

Spotlight

on Student Assessment and Accountability

What's New

Week of January 28, 2021

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Waiver Request Submitted

On January 25, 2021, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) delivered a [request](#) to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to waive certain assessment and accountability requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for Spring 2021. MDE is seeking public comment on this waiver request. Any interested party may submit comments by close of business on **February 12, 2021** via email to: MDE-ESSA@Michigan.gov (include "2021 ESSA Assessment and Accountability Waiver" in the subject line).

At this time, the submitted waiver request is strictly a request. It is not an approval to change any plans regarding assessment. MDE and the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) must continue to prepare for the required spring assessments in the event the USED does not grant this waiver request.

We understand that the WIDA testing opened this week. Until we hear any news regarding our request to USED, districts/schools are to continue to plan to assess your English learners as safely as possible. If MDE does receive approval to waive this year's assessments, WIDA testing is still encouraged. Completed tests will be scored and used for EL exit purposes. The results will not be used for high-stakes accountability.

Updates regarding the status of this waiver request will be provided through the weekly [Spotlight on Student Assessment and Accountability newsletter](#) (www.michigan.gov/mde-spotlight). Always bear in mind that the health, safety, and well-being of students, educators, and their families is MDE's first priority.

New OEAA Secure Site COVID-19 School Closures Page

The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) Secure Site has a new COVID-19 School Closures page. This page is to be used by a district or school that is closed for in-person instruction during one of the assessment windows, including the WIDA assessment window that just opened. Follow the [instructions](#) found on the [OEAA Secure Site Training web page](#) under the **Miscellaneous Secure Site Functions** section to document such closures.

WIDA Testing Must Be Completed In-Person

With this week's opening of the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessments window, it is important for educators to understand that the assessments must be administered in-person.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the WIDA Consortium attempted to find solutions to mitigate the burden in-person testing has on test administration during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the WIDA Consortium (composed of 42 states and territories) identified significant concerns that outweigh the potential benefits of a remote administration. The concerning issues included equity, validity of the test results, demands on local educators, test security, and costs. In agreement with prevailing state and WIDA subcommittee input—and with the WIDA Executive Committee's recommendation—the WIDA Consortium decided not to develop a remote administration for the 2021 summative WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments. Educators are encouraged to review the memos emailed to local and intermediate school district superintendents on [December 2](#) and [December 8, 2020](#).

Assessment coordinators must keep track of why students might be unable to test, including parent refusals and issues related to COVID-19. Reasons for students not testing should be submitted during the Students Not Tested window in the OEAA Secure Site in the spring. MDE does not require documentation for these reasons.

WIDA Assessment Office Hours Continuing

Due to their popularity and feedback from attendees, the WIDA Assessment Office Hours will continue throughout the remainder of the testing window. The office hours are scheduled for the following Wednesdays from 3:00–3:30 p.m., using the same Zoom link for each meeting.

- February 3, 10, and 17
- March 3, 10, 17, and 24
- April 7

[Zoom Link](https://msu.zoom.us/j/97649484974) (<https://msu.zoom.us/j/97649484974>)

Bubbling-In Student Information on WIDA Test Booklets

Educators are reminded that even if a Pre-ID label is affixed to the student test booklets, some information still has to be bubbled-in by hand. Districts choosing not to bubble in the minimum amount of information on student books that do have a Pre-ID label are at risk of DRC and MDE being unable to match a test booklet to a particular student if the label is damaged or falls off. For the list of the minimum information to be filled in, refer to the Appendix on page 160 of the [Michigan Specific Test Administration Manual](#) on the [WIDA web page](#) (www.michigan.gov/wida).

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

M-STEP Test Administration Manual Available

The [2021 M-STEP Test Administration Manual \(TAM\)](#) is now available on the [M-STEP web page](#) (www.michigan.gov/mstep) under the **What's New** and **Current Assessment Administration** sections. The manual provides important information for both online and paper/pencil M-STEP administrations.

Updates to the M-STEP administration were planned for Spring 2020 but were not implemented due to the cancellation of testing. The following updates will be applied in Spring 2021:

- Test Administrators are no longer required to read the TAM. Instead, they are required to read the **Test Administrator's Directions and Manual** document(s) for each test they will administer (these will be posted soon – watch Spotlight for details!)
- The **Incident Reporting Guide** has been updated to reflect policy changes:
 - » Most incident reports are expected to be submitted within two school days; some incident reports must be submitted on the day of the incident in order for test regeneration to be considered.
 - » In addition to District Assessment Coordinators, any authorized user of the OEAA Secure Site may submit incident reports, as determined by policy/procedure of the local district and/or building.
 - » Documentation to be submitted for incident reports involving errors in designated supports and/or accommodations has been updated.

- **TTS for Directions Only** is available on all M-STEP tests (excluding VSL and Stacked Spanish). The decision to use this new feature is made by the District and/or Building Assessment Coordinator.

All test coordinators and accommodations providers involved in the M-STEP administration should read and know the policies, procedures, and guidelines documented in the TAM, to ensure a valid, equitable, and trouble-free M-STEP administration.

New MI- Access Science Alternate Content Expectations

Reminder: The new science alternate content expectations for MI-Access (Michigan's alternate assessment) were posted to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) website in 2020. The alternate content expectations can be found on the [MI-Access web page](#) (www.michigan.gov/mi-access). Select the [Michigan's alternate content expectations](#) link at the top of the page.

Immediate Need: MI-Access Item Writers

New writers are needed to develop items for the new alternate science content expectations. Specifically, educators who work with students who typically take the Functional Independence level of the MI-Access assessment for science are needed. There is also an ongoing need for item writers at all levels of MI-Access in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, and social studies.

If you are interested in writing items for the MI-Access assessments, fill out the [Assessment Committee Participation Application](#). Be sure to indicate your interest in being an **Item Writer**. Item writers are supported throughout the item writing process and are also paid for items developed for MDE.

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

Webinar with Curriculum Associates - MiDataHub, and iReady Updates

February 2, 2021, 11:00-11:30 a.m. EST

- Resources to address unfinished learning
- MiDataHub updates
- New families report

[Webinar Registration](#)

For access questions, contact Danielle Falcon at dfalcon@cainc.com



Reminders

2021 Michigan School Testing Conference

The 2021 Michigan School Testing Conference (MSTC) will be held in mid-February, but this year in a very different manner—virtually. The uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have affected all of us deeply and in very different ways. In planning the 2021 conference, the feasibility of an in-person conference became very challenging, given restrictions (or even bans) on large-group gatherings and the limited space for “social distancing” at the Sheraton Ann Arbor Hotel, where the conference was held during the past two years.

The MSTC Planning Committee is shifting the 2021 MSTC Conference to an all-virtual event to be held **February 16-18, 2021**. This year’s conference will be the 61st annual event. The mission of MSTC is to provide educators with professional learning opportunities about assessment, as well as information on national, state, and local assessment programs and trends. The conference is unique in its match to the needs of Michigan educators, featuring examples of

outstanding practices from local educators, as well as state and nationally renowned experts in the field.

The annual Michigan School Testing Conference consists of a day for workshops and two days of plenary and clinic sessions.

On **Tuesday, February 16, 2021, from 8:30 to 11:45 a.m. and 12:45 to 3:45 p.m.**, six half-day and two full-day workshops will be offered. Login will start at 8 a.m.

The conference itself takes place on **Wednesday, February 17, 2021** and continues through **Thursday, February 18, 2021**. Keynote presenters on Wednesday, February 17 include Jay McTighe (Educational Author/Consultant) and Andy Middlestead (Michigan Department of Education), while Mike Nettles (Educational Testing Service) will be the keynote speaker on Thursday, February 18.

For [conference program information](#) and registration, go to the [MSTC online registration site](#).

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

Formative

Interim

Summative

How do English Learners Participate in Michigan State Assessments?

The Title I and Title III portions of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) mandate that English learners (ELs) (defined as any student whose home language is other than English) must participate in statewide and district-wide summative assessments. Besides providing results for accountability purposes, assessing ELs provides important information that schools and districts can use to determine whether their EL students are making progress toward English language development standards as well as academic content standards. However, there are some challenges involved with assessing ELs for both the students and their educators, which we will discuss in this article.

ELs must participate in two types of assessments: English language proficiency and academic achievement assessments. In Michigan, K-12 ELs are assessed annually with the summative WIDA assessments that measure speaking, writing, reading, and listening skills as students progress in levels toward English language proficiency. Students eventually score well enough on this assessment to exit the EL program. ELs must also participate in Michigan's statewide system of assessments—such as M-STEP, SAT, and PSAT—that measure academic content standards in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Because ELs have an increased risk of falling behind their native English-speaking peers academically, or of dropping out of school altogether, it is paramount to make sure that their English language skills remain on par for them to access increasingly rigorous academic content taught in English. High-quality state and local assessments that provide data on progress toward English language proficiency as well as academic content standards are critical for educators in making programmatic decisions that help increase the potential for EL success in core academic subjects, and in careers and college.

To increase the possibility for success, a wide variety of universal tools (such as English glossaries and dictionaries, oral presentation of questions other than reading), designated supports, (such as text-to-speech, stacked translations, and glossaries), and accommodations (such as the use of scribes, braille, video sign language) are available to ELs as they participate in both types of assessments. Because each student has individual needs and abilities, and because supports and accommodations vary by assessment and grade level, educators must make carefully considered decisions as to which supports should be available for assessment purposes.

Resources

[How do English learners participate in state assessments?](#) Learning Point, Michigan Assessment Consortium

[English Learners and ESSA: What Educators Need to Know](#) (TESOL, 2016)

[MDE Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#)

[MDE's English Learner Resources Page](#)

Put into Practice

Seek out your district's Title III Director and/or EL teachers to find out:

- how WIDA's English Language Development Standards, data from the summative WIDA assessments, and local assessments are used to inform decisions about instruction for ELs
- how many EL students attend the district, the most frequently spoken languages, and even the number of refugee or migrant students in the district; this demographic information can help you to understand your students and better serve them

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

CB College Board Corner

Information on SAT®, PSAT™ 8/9, and PSAT™ 10 provided by the College Board

Questions about Fall or Spring PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, or SAT?

- Call the Michigan Educator Hotline: 866-870-3127 (select Option 1)
- Email michiganadministratorsupport@collegeboard.org

WHAT'S NEW

If your school administered the PSAT/NMSQT to students on January 26, those test books must be returned. Please return these books as soon as possible.

Any testing materials and manuals that you might have in your building from Fall 2020 administrations of the PSAT 8/9, PSAT/NMSQT, or SAT must not be used for Spring 2021 testing.

This includes answer sheets, manuals, and especially test books. Materials including answer sheets, extra forms, and manuals can be securely destroyed. We recommend doing this before your shipment of Spring 2021 materials arrive in March, to eliminate the possibility of the materials being mixed up.

Test books for the October 2020 PSAT/NMSQT and the PSAT 8/9 did not need to be returned to College Board. These can be distributed to students. If the books have not been returned to students, keep them separate from the Spring 2021 materials that will arrive the week of March 22, 2021. Use of any Fall 2020 test books in April 2021 will result in student scores being invalidated.

REMINDERS

Michigan Testing Manuals

Michigan-specific testing manuals will be available for the SAT with Essay, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9. There are three SAT manuals, one PSAT 10 manual, and one PSAT 8/9 manual. You will receive a **sample** set of manuals in the Coordinator Planning Kit, which will be delivered the week of March 1, 2021. The full set of manuals to support your school will be sent in the preadministration shipment, to be delivered the week of **March 22, 2021**.

All manuals are posted for early review on the [mme web page](http://www.mme.gov) (www.michigan.gov/mme) and [psat web page](http://www.psat.org) (www.michigan.gov/psat).

Coming Soon

- Coordinator planning kits will arrive in schools the week of **March 1, 2021**. The kits include a sample set of manuals coordinators can use to begin preparing for the administration.
- Coordinators will receive an email the week of March 1, 2021, with a link to access the required online training from College Board. Completion of this training is required each spring. More information about training will be available in February.

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

ACT WorkKeys

What's New

Off-site Testing

Off-site testing must be approved by the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA). Submit your requests using the [OEAA Secure Site](http://www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure) (www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure) through **May 4, 2021**. For additional information, refer to the [December 3, 2020 Spotlight](http://www.michigan.gov/mde-spotlight) (www.michigan.gov/mde-spotlight).

ACT additionally requires that the off-site testing location name and address is documented in the Test Room Report portion of the Test Administration Form folder.

Reminders

ACT WorkKeys Training Webinars

All school staff are invited to attend ACT's optional online Workkeys training webinars. These sessions will provide an overview of how to administer the WorkKeys assessments, including receiving and returning test materials. Use the links below to register for one or both sessions. Each session will be recorded and posted to the ACT-hosted website in the Preparation stage, for those unable to attend.

- **Wednesday, February 3, 2021**, 10-11 a.m. ET, [Register](#)
- **Tuesday, March 9, 2021**, 3:30-4:30 p.m. ET, [Register](#)

Upcoming Events and Deadlines

For all upcoming events and deadlines, be sure to reference the following documents:

- [ACT WorkKeys Schedule of Events](#) posted on the **WorkKeys on Paper** page.
- [MME and High School PSAT List of Important Dates](#) found on the [MME web page](#) (www.michigan.gov/mme) under **General Information**.

Contacting ACT

If you have questions, you may:

1. contact ACT via the [Contact Us web page](http://www.act.org/aap/state/contact.html) (www.act.org/aap/state/contact.html)
2. call ACT at 800-553-6244 between 9:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. ET
 - standard time: ext. 2800
 - accommodations: ext.1788
3. email accommodations questions to ACTStateAccoms@act.org

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

Important Dates

Approaching Deadlines!

February 4, 2021

- Pre-identification of students for **Winter 2021 Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments** **DEADLINE**
- Pre-identification of students for **M-STEP Passage-based Writing Field Test** **DEADLINE**

February 5, 2021

- **Winter 2021 Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments** online test administration window **CLOSES**
- **M-STEP Passage-based Writing Field Test** online test administration window (refer to the [November 12 Spotlight](#) for information) **CLOSES**

Coming Next Week . . .

February 3, 2021

- **ACT WorkKeys** Test Administration Training Webinar [Register](#)

January – February 2021

M-STEP and MI-Access

Now – March 5, 2021

- Window for [Alternate INSIGHT Availability requests](#) – for schools with regular instructional hours after 4 p.m., who plan to schedule **M-STEP** or **MI-Access FI** test sessions that extend beyond 4 p.m.

WIDA

Now – April 9, 2021

- **WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs** Off-site Test Administration Request window in OEAA Secure Site

Now – April 9, 2021

- **WIDA ACCESS for ELLs** Pre-identification of students in OEAA Secure Site window

Now – April 9, 2021

- **WIDA ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs** Testing window (extended for Spring 2021)

SAT and PSAT

Now – February 22, 2021

- Window to submit state-allowed accommodations and English learner extended time requests for **SAT with Essay, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9**

M-STEP, MI-Access, SAT, PSAT, and ACT WorkKeys

Now – February 17, 2021

- **M-STEP, MI-Access, SAT, PSAT, and ACT WorkKeys** Pre-ID for barcode labels and Materials Order window

March 2021

ACT WorkKeys

March 9, 2021:

- Test Administration Training Webinar [Register here](#)

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues

Contacts

For assistance with assessment or accountability issues:

Assessment and Accountability Call Center

877-560-8378 (select appropriate option)

Options	Topics
1	to report cheating and unethical behavior by a district/school in regards to state assessments
2	for support of Central Office Services (COS), DRC INSIGHT Portal, and INSIGHT for the online M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K-2)
3	for support of the OEAA Secure Site for <u>all</u> state assessments, administration and policy questions related to M-STEP, MI-Access, Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K-2), and accountability reporting
4	for questions about the College Entrance and Workskills assessments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligibility, MDE policies, and OEAA Secure Site Support 2. SAT, PSAT 8/9, and PSAT 10 – College Board 3. WorkKeys – ACT
5	for questions about the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, and support for WIDAAMS, INSIGHT, and Central Office Services (COS)
8	for all other questions

Email

For assessment questions:

mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

For accountability questions:

mde-accountability@michigan.gov

For assistance with WIDA Screener, W-APT, and the WIDA Secure Portal questions:

(for questions not covered in options 3 and 5 in the table above)

WIDA Client Services

866-276-7735

Call Center: 877-560-8378 (select appropriate option) for assistance with assessment or accountability issues