



Michigan School Accountability: Planning and Response to COVID-19

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Foreword

Accountability and related reporting are one of many topics impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike more immediate issues caused by the pandemic, accountability and reporting issues will mostly become more visible months and even years later. While there are many pressing needs now, along with uncountable questions and concerns, we hope this document can be useful once the focus turns to accountability policies. 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

Overview

Michigan's schools were initially closed statewide as of March 16, 2020 by Executive Order 2020-5 and then for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year by Executive Order 2020-35 on April 2, 2020 to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Most districts reopened weeks later using virtual learning, distance learning, or a hybrid of the two to provide students learning and instruction while Michiganders sheltered at home. At this time, it is not known what Fall will look like in terms of public education, other than that districts will be using a variety of methods to safely serve their students.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event
Tuesday, March 10, 2020	State of Emergency declared statewide
Monday, March 16, 2020	Executive Order 2020-5 is signed, temporarily closing all schools statewide
Friday, March 20, 2020	Michigan's 2019-20 federal waiver for suspension of state assessments and federal accountability is preliminarily approved by the United States Department of Education (USED)
Tuesday, March 31, 2020	Michigan's 2019-20 federal waiver for suspension of state assessments and federal accountability is officially approved by USED
Thursday, April 2, 2020	Executive Order 2020-35 is signed, suspending in-person instruction for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year and waiving state content area assessments
Tuesday, June 30, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Michigan's 2020-21 Return to School Roadmap is releasedExecutive Order 2020-142 is signed, requiring schools to adopt a COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan for 2020-21 that outlines how they will implement protocols to ensure a safe return to in-person learning.Michigan's 2020-21 request to waive federal requirements around state assessment and accountability is submitted to USED

Frequently Asked Questions

Assessments

For 2019-20, which state assessments were waived, and which were not?

- The table below lists the 2019-20 state assessments and indicates whether or not that assessment was waived.

Assessment Type	Assessment Name	2019-20 Waiver Status
English Language Acquisition	WIDA ACCESS	Not Waived, completed for most students*
	WIDA Alternate ACCESS	Not Waived, completed for most students*
Content Areas	M-STEP	Waived
	PSAT 8	Waived**
	PSAT 9	Waived**
	PSAT 10	Waived**
	SAT	Waived**
	MI-Access	Waived
Career Readiness	WorkKeys	Waived

*Executive Order 2020-5 closed schools statewide with about a week and a half left in the 7-week WIDA testing window. Most students were able to complete the test prior to closure, but the Michigan Department of Education will be reviewing the data to ensure validity of the results and what disclaimers may be needed for this data.

**Spring 2020 PSAT and SAT were waived from accountability and reporting for the 2019-20 school year. Under Executive Order 2020-65, schools are expected to administer the applicable grade-level assessments (SAT, PSAT) in Fall 2020 to students who are enrolled in schools that were established for Spring 2020 testing. Fall 2020 test results will not be used for any type of accountability reporting.

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

- On June 30, 2020 the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) submitted a request to USED to waive 2020-21 state assessment and federal accountability requirements. USED has not yet formally responded to that request. However, USED informally stated in late June 2020 that full assessment and accountability waivers, like those granted for 2019-20, are unlikely to be approved for 2020-21.

Will 2020-21 seniors who were unable to test in 2019-20 be expected to test in 2020-21?

- Seniors are expected to take the state-provided SAT in Fall 2020. However, they will not be counted in accountability calculations. Seniors taking the state-provided SAT in Fall 2020 will not be able to take the state-provided SAT in Spring 2021.

Will the waiving of 2019-20 state assessments 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. At this time, it is not known whether future assessment waivers will be granted.

General Reporting

What do school districts need to report in 2020-21 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 continuation of required reporting elements even outside of the waived federal assessment and accountability requirements for 2019-20.
- 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 fresh data become available. Many Parent Dashboard metrics rely on non-assessment data. MDE anticipates greater public focus on the Parent Dashboard in the absence of accountability results.

How will virtual programs in the 2020-21 school year be held accountable?

- MDE is reviewing its policy stance during the pandemic, since most schools are likely to implement a variation of virtual programming. Districts can still offer a virtual program as outlined in 21f (5-0-D in the Pupil Accounting Manual) without a new building code being issued in EEM.

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.

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 establish local reporting/group/class codes that will enable you to meet your goals.

Will 2019-20 data be valid, and can they be used in trendlines or will new trendlines be needed?

- Most metrics reported in 2020 (from 2019-20 data) will be valid and able to continue to be used in trending. MDE will be closely looking at 2019-20 WIDA data used in the English Learner Progress metric as the data set will not include all possible students.
- More analysis will be needed for the 2020-21 accountability cycle, as that will use graduation rates from June 2020, as well as state assessments from Spring 2021. Until these analyses can be run, it is not known whether trendlines will need to be broken or how concerned to be with validity.

How should reports/indicators be caveated 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, for example accountability results files, will also include similar disclaimers.
 - For 2019-20 results, disclaimers will begin appearing on MI School Data assessment reports by the end of August 2020. These disclaimers will simply make users aware of data that is unavailable due to 2019-20 testing being waived.
 - For 2020-21 results, disclaimers may end up addressing validity concerns depending on analysis of those results.

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?

Accountability Systems

For 2019-20, which accountability systems were waived, and which were 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 that system was waived for 2019-20.

Accountability System Type	Accountability System Name	2019-20 Waiver Status
Federal	School Index	Waived
	Annual Education Report (AER)	Partially Waived*
State	Parent Dashboard	Not Waived, Limited Data*
	School Grades	Not Waived, Limited Data*
	At-Risk (31A)	Not Waived, No Data*

*Metrics related to state assessments in content areas not available, as those assessments were waived

- MDE has communicated to the legislature and governor's office that state laws covering school accountability have yet to be addressed. There are currently no plans to waive these state laws.

For 2020-21, have any accountability systems been waived?

- At this time, no accountability systems have been waived for 2020-21.
- On June 30, 2020 MDE submitted a request to USED to waive 2020-21 state assessment and federal accountability requirements. USED has not yet formally responded but has informally stated that full assessment and accountability waivers are unlikely to be approved for 2020-21.
- MDE has communicated to the legislature and governor's office that state laws covering school accountability have yet to be addressed. There are currently no plans to waive these state laws.

For 2019-20 accountability systems that were not waived, what data will be available?

- The 2020-21 **Annual Education Report (AER)**, which uses 2019-20 data, is still required under federal law, however some portions are not required for 2020-21. The 2020-21 AER **will** contain the following information from the 2019-20 school year:
 - 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 are able to be updated with data reported through CEPI's existing data collections. Metrics that will **not** be updated with 2019-20 information include:
 - Performance Summary
 - Progress Summary
 - English Learner Progress
 - Test Participation
 - Percent of High School Graduates Proficient on the SAT
- The **School Grades** system is required by a state law (380.1280g) that has not been suspended or waived. MDE is required to release 2019-20 School Grades results at this time. Due to the suspension of state assessments in Spring 2020, reports will only include results for:
 - Graduation Rates
 - Chronic Absenteeism
 - English Learner Progress
 - 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 2019-20. However, all outputs for this system are results from state content area assessments, which were waived for 2019-20. The 2019-20 At-Risk Student (31a) report in MI School Data will show Not Applicable (NA) for all potential data points.

Accountability Topics

How will School Index Support Identifications (Federal law) be impacted by waived assessments?

- Any school that was identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), additional targeted support (ATS), or targeted support and improvement (TSI) in the 2019-20 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020-21 school year and continue to receive supports and interventions consistent with the school's support and improvement plan in the 2020-21 school year.

How will School Grades Support Identifications (State law) be impacted by waived assessments?

- State comprehensive support and improvement (state-CSI) from the School Grades system is tied to the same cycle as federal CSI from the School Index system. Since the 2019-20 School Index was waived, no state-CSI schools will be identified by the School Grades system using 2019-20 data. MDE will also not be identifying Reward schools from the partial data set used for the 2019-20 School Grades system.

How will Alternative Education Campuses be impacted by waived assessments?

- Alternative Education Campuses (AECs) are a group of school types (e.g., Alternative Education, Special Education Centers, etc.) within the School Grades system that do not receive letter grades or rankings and instead receive a summary status of “Met” or “Not Met”. To be an AEC, schools must meet specific reporting requirements in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) and Educational Entity Master (EEM), and must respond to an assurance of compliance with all applicable laws task within MDE’s Grant Electronic Monitoring System (GEMS). In a normal cycle, AEC eligibility is determined using MSDS and EEM data collected in the Fall and the assurance of compliance with all applicable laws task in GEMS collected in January.
- For 2019-20, AEC eligibility will be determined using MSDS and EEM data collected in Fall 2019, as is normally collected, but the assurance of compliance with all applicable laws task in GEMS will be collected in September 2020.
- For 2020-21, provided School Grades are not waived, AEC eligibility will be determined using normal collections. That is, using MSDS and EEM data collected in Fall 2020 and the assurance of compliance with all applicable laws task in GEMS collected in January 2021.

Accountability Measures

How will attendance data be reported for 2019-20, given the school year ended early?

- MDE and CEPI will use student attendance through March 13, 2020 to calculate attendance rates and chronic absenteeism. The reporting mechanism and procedure did not change for the collection of attendance data.

How will the waiving of 2019-20 state assessments impact the state’s student growth measures?

- The table below describes which assessments had growth data in a normal cycle (2018-19) and whether that assessment is likely to have growth data in 2019-20 and 2020-21.

Assessment Type	Assessment Name	Had 2018-19 Student Growth Data?	Will have 2019-20 Student Growth Data?	Will have 2020-21 Student Growth Data?
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English Acquisition	WIDA ACCESS	Yes	Likely Yes*	Likely Yes*
	WIDA Alt ACCESS	No	No	No
Content Area	M-STEP	Yes	No	Likely Yes*
	PSAT 8	Yes	No	Likely Yes*
	PSAT 9	No	No	Potentially*
	PSAT 10	No	No	Potentially*
	SAT	Yes	No	Likely Yes*
	MI-Access	Yes	No	Likely Yes*

*The growth model used by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will have the technical capability to produce growth data. However, MDE will need to run analyses to determine the validity of those results before they can be released.

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

- At this time, no new accountability indicators are planned. Unsurprisingly, there is a flurry of interest nationally to investigate potential replacement, or proxy indicators, or new indicators that would be able to provide context around virtual instruction, temporary closures, and other issues this pandemic has brought to the forefront.
- Any new indicators would need to balance short-term and long-term impact and confidence in the fairness of specific indicators and on the overall accountability system.

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 Biz Rules Placeholder

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

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

Federal Waiver(s)

- Assessment requirements in section 1111(b)(2) for the school year 2019-2020.
- Accountability and school identification requirements in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D) that are based on data from the 2019-2020 school year.
- Report card provisions related to assessments and accountability in section 1111(h) based on data from the 2019-2020 school year. These include:
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(i) (accountability system description);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(ii) (assessment results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iii)(I) (other academic indicator results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(iv) (English language proficiency results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(v) (school quality or student success indicator results);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(vi) (progress toward meeting long-term goals and measurements of interim progress);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(vii) (percentage of students assessed and not assessed);
 - Section 1111(h)(1)(C)(xi) (number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities taking an alternate assessment); and
 - Section 1111(h)(2)(C) with respect to all waived requirements in section 1111(h)(1)(C) as well as 1111(h)(2)(C)(i)-(ii) (information showing how students in an LEA and each school, respectively, achieved on the academic assessments compared to students in the State and LEA).

As part of this waiver, Michigan assures that:

- Any school that was identified for comprehensive support and improvement (CSI), additional targeted support (ATS), or targeted support and improvement (TSI) in the 2019-20 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020-21 school year and continue to receive supports and interventions consistent with the school's support and improvement plan in the 2020-21 school year.
- The State educational agency will provide the public and all LEAs in the State with notice of and the opportunity to comment on this request (e.g., by posting information regarding the waiver request and the process for commenting, on the State website).

State Waiver(s)

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