

# Preparing Students and Parents for Testing

## Relevant assessments:

### All Michigan state assessments:

- **M-STEP**
- **MME**
  - » ACT WorkKeys®
  - » SAT® with Essay
  - » 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
  - » WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
  - » WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)
  - » WIDA Screener
- **PSAT™ 8/9 and 10**
- **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2)**



Preparing Students



Engaging Families

## 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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Regardless of the test being administered, MDE requires that ALL testing staff read the **Assessment Integrity Guide** and sign the **OEAA Assessment Security Compliance Form**. A signed **Assessment Security Compliance Form**, testing schedules, and training materials should be kept on file for any staff member who participates in the administration of a state assessment or handles secure test materials. A link to the **OEAA Assessment Security Compliance Form** is also provided in the **Assessment Coordinator Quick Reference** chapter of this Training Guide.

# Intro

A number of resources and tools have been developed to help parents ease their child's anxiety about state assessment and to help students gain valuable experience with online test tools and sample test items prior to testing. It is highly recommended that schools make parents aware of these resources and tools, and provide students with opportunities to practice using these resources before they take the online or paper/pencil tests. This chapter will introduce you to these tools and resources, by answering the following questions:

- ▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments?
- ▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the PSAT, SAT, and WorkKeys?
- ▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for WIDA assessments?
- ▶ What resources are available to engage families in preparing for assessments?

## What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments?



The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has developed online resources that prepare students to take state assessments. These resources provide students the opportunity to learn about the tools and features of the online testing engine to ensure students are able to focus on the content of the test on testing day, and not the testing technology.

**Student Tutorials** – These tutorials (see Figure 1) are student-narrated videos that introduce students, teachers, and parents to the online tests and tools contained in the **M-STEP, MI-Access (FI only)**, and **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2)**. The tutorials are designed to be administered to students in a group setting, such as the classroom, using a projector or other similar resource. They can be accessed three different ways:

1. **eDIRECT** – Select **All Applications > General Information > Test Tutorials**. Click on the icon under the **Action** column. This takes you to the tutorial page.

2. **INSIGHT** (the online testing environment) – Select the yellow **DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments Tutorials** link on the bottom of the page (see Figures 1 and 2).

3. **Using Chrome** – You must use the **Chrome** browser to access the **DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments Tutorials** if you are not logged into eDIRECT or INSIGHT. If you don't use Chrome as your default browser, you will need to launch Chrome, and then copy and paste the full INSIGHT URL (<https://wbte.drctedirect.com/MI/portals/mi>) into the Chrome address bar. Once you reach the INSIGHT landing page, you will select the yellow **DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments Tutorials** link on the bottom of the page (see Figures 1 and 2).

An important component of the **Student Tutorials** is that they provide explicit training on the pause/exit/end test functionality of the online testing engine, as well as how to access and use the online assessment tools.

Figure 1 – Online Testing Video Tutorials



### Online Test Tutorials (OTTs) and Sample Item Sets

– The **Sample Item Sets** are a select group of test items in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies that encompass various kinds of technology-enhanced items (drag and drop, hot spots, etc.) and are embedded within the **OTTs** by test system (see Figure 2). Teachers can model and students can practice using the sample items. Items in the **Sample Item Sets** are selected to ensure that each grade and content area has a sample for each tool and item type that students will see in the actual test. The sets provide students and teachers with practice in solving grade-level and content-specific test items aligned to Michigan’s content standards, and provide practice in navigating the online test delivery system. The **OTTs** can be accessed two ways:

1. **INSIGHT** – Open INSIGHT and then select the **Online Tools Training** link located under the appropriate assessment for students testing online.
2. **Using Chrome** – You must use the **Chrome** browser to access the **OTTs** if you are not logged into eDIRECT or INSIGHT. If you don’t use Chrome as your default browser, you will need to launch Chrome, and then copy and paste the full INSIGHT

URL (<https://wbte.drctdirect.com/MI/portals/mi>) into the Chrome address bar. Once you reach the INSIGHT landing page, choose the **Online Tools Training** link located under the appropriate assessment (see Figure 1).

Figure 3 shows the **M-STEP OTT**. It includes:

- » **Sample Item Sets** (by grade)
- » **calculator practice**
- » **graphing practice**, and
- » **practice using some of the online supports and accommodations**

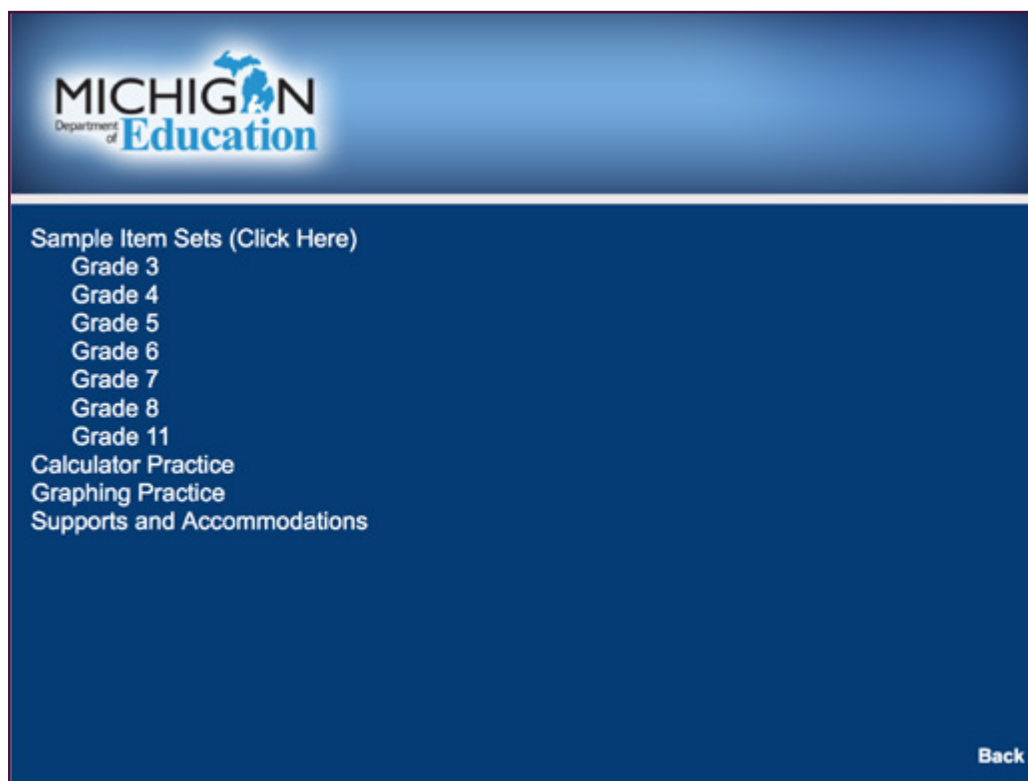
MI-Access has an **OTT for the Functional Independence** assessment, and the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2) OTT has **Sample Item Sets** for ELA and mathematics (see Figure 2).

**Paper/Pencil Sample Item Sets** – For students who will take the M-STEP paper/pencil assessments, grade-level Paper/Pencil Sample Item Sets are available for all content areas on the [M-STEP web page](#) under the **Parent/Student Information** section.

Figure 2– DRC INSIGHT



Figure 3 – M-STEP OTTs



NOTE: The **Sample Items Sets** are not considered "Practice Tests," as a practice test implies a test with the same number of items and similar level of difficulty as an actual test.

Feedback collected from previous assessment administrations indicates that students and teachers who utilized the **OTTs Sample Item Sets** felt more prepared for online testing; students reported feeling confident about taking assessments online; and school administrators and teachers experienced fewer issues related to online testing than students and teachers who did not take advantage of this resource.

As an Assessment Coordinator, you can provide training for teachers and test administrators to ensure they are aware of these tools. Show them how to find the resources, review the videos and materials, and assist them in creating a schedule for both classroom and individualized student review and practice.

The OEAA recommends that classroom teachers introduce online testing to parents via email or notes, and to their students by playing the **Student Tutorial** video in class to show students how the online testing system and tools work. Once the Student Tutorial video is shown and discussed in the classroom, teachers should then show the **Online Tools Training (OTTs)** to the entire class (on the same or another day). Additionally, each student should be provided hands-on practice with the online **Sample Item Sets** contained within the OTTs, ideally using the device they will use during testing.

## What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the PSAT™, SAT®, and ACT WorkKeys®?

The **SAT Test Coordinator** should inform students about SAT test day activities and testing schedules well in advance, so that they can know what to expect, what to bring (and what NOT to bring), where to report, and how to practice for the test.

The Test Coordinator should hold a pre-administration session in advance of test day for students. The pre-administration session allows students to:

- » go over test day procedures,
- » complete required personal information,
- » identify the colleges, universities, or scholarship programs to which they want their four free score sends to be sent, and
- » opt into the Student Search Service and complete the optional questionnaire.

This will save time on test day as the process can take up to 45 minutes to complete. For more information on conducting the pre-administration session for College Board assessments, review the **Before Test Day/Prepare Your Students** and the **Prepare**

**Your Pre-administration Session** sections, in the applicable **SAT** or **PSAT Michigan Coordinator Manuals** with testing staff.

In addition, students and their parents should be made aware that the College Board offers resources, including SAT sample test items and PSAT sample test items to help eight-graders and high school students prepare for assessments. College Board also provides the **SAT School Day Student Guide**, which is included in pre-administration shipments. In addition, Khan Academy has partnered with College Board to provide free, online practice sessions offered to Michigan SAT with Essay School Day test takers, tailored to each student's academic strengths and weaknesses. Go to the [Official SAT Practice Page](#) for more information on student resources.

The **ACT WorkKeys Assessment Coordinator** will need to inform students about where to report and what to bring (and not bring) to the test sessions. Consider holding a special student preparation session a few weeks prior to test day so that students

can fill out demographic information on the answer documents, be informed of test day activities and guidelines, and learn where to go for ACT WorkKeys sample questions. See the **Prepare Your Examinees** section on the [ACT Testing: Michigan website](#). Here you will find sample questions for each WorkKeys assessment as well as access to a free online practice test. Topics that should be communicated to students during this session should also include:

- » what to bring to the test session (several #2 pencils with erasers, photo ID, permitted calculator)

- » how to prepare for the test
- » when and where to report; if testing off-site, how they will be transported
- » what not to bring (cell phone, prohibited calculators)

Parents and students also should be made aware that ACT WorkKeys sample questions and an online practice test are available on the [ACT Testing: Michigan website](#).

## What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments?



WIDA offers a variety of assessment preparation materials and tools and guidance for educators, parents, and students on the [Michigan-specific WIDA website](#). Additionally, WIDA suggests that schools take the following steps to acclimate students to the online test platform prior to testing:

1. Preview with students the ACCESS for ELLs online assessment using their online **Test Demo**.
2. Use the **Interactive Sample Items** in conjunction with the **ACCESS for ELLs Online Sample Items for the Public** document to familiarize students with the test engine and assessment item types

NOTE: The **Interactive Sample Items** are not considered “practice tests,” as a practice test implies a test with the same number of items and similar level of difficulty as an actual test.

3. Have students independently preview the online **Practice Test**, prior to the start of testing.

NOTE: For the online **Test Demo**, the **Interactive Sample Items**, and online **Practice Test**, it is advised that you use a **Chrome** browser. If you do not use Chrome as your default browser, you will need to launch Chrome, and then copy and paste the full URLs found on the [WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs](#) page into your Chrome browser address bar.

Educators preparing students to take the ACCESS for ELLs paper/pencil assessment can use the **Student Booklet** links (by grade level) on the [WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs](#) web page to preview **Paper Sample Items** and acclimate students to the format of the Listening and Speaking domains, delivered by CD. (Sample items for Reading and Writing are not available for ACCESS for ELLs Paper at this time.) [WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs](#) web page also offers a user guide to **Paper Sample Items – ACCESS for ELLs Grades 1-12 Paper-Based Sample Items** – which includes more instructions on how best to utilize the **Paper Sample Items** with students.

## What resources are available to engage families in preparing for assessments?



The OEAA has a growing set of resources designed to help families learn more about the assessments their child takes, how to prepare for the testing experience, and how results are reported.

Included in these resources is a **Communications Toolkit** for school administrators that offers timely and accurate information that can be shared with families. The **Toolkit** is updated each season – during the test administration window and the results reporting window – and can be found on each assessment’s web page; updates also are announced in the weekly Michigan Department of Education (MDE) **Spotlight on Student Assessment and Administration** newsletter. Building Administrators can use the **Toolkit’s** helpful documents and customizable templates to communicate with parents before the testing window opens, and again when state assessment results become publicly available. The **Toolkit** documents can also help answer questions that might arise – including requests to allow children to “opt out” of testing.

Here is a sample of the type of resources included in the **Toolkit** and also listed separately under the **Parent/Student Information** header on each assessment web page:

- » [M-STEP: What can students expect?](#) (a video resource)
- » [Michigan’s State Assessment System: What it Is, What it Means – And What it Offers](#) (a handout and companion PowerPoint presentation)
- » [Parent Guide to MI-Access](#)
- » [Student Testing: What Parents Can Do to Help Students Prepare](#) (a handout)
- » [M-STEP/MME: How to Read Your Child’s Score Report](#) (handouts)
- » [Parent Guide to State Assessments in Michigan – National PTA](#)
- » [Superintendent Parent Letter on M-STEP and MME](#) (includes opt-out information)
- » [What Parents Should Know About Assessment](#)

New and updated resources for families are occasionally posted to each Michigan state assessment web page, so be sure to revisit these pages whenever you have questions about what families can do to experience successful assessments.