge and skills of a diverse population. MEAP-Access (Michigan's AA-MAS) will complete the continuum, providing a valid, reliable, and fair measure of the achievement of students who struggle with the academic content areas of ELA and mathematics and who do not meet grade level expectations for the grade in which they are enrolled. Michigan educators have struggled to make decisions about participation in statewide assessment for a group of students who have difficulty learning grade level content in the same timeframe as many peers. Often, these students have participated in MEAP with accommodations, which has proved inappropriately difficult, or taken MI-Access Functional Independence (FI) which

did not provide an appropriate level of challenge. The FI assessments are based on Extended Grade Level Content Expectations (EGLCEs) that are aligned to the GLCEs. For more information on the EGLCEs, please visit the MI-Access Web page at www.michigan.gov/mi-access. Neither MEAP nor FI assessments permitted these students to demonstrate what they truly know and are able to do in regard to state content standards.

State Assessment Continuum

Assessment	Type of Assessment	Based On
MEAP/MME	General	GLCEs/HSCEs
MEAP/MME with Accommodations	General	GLCEs/HSCEs
MEAP-Access	**AA-MAS**	**GLCEs**
Functional Independence	AA-AAS	Extended GLCEs
Supported Independence	AA-AAS	Extended GLCEs
Participation	AA-AAS	Extended GLCEs

Like the current MI-Access assessments, the MEAP-Access assessments will also apply universal design criteria in order to maximize accessibility so that students may better show what they know and are able to do.

In December 2008, draft eligibility criteria were distributed statewide for public input. The MEAP-Access pilot assessment was administered in winter 2009. Data from the pilot assessment and comment on the draft criteria were analyzed and compiled in March 2009 and presented to the State Board of Education (SBE) for their approval. Following the incorporation of SBE discussion, the final MEAP-Access Eligibility Criteria and Participation Guidelines and assessment formats were produced.

Eligibility Criteria for Participation in MEAP-Access

In order for a student to be eligible for the MEAP-Access assessment, ALL of the following criteria must be met:

A Student with a disability

- A Student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Students with a Section 504 Plan are NOT eligible for alternate assessments.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- The IEP must include goals that are based on Michigan's grade-level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled. In Michigan, these standards are articulated in the GLCEs.
- The IEP goals should be attainable within the year covered by the IEP. Building blocks to attain the grade-level goals can start where the student is currently functioning. Short-term goals and objectives may incorporate below grade-level GLCEs needed as prerequisites in order to attain the grade-level goal.
- The IEP Team is reasonably certain that the student will not achieve grade-level standards, at the same level of rigor as their peers, within the year covered by the IEP.

Instruction

- The student must have access to and instruction in grade-level content for the grade in which the student is enrolled.
- Instruction must be provided by a highly qualified teacher.
- Instruction may be provided by a general education or a special education teacher as long as the teacher is highly qualified in the academic subject being taught.

Impact of disability

- There must be objective evidence demonstrating that the student's disability has precluded the student from achieving the grade-level standards at the same level of rigor as the student's peers.

Progress over time

- The student's progress or lack of progress must be determined using multiple objective and valid measures of the student's academic achievement over time.
- There is no set length of time during which the data must be gathered, but there must be enough time to document the progress (or lack of progress) in response to appropriate instruction. Measures, such as the following, may be used:
    - end-of-course assessments;
    - district-wide assessments;
    - classroom assessments;
    - formative assessments;
    - standardized achievement testing;
    - State assessments (MEAP or MI-Access alone would not be sufficient documentation to show progress or lack of progress).

Other considerations

- The IEP Team must not base their decision to participate in the MEAP-Access assessments solely on the student's:
    - special education category;
    - ethnicity;
    - economic background

- A student's lack of progress cannot be solely due to excessive absences.
- Participation in state assessment decisions must be determined annually by the IEP Team.
- It is expected that there will be students with disabilities who take MEAP-Access one year, make considerable progress during the school year, and then take the MEAP the following year. Therefore, an IEP Team must consider a student's progress annually based on multiple objective measures of the student's achievement before determining that the student should be assessed with MEAP-Access.
- In determining if the MEAP-Access assessment is appropriate, the IEP Team needs to determine if the student's progress to date in response to appropriate instruction, including special education and related services designed to address the student's individual needs, is such that, even if significant growth occurs, the IEP Team is reasonably certain that the student will not achieve grade-level proficiency within the year covered by the student's IEP.
- Students who participate in MEAP-Access should not be precluded from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma.

Examples of Possible Learning Characteristics of Students Participating in MEAP-Access

- Have some grade-level knowledge for the grade they are enrolled.
- Have sufficient cognitive ability to transfer or generalize learning when taught strategies to do so.
- Have sufficient capacity to achieve grade-level standards, but not to the same level of rigor and/or during the same timeframe.
- Need additional learning opportunities, (e.g., repetition of concepts, strategies to stay on task, skills, and accommodations) in order to achieve grade level standards.
- Difficulty with complex language when learning skills and concepts (e.g., syntax, multi-step instructions).
- May read below grade level.

Assessment Options (MEAP, MEAP-Access, or Functional Independence)

Prior to the implementation of MEAP-Access, the IEP Team could determine that a student would take the MEAP for one or more content areas and MI-Access Functional Independence (FI) for the remaining content area(s). For example, a student could take MEAP mathematics and FI in English Language Arts (ELA). With the addition of MEAP-Access, the IEP Team has the flexibility to have a student participate in MEAP, MEAP-Access or FI. The IEP Team is responsible for making this decision for each content area assessed at a given grade. For example:

- A student may take MEAP mathematics and MEAP-Access ELA.
- A student may take MEAP-Access mathematics and FI ELA.
- A student may take MEAP ELA and FI mathematics.

The case studies in **Appendix B** provide several examples of student characteristics and a key for determining what assessment the student would likely be best assessed with based on the information provided. These examples only cover MEAP, MEAP-Access and MI-Access Functional Independence. As in the past, if an IEP Team determines that a student will participate in MI-Access Supported Independence or Participation, he or she must take the same assessment for all content areas (e.g., Supported Independence ELA and Mathematics or Participation ELA and Mathematics).

Consequences

There are some potential consequences for participating in alternate assessments, such as MEAP-Access, of which IEP Teams should be aware, including the following:

- If a student participates in MEAP-Access, it is assumed that he or she is receiving grade-level instruction based on Michigan's GLCEs, but is not expected to progress in the general education curriculum in the same time frame as his or her grade-level peers.
- A divergent path at a young age may have consequences later and may prevent the student from progressing on Michigan's GLCEs/HSCEs/Benchmarks as needed to meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.
- According to federal regulations, states may include only 2 percent of proficient MEAP-Access scores (of the total tested population) in AYP proficiency calculations. There are some potential consequences for participating in alternate assessments, such as MEAP-Access, of which IEP Teams should be aware, including the following:
- If a student participates in MEAP-Access, it is assumed that he or she is receiving grade-level instruction based on Michigan's GLCEs, but is not expected to progress in the general education curriculum in the same time frame as his or her grade-level peers.
- A divergent path at a young age may have consequences later and may prevent the student from progressing on Michigan's GLCEs/HSCEs/Benchmarks as needed to meet all of the requirements of the Michigan Merit Curriculum.
- According to federal regulations, states may include only 2 percent of proficient MEAP-Access scores (of the total tested population) in AYP proficiency calculations.

Appendix A

Individual Student Decision Checklists by Content Area

Directions: Each of the following questions must be answered for each content area. If the answer to any of the questions is "No" the student is not eligible to participate in the MEAP-Access assessments.

Mathematics

#	Criteria	Yes	No
1.	Does the student have IEP goals based on grade-level content standards, not extended standards, for the grade in which the student is enrolled?		
2.	Does the student have access to, and instruction in, grade level content from highly qualified teachers?		
3.	Is there objective evidence demonstrating that the student's disability precludes the student from achieving the grade-level standards at the same level of rigor as the student's peers?		
4.	Is the student's lack of progress based on multiple objective and valid measures of the student's academic achievement over time?		
5.	The IEP Team is reasonably certain that the student will not achieve grade-level standards, at the same level of rigor as their peers, within the year covered by the IEP.		

Comments:

English Language Arts

#	Criteria	Yes	No
1.	Does the student have IEP goals based on grade-level content standards, not extended standards, for the grade in which the student is enrolled?		
2.	Does the student have access to, and instruction in, grade level content from highly qualified teachers?		
3.	Is there objective evidence demonstrating that the student's disability precludes the student from achieving the grade-level standards at the same level of rigor as the student's peers?		
4.	Is the student's lack of progress based on multiple objective and valid measures of the student's academic achievement over time?		
5.	The IEP Team is reasonably certain that the student will not achieve grade-level standards, at the same level of rigor as their peers, within the year covered by the IEP.		

Comments:

Appendix B

Student Case Studies

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Case Study – Sample 1

Phil

- Ten-year-old male in the 4th grade
- Has a primary disability of Specific Learning Disabilities in mathematics reasoning and mathematics calculations based on his current IEP
- Initial IEP was in 3rd grade
- Receives help from a special education teacher within the general education mathematics classroom focusing on grade level content standards
- Verbal skills are excellent and he is able to ask specific questions about what is difficult when working through mathematics problems
- Receives accommodations in classroom and testing situations
- Currently takes the MEAP in all content areas
- Test-taking strategies are provided to him
- Uses standard MEAP accommodations
- Receives direct instruction when new math concepts are introduced
- Receives one-on-one directions and small-group instruction when needed
- Uses a calculator
- Needs a lot of repetition of math concepts already learned
- Wants to continue on with post-secondary schooling. Does not have a goal in mind yet

Standardized Assessment (Standard Score = SS):

- The Key Math Test was administered in grade 3
  - Basic Concepts: SS 74
  - Operations: SS 85
  - Application: SS 62

Statewide Assessment:

- Grade 3 MEAP scores in all content areas fell within the Proficient levels except mathematics, which was in the Not Proficient category

Classroom Assessment:

- His report card markings since he entered school show that he is meeting GLCEs in all areas except for mathematics

Case Study - Sample 2

Brian

- Eight-year-old boy in the 3rd grade
- Primary disability of Cognitive Impairment
- IEP was developed at the end of 2nd grade
- His IEP goals in mathematics are based on Michigan GLCEs
- ELA goals are based on GLCEs related to decoding and Extended GLCEs for comprehension
- Recently tested out of speech and language services
- Currently receives instruction in the general education classroom with special education support
- Needs directions and tests read and explained to accommodate his low comprehension skills
- Tends to be disorganized and is not able to sequence steps like his classmates
- Small group instruction is needed for completion of assignments and tests due to distractibility and comprehension level
- Mathematics facts are not memorized, use of calculator needed and assistance in multi-step problems
- Is capable of asking for assistance but often does not because Brian thinks that he understands tasks

State Assessment:

- Brian received a 4 (not proficient) in the ELA section of the fall 3rd grade MEAP
- He received a 3 (partially proficient) on the fall 3rd grade MEAP mathematics assessment

Classroom Assessments:

- Received marks on his report card that imply that he is not meeting the year-end GLCEs, but is meeting the Extended GLCEs in ELA.
- Showing progress on the mathematics GLCEs
- Brian's portfolio contains collected work samples from 1st grade that provide evidence that he is progressing at grade level in mathematics, but continues to have difficulty in the area of ELA even when his goals are based on Extended GLCEs.

Standardized Assessment (Standard Score = SS):

- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement II (KTEA-II):
  - Mathematics Concepts and Applications: SS 80
  - Reading Comprehension: SS 60
  - Letter and Word Recognition: SS 70

Case Study - Sample 3

Marie

- 12-year-old female in the 6th grade
- Identified as a student with a hearing impairment and receives related services in speech and language as documented in her IEP
- Identified as hearing impaired at the age of four
- Marie has some hearing. She uses hearing aids and lip reads, but does not use sign language
- Receives speech and language services through collaboration with the general education teacher and some one-on-one therapy
- The speech pathologist coordinates the speech/language therapy with the ELA lessons taught in the general education classroom
- The IEP includes grade-level goals in ELA and mathematics
- Receives instruction based on the Michigan GLCEs in all academic areas with extended time allowed for assignments and completion of tests
- Needs accommodations with reading comprehension. For example, she needs help with new vocabulary and identifying key concepts
- Needs accommodations in written expression, such as composing multi-paragraph essays
- The teacher has paired Marie with other students in her general education English class to assist in organizing her compositions
- Difficulty in reading comprehension and written expression impacts other content areas, but with accommodations and special education services she is able to maintain grade-level achievement in all areas excluding ELA
- Marie is a very organized student, but needs assistance to have directions broken down into shorter steps for her to process
- Has good sight word vocabulary, but needs help reading long passages
- Very social and has lots of friends. Friends seem unaware of her disability because she is so strong with social interactions
- Will continue with education after high school. Wants to go to college to become a dental hygienist

State Assessments:

- Received a 4 (not proficient) in the area of ELA on the MEAP in grades 3 and 4, and received a 3 (partially proficient) in ELA on the MEAP in grade 5
- Received a 3 (partially proficient) in mathematics on the MEAP in grades 3 and 4 and received a 2 (proficient) in mathematics on the MEAP in grade 5

Classroom Assessments:

- Receiving marks on her report cards for the last two years that show she is not meeting year-end expectations on her standards-based report card for her English Language Arts class
- Achieving grade level expectations in mathematics

Case Study - Sample 3 (continued)

Formative Assessments:

- End-of-the-year DIBELS oral reading fluency was 50 words correct per minute in 4th grade connected text, and 65 words per minute in connected text correct in 5th grade. A typical 5th grader in connected text would be reading over 100 words per minute.

Case Study - Sample 4

Sue

- Thirteen-year-old female in the 7th grade
- Primary disability of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Identified as ASD at age 3
- Performing at the top of the general education seventh grade mathematics class
- Receives ELA instruction from the teacher of students with ASD in the special education classroom
- Receives instruction based on Extended GLCEs for ELA
- Reads at approximately the 3rd grade level with writing skills at the 2nd grade level
- Refuses to write anything except to show her work on math problems

State Assessment

- MEAP – consistently attained Proficient on MEAP throughout school career in mathematics
- Not proficient (Emerging) on the Functional Independence (FI) ELA assessment since 5th grade

Standardized Assessment

- Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – Second Edition (WIAT-II)
    - Numerical Operations SS 110
    - Mathematics Reasoning SS 115
    - Word Reading SS 66
    - Reading Comprehension SS 68
    - Written Expression - refused to complete this subtest

Case Study - Sample 5

Tina

- 13-year-old in the 8th grade
- Received a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder from her pediatrician when she was 8 years old
- Identified as Otherwise Health Impaired in grade 3
- Very unorganized and frequently forgets to turn in assignments or loses them
- Needs frequent cues and prompting to stay on task
- Frequent re-teaching of concepts is needed in order to apply them to new learning
- Receives instruction in resource room for ELA and mathematics. The classes in the resource program are based on the 8th grade GLCEs
- Is social, but often has conflicts with fellow female classmates

Standardized Assessment (Standard Score = SS):

- Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement
  - Broad Reading: SS 70
    - Letter Word Identification: SS 76
    - Reading Fluency: SS 66
    - Passage Comprehension: SS 68
  - Broad Math: SS 65
    - Calculation: SS 69
    - Math Fluency: SS 61
    - Applied Problems: SS 71

Statewide Assessments:

- MEAP – ELA 3rd grade (not proficient), 4th grade (partially proficient), 5th and 6th grades (not proficient), 7th grade (partially proficient)
- MEAP – Math 3rd grade (proficient), 4th-7th grades (not proficient)

Report cards:

- Inconsistent. Works best within a well-organized classroom. Grades have fluctuated over the years. As school work has become complex, her report card grades reflect Cs to Fs. Some of the grades were lower due to incomplete assignments.

Case Study Answer Key

Case Study 1 – Phil

MEAP-Access - Mathematics
MEAP - English Language Arts

Case Study 2 – Brian

MEAP - Mathematics
MEAP-Access - English Language Arts

Case Study 3 – Marie

MEAP - Mathematics
MEAP - English Language Arts

Case Study 4 – Sue

MEAP - Mathematics
Functional Independence - English Language Arts

Case Study 5 – Tina

MEAP-Access - Mathematics
MEAP-Access - English Language Arts