

RENAISSANCE®



# Optimize learning with Star 360 assessments

## Overview

Michigan students and teachers returning to learning for the 2020-2021 school year are charting new territory. Many students have missed learning or forgotten what they knew of the skills and standards from the previous grade level after COVID-19 shuttered schools.

Now more than ever, educators need to understand what their students know and still need to learn. Star 360 equips every teacher with the tools to pinpoint learning gaps, intervene effectively, and prioritize instruction to help students meet end-of-grade learning milestones.

- **Star Early Literacy** tests a child’s understanding of word knowledge and skills, comprehension, meaning, and numbers and operations. This computer-adaptive test is normed for grades K–3 but may be used with students outside of that range if it is appropriate to the curriculum.
- **Star Reading** measures a student’s understanding of vocabulary, comprehension, and ability to analyze, understand, and evaluate literary and informational texts. This computer-adaptive test is normed for K–12.
- **Star Math** assesses a student’s grasp of concepts including numbers and operations, algebraic thinking, geometry, measurement, data analysis, statistics, and probability. This computer-adaptive test is normed for grades 1–12 but may be used with students outside of that range if it is appropriate to the curriculum.
- **Star CBM** allows teachers to screen students and measure their progress against critical reading and math development milestones through curriculum-based measures (CBMs). Star CBM Reading measures are letter naming (K–1), letter sounds (K–1), phoneme segmentation (K–1), receptive nonsense words (K), expressive nonsense words (1–2), rapid automatic naming (K–3), and passage oral reading (1–6). Star CBM Math measures are numeral recognition (K–1), quantity comparison (K–1), addition to 10 (K–1), addition to 20 (2) subtraction from 10 (2–3), mixed addition and subtraction (3) and multiplication to 100 (3).
- **Star Custom** is a K–12 formative assessment platform that includes pre-loaded reading and math skill probes to affirm students’ skills mastery; Renaissance-authored reading, math, and science items; and test-creation tools that allow teachers to efficiently create and administer quizzes or tests for any content area.

On the pages that follow, we answer common questions about Renaissance’s reliable and valid Star assessments. Educators worldwide trust Renaissance’s Star 360 suite to provide the right tests at the right time to support learning for every student. Star 360 assessments are:



### Purposeful

Inform instruction, monitor progress, track mastery, and personalize practice.



### Proven

Trust research-proven tests to deliver reliable, valid, and actionable data.



### Powerful

See where students stand on the path to proficiency in about 20 minutes.



### Predictive

Eliminate surprises on state tests and proactively track college readiness.

## How do the Star assessments help determine if my students are making meaningful progress toward reading and math standards mastery?

The Star 360 assessments align to the Michigan K-12 Standards and give educators clear insight into what their students know and can do in relation to grade-level expectations. Our empirically validated learning progressions for reading and math ensure the Star assessments align to and assess the skills and standards of the Michigan K-12 Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics.

Star 360 features a Michigan-specific Focus Skills tool (figure 1) tailored to the Michigan K–12 Standards. Focus skills are the most critical skills for a pupil to learn at a grade level. These key building blocks support a pupil's ability to read and comprehend. Pupils need proficiency with the focus skills to be successful in reading at their grade levels and to progress in the grades that follow.

Additionally, Star 360's assessments for reading and math accurately predict student achievement Michigan's M-STEP tests in English language arts and mathematics, according to the Pathway to Proficiency linking study (available at [http://bit.ly/Star\\_MSTEP](http://bit.ly/Star_MSTEP)). Results from the linking analysis revealed that Star Reading and Star Math are accurate predictors of the M-STEP, meaning educators can use Star Reading and Star Math scores to:

- Identify early in the year pupils likely to miss reading and math yearly progress goals in time to make meaningful adjustments to instruction well before the year-end test.
- Forecast the percent of pupils at each M-STEP performance level to serve as an early warning system for building and district administrators and allow redirection of resources as needed.

**Figure 1. Chart a path to success.** Educators use the clearly identified focus skills within Star Reading's learning progression to intervene effectively and prioritize instruction for their students. A student's mastery of focus skills is integral to future success.

LITERACY   Michigan   Grade 1		FOCUS SKILLS
	Foundational Skills: Fluency	4
	Foundational Skills: Phonics and Word Recognition	16
	Foundational Skills: Phonological Awareness	6
	Foundational Skills: Print Concepts	3
FOCUS SKILL	DESCRIPTION	POSITION
Locate conventions that begin and end a sentence CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1A	Locate the capital letter that begins a sentence, and the period, question mark, or exclamation point that ends it	98
Know type of sentence based on end punctuation CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1A	Distinguish kinds of sentences based on their end punctuation	99
Identify dialogue indicated by quotation marks CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.1.1A	Identify the dialogue that quotation marks indicate	100
	Informational Text: Craft and Structure	1
	Informational Text: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas	2
	Informational Text: Key Ideas and Details	3

## How do the Star assessments support students with disabilities, English learners, and other students with special needs?

The Star assessments have many supports for students with disabilities, English learners, and other students with special needs. As detailed in table 1, a variety of presentation, setting, timing, and response accommodations are available to support students with disabilities and special needs in completing a Star 360 computer-adaptive test. For more information, please visit [http://bit.ly/Star\\_Accommodations](http://bit.ly/Star_Accommodations).

**Table 1. Support student needs.** Numerous accommodations are available to help students access and successfully complete the Star 360 computer-adaptive assessments.

Accommodation type	Allowable accommodations
Timing accommodations	Allow educators to increase the amount of time available for students to respond to Star 360 computer-adaptive assessments for students who need more time to demonstrate their proficiency. Test validity is unaffected, as a student's performance on a test question remains solely a function of the test's calibrated difficulty and what the student knows and can do—not how quickly the student can do it.
Setting accommodations	Permit changes to the physical environment where the test is administered. Examples include administering the test in a separate location, in small group, individually, or in a location with minimal distractions; or administering the test in a room with special acoustics, lighting, or furniture.
Presentation accommodations	Allow students to access test directions in ways that that may not require them to visually decode standard print because of a physical, sensory, or cognitive disability. Examples of presentation accommodations include magnifying the size of the type; reading testing directions (but not the test itself) orally to students; signing testing directions (but not the test itself) to hearing-impaired students; or reading testing directions (but not the test itself) in the student's native language.
Response accommodations	Allow students to record responses to test questions in alternate ways. Examples of response accommodations include altering the method of input from mouse to keyboard (or vice versa), or to an assistive device. Assessments also can be administered on an iPad or other supported tablet to utilize touchscreen functionality. Teachers also may have a student respond to questions orally, and then enter the student's response into the system.

In addition, every Star 360 subscription includes English and Spanish editions of Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, and Star Math. This ensures educators have the support they need as they help native Spanish speaking students make the transition to English-language literacy, meet English-language learning standards, and achieve English-language readiness for college and careers. For more information, please visit <http://bit.ly/StarInSpanish>.

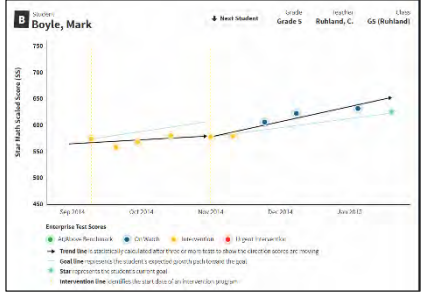
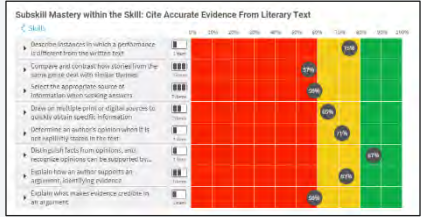
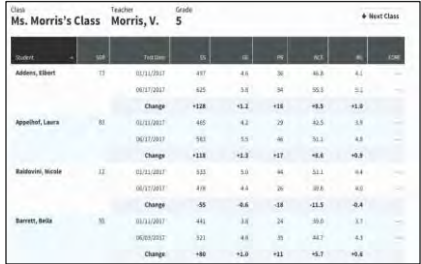
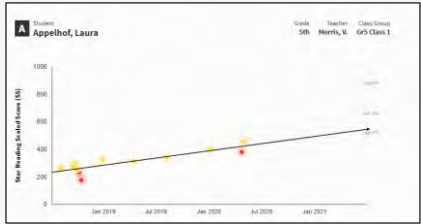
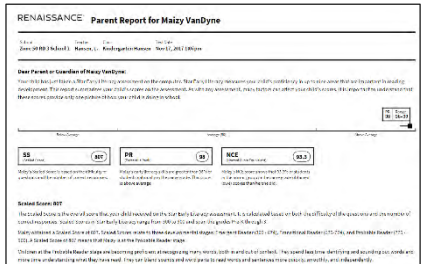
Parallel assessments mean educators get a true comparison of how students are performing in their native Spanish and English languages. Separating a student's skills mastery from his or her language mastery gives a teacher vital information about how to focus and personalize instruction and practice. Disaggregating a student's assessments by grade and English-language proficiency also helps a teacher to see whether the student's performance is typical for his or her grade and English-language proficiency level. This means educators can use Star Spanish assessments to determine if students lack the English-language skills necessary to demonstrate their mastery of skills in English, if they are struggling with specific academic content or skills, or if both language issues and content knowledge pose a challenge.

## What reports and information do the Star assessments provide?

As soon as a student completes a test, the Star software automatically scores all of the computer-adaptive assessments, as well as all selected-response items within Star Custom. Test results are available immediately and are presented in easy-to-understand reports and dashboards. Star 360 reports include an array of scores, which are used to guide instructional recommendations. Table 2 provides an overview of frequently used Star 360 reports. To explore reports and dashboards, please visit <http://bit.ly/KeyStarReports>.

**Table 2. Understand performance.** A wealth of reports available at the student, group, class, grade, and school district level allow teachers and administrators to understand and unpack student learning trends. Users may refine how they view data by selecting to view reports for students within specific subgroups, such as English learners, students with disabilities, and students who participate in free or reduced-meal programs.

Report name	Available levels	Description	Sample
<a href="#">Screening</a>	Group/class	Graphs students' placement above/below benchmarks. Includes a choice of school, district, and M-Step benchmarks.	
<a href="#">Diagnostic</a>	Student or group/class	Presents diagnostic and skill information for an individual student, a group of students, or a class. Includes progress toward school, district, and state benchmarks.	
<a href="#">Instructional planning</a>	Student or group/class	Lists recommended skills for instruction based on the most recent test. Includes progress toward school, district, and state benchmarks.	

Report name	Available levels	Description	Sample
<a href="#">Progress Monitoring</a>	Student	Graphs an individual student's progress toward a learning goal. Often used for MTSS/RTI.	
<a href="#">Mastery dashboard</a>	Student	Enables educators to view student progress on Michigan state standards and drill down to the skill level.	
<a href="#">Growth</a>	Group/class	Shows growth for students over time, with an emphasis on student growth percentile	
<a href="#">Annual progress</a>	Student or group/class	Graphs student progress longitudinally using school, district, or Michigan M-STEP benchmarks.	
<a href="#">Parent</a>	Student	Informs parents and guardians about a student's progress. Available in <a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">Spanish</a> .	

## **Can I use Star assessments to test students remotely?**

Yes, you can. Renaissance has extensive experience with remote administration of the Star 360 assessments and has partnered with virtual school programs for years to support this need. We've drawn from this experience to create educator and parent best practice materials for remote administration of the Star assessments.

Star 360 remote guidance materials include suggested testing procedures, communication tips, videos and more to yield the most reliable results and confidently inform instruction. An educator webinar addressing best practices for remote testing also is available. Family guides are available in English and Spanish for Star CBM, and in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Creole, and Arabic for the Star 360 computer-adaptive assessments. Please visit <https://www.renaissance.com/renaissance-everywhere/> to download these educator, administrator, and family resources.

## **What instructional or classroom resources and supports for teachers does Star provide?**

Renaissance's learning progressions for reading and math clearly define Michigan-specific focus skills in reading and math. Considered the building blocks of a student's reading or math ability, focus skills are the critical skills a student must master at each grade level to continue to build reading mastery and achieve college and career readiness.

Focus skills are essential to the progression of learning, prerequisite skills that support the development of other skills, and/or part of a unique emphasis within a specific standard set.

Focus skills are especially valuable to help educators chart learning paths for students who are missing grade-level benchmarks for mastery. A teacher uses the student's Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, or Star Math placement on the learning progression to understand where mastery ends and intervention must begin. The focus skills help the teacher further prioritize instruction, intervention, and practice to help the student catch up to and keep up with grade-level expectations for skills mastery.

Renaissance released Michigan-specific educator workbooks for reading and math focus skills. To learn more or download one of these workbooks, please visit <https://www.renaissance.com/focus-skills/>.

Renaissance regularly hosts free webinars to provide new insights and practical tips to teachers. Topics include:

- The Critical Role of Assessment in Our 'New Normal'
- Assessing Emergent Bilinguals: Celebra lo que saben
- Best Practices for Remote Testing
- Using Focus Skills to Close COVID-19 Learning Gaps,
- Making Student Success Visible: How to Act on Growth Scores

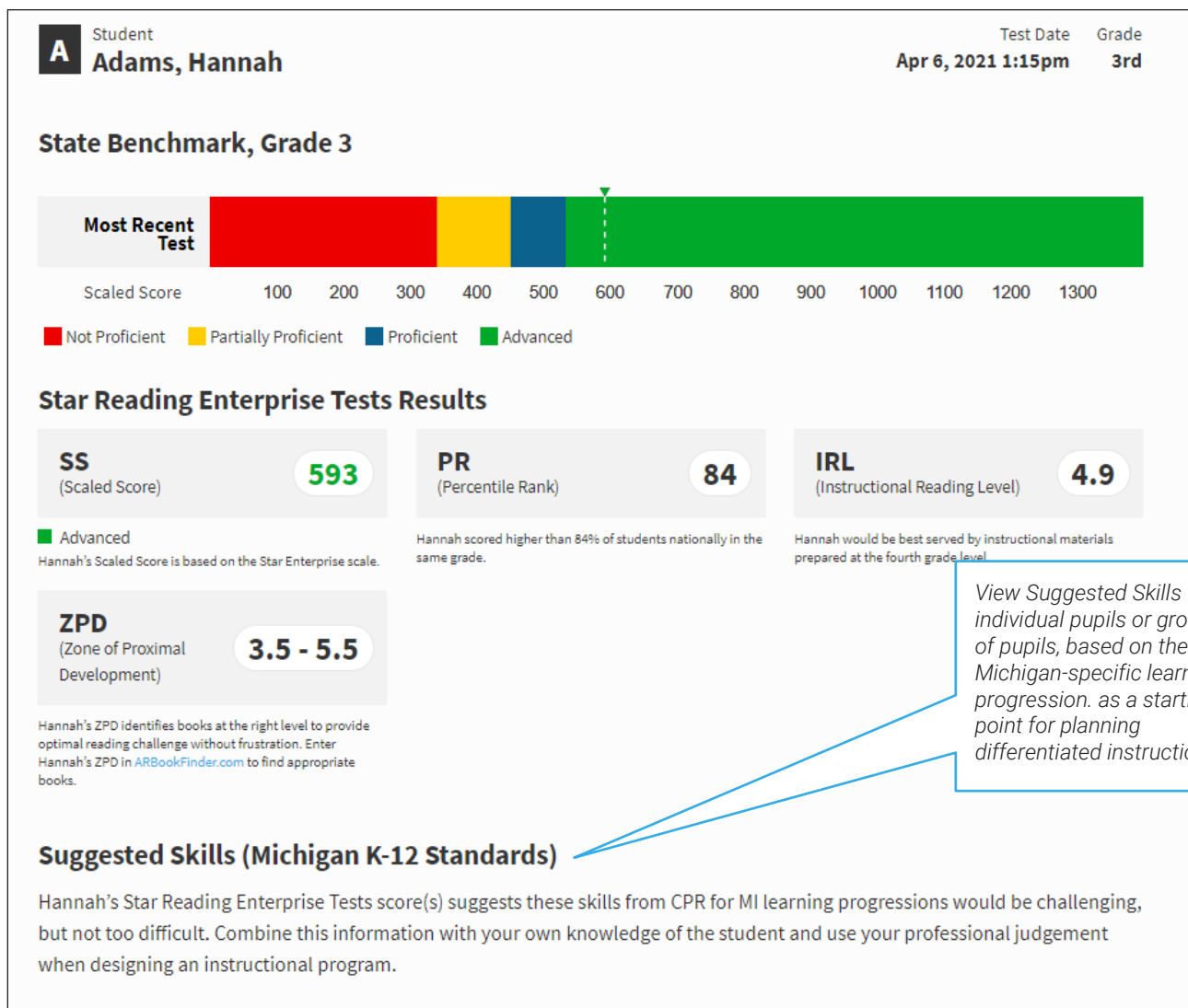
To access on-demand webinars or sign up for live events as they become available, visit <https://www.renaissance.com/webinars/>.

Within the Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, and Star Math software, the learning progressions for reading and math also link to tens of thousands of free, instructional resources that align to state standards. These resources help educators personalize instruction, intervention, and practice to match students' learning styles.

The Instructional Planning Report (figure 2) for Star Early Literacy, Star Reading, and Star Math also reports from the Michigan-specific learning progression. Available at both the class and student levels, the Instructional Planning Report graphs current and projected scaled scores against school, district, or M-STEP benchmarks.

The Instructional Planning Report helps teachers identify skills (figure 3, next page) that individual pupils and groups need to learn to advance in the learning progression. This information provides teachers with an efficient way to understand where pupils are in the learning progression and the types of skills, they are ready to learn next.

**Figure 2. Pinpoint the skills pupils are ready to learn.** The Instructional Planning Report shows skills pupils are ready to work on to help teachers plan instruction and guide pupils toward mastery of standards.





**Figure 3. Drill down with focus skills.** The state standards-specific focus skills aid educators by pinpointing exactly what students are ready to learn next and where they need additional instruction.

### Key Ideas and Details

This score suggests Samuel is ready for instruction and practice with the following skills:

- 2 Describe setting using details and illustrations
- 2 **Focus Skill** Ask / answer 5W questions in literary text
- 2 **Focus Skill** Use key details to describe characters
- 2 Identify a story's problem and its resolution
- 2 **Focus Skill** Describe how characters respond to events
- 2 **Focus Skill** Determine central message / moral of stories
- 2 Recount stories in detail

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### Craft and Structure

This score suggests Samuel is ready for instruction and practice with the following skills:

- 2 Use strategies to define general academic words
- 2 **Focus Skill** Describe overall structure of a story

In addition to focus skills and instructional resources, Renaissance also provides educators with superior customer support. We assign implementation coordinators to work with district personnel to assist with the setup and installation of Renaissance solutions. Every subscriber receives unlimited e-mail, toll-free phone, and live chat support from our U.S. based experts between 7:30 am and 8 pm eastern time, Monday through Friday. Additional resources that are available 24/7 and included at no charge with purchase are:

- The **Help** articles searchable database, which includes topic overviews, implementation guides, report information, step-by-step directions to perform specific tasks, troubleshooting tips, glossaries, and links to related articles and resources.
- The **Knowledge Base**, which supports keyword searches that may be refined by solution, platform, or category to yield detailed, step-by-step answers to common technical questions.
- **Smart Start** product training, which features on-demand, multi-media training that outlines critical first steps to start using the Star 360 assessments
- The **Renaissance Blog**, which addresses a range of topics, such as student growth, personalized learning, and intervention. Posts also feature shareable tips, resources, and insightful thoughts on K–12 education.
- The **Renaissance Resources** portal, which links educators to vital resources to boost their implementations. Content includes product updates, resources, informational videos, and learning analytics. Educators also can use this portal to register for upcoming events or access on-demand webinars led by industry experts.

### ***How can I learn more about the Star assessments?***

Watch the on-demand webinar with Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA) Executive Director Paul Liabenow and Renaissance to learn how the Star assessments support Michigan's state policies. In this session you will learn more about:

- Star benchmarks for Return to Learn, including M-STEP linking, state standard reporting, and more ([http://bit.ly/MDOE\\_ReturnToLearn](http://bit.ly/MDOE_ReturnToLearn))
- Screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring Star reports for Read by Grade Three ([http://bit.ly/MDOE\\_ReadByGrade3](http://bit.ly/MDOE_ReadByGrade3))
- Renaissance best practices for remote testing from years of experience (<http://bit.ly/StarRemoteTesting>)

To view the Return to Learn with Star Assessments in Michigan webinar, please visit [http://bit.ly/MEMSPA\\_Star](http://bit.ly/MEMSPA_Star).

For more information about the Star assessments, please visit [www.renaissance.com](http://www.renaissance.com) or contact Account Executive Aaron Hartman at (586) 533-1107 or [aaron.hartman@renaissance.com](mailto:aaron.hartman@renaissance.com).