

ASSESSMENT

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says (from various sections of law)

380.1278(a)(4)(b) A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a pupil has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the pupil's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the department or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

380.1278(a)(4)(c) A school district or public school academy shall also grant a pupil a credit if the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the department or the pupil earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

380.1278(a)(3) The requirements for a high school diploma are in addition to any local requirements imposed by the board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy. The board of a school district or board of directors of a public school academy, as a local requirement for a high school diploma, may require a pupil to complete some or all of the subject area assessments, the Michigan Merit Examination, or MI Access assessments, if appropriate for the pupil.

380.1278(b)(1)(d) Not later than 3 years after the effective date of this section, develop or select and approve assessments that may be used by school districts and public school academies to determine whether a pupil has successfully completed a credit required under the Michigan merit standard under subsection (1) or section 1278a(1)(a). The assessments for each credit shall measure a pupil's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit. The department shall develop or select and approve assessments for at least each of the following credits: algebra I, geometry, algebra II, Earth science, biology, physics, chemistry, grade 9 English, grade 10 English, grade 11 English, grade 12 English, world history, United States history, economics, and civics.

What the Michigan Merit Exam Law Says (Updated 1/08)

388.1704b Michigan merit examination.

Sec. 104b (1) Beginning in the 2006 calendar year, in order to receive state aid under this act, a district shall comply with this section and shall administer the state assessments under section 1279 or the Michigan merit examination to pupils in grade 11 as provided in this section, as follows:

(a) For pupils in grade 11 in the 2005-2006 school year, the provisions concerning state assessments under section 104a apply to all pupils in grade 11 and the Michigan merit examination shall be administered to a sample of pupils in grade 11 statewide, as identified by the department. The pupils to be included in this sample shall be determined by the department as the department determines necessary to seek the approval of the United States department of education to use the Michigan merit examination for the purposes of the federal no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.

(b) Subject to subdivision (c), for pupils in grade 11 in the 2006-2007 school year and subsequent school years, the Michigan merit examination shall be offered to all pupils in grade 11.

What the Michigan Merit Exam Law Says (continued)

(c) If the United States department of education has not approved the use of the Michigan merit examination for the purposes of the federal no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, by December 31, 2006, all of the following apply:

(i) The provisions concerning state assessments under section 104a shall continue to apply to all pupils in grade 11 until the next calendar year that begins after that approval occurs.

(ii) The Michigan merit examination shall be offered to all pupils in grade 11 beginning in the next calendar year that begins after that approval occurs.

(iii) If it is necessary as part of the process of continuing to seek the approval of the United States department of education to use the Michigan merit examination for the purposes of the federal no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, the department may again provide for the administration of both the state assessments under section 104a and the Michigan merit

388.1704b Michigan merit examination.

(2) The department shall take all steps necessary, including, but not limited to, conducting a content alignment study and statistical analyses, to obtain the approval of the United States department of education to use the Michigan merit examination for the purposes of the federal no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110, by not later than December 31, 2006 or as soon thereafter as possible.

(3) For the purposes of this section, the department of management and budget shall contract with 1 or more providers to develop, supply, and score the Michigan merit examination. The Michigan merit examination shall consist of all of the following:

(a) Assessment instruments that measure English language arts, mathematics, reading, and science and are used by colleges and universities in this state for entrance or placement purposes.

(b) One or more tests from 1 or more test developers that assess a pupil's ability to apply reading and mathematics skills in a manner that is intended to allow employers to use the results in making employment decisions.

(c) A social studies component.

(d) Any other component that is necessary to obtain the approval of the United States department of education to use the Michigan merit examination for the purposes of the federal no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.

(4) In addition to all other requirements of this section, all of the following apply to the Michigan merit examination:

(a) The department of management and budget and the superintendent shall ensure that any contractor used for scoring the Michigan merit examination supplies an individual report for each pupil that will identify for the pupil's parents and teachers whether the pupil met expectations or failed to meet expectations for each standard, to allow the pupil's parents and teachers to assess and remedy problems before the pupil moves to the next grade.

(b) The department of management and budget and the superintendent shall ensure that any contractor used for scoring, developing, or processing the Michigan merit examination meets quality management standards commonly used in the assessment industry, including at least meeting level 2 of the capability maturity model developed by the software engineering institute of Carnegie Mellon university for the first year the Michigan merit examination is offered to all grade 11 pupils and at least meeting level 3 of the capability maturity model for subsequent years.

(c) The department of management and budget and the superintendent shall ensure that any contract for scoring, administering, or developing the Michigan merit examination includes specific deadlines for all steps of the assessment process, including, but not limited to, deadlines for the correct testing materials to be supplied to schools and for the correct results to be returned to schools, and includes penalties for noncompliance with these deadlines.

What the Michigan Merit Exam Law Says (continued)

(d) The superintendent shall ensure that the Michigan merit examination meets all of the following:

(i) Is designed to test pupils on grade level content expectations or course content expectations, as appropriate, in all subjects tested.

(ii) Complies with requirements of the no child left behind act of 2001, Public Law 107-110.

(iii) Is consistent with the code of fair testing practices in education prepared by the joint committee on testing practices of the American psychological association.

(iv) Is factually accurate. If the superintendent determines that a question is not factually accurate and should be removed from an assessment instrument, the state board and the superintendent shall ensure that the question is removed from the assessment instrument.

(5) Beginning with pupils completing grade 11 in 2006, a district shall include on each pupil's high school transcript all of the following:

(a) For each high school graduate who has completed the Michigan merit examination under this section, the pupil's scaled score on each subject area component of the Michigan merit examination.

(b) The number of school days the pupil was in attendance at school each school year during high school and the total number of school days in session for each of those school years.

(6) The superintendent shall work with the provider or providers of the Michigan merit examination to produce Michigan merit examination subject area scores for each pupil participating in the Michigan merit examination, including scaling and merging of test items for the different subject area components. The superintendent shall design and distribute to districts, intermediate districts, and nonpublic schools a simple and concise document that describes the scoring for each subject area and indicates the scaled score ranges for each subject area.

(7) The Michigan merit examination shall be administered each year after March 1 and before June 1 to pupils in grade 11. The superintendent shall ensure that the Michigan merit examination is scored and the scores are returned to pupils, their parents or legal guardians, and districts not later than the beginning of the pupil's first semester of grade 12. The returned scores shall indicate at least the pupil's scaled score for each subject area component and the range of scaled scores for each subject area. In reporting the scores to pupils, parents, and schools, the superintendent shall provide standards-specific, meaningful, and timely feedback on the pupil's performance on the Michigan merit examination.

(8) A pupil who does not qualify for a Michigan merit award scholarship under the Michigan merit award scholarship act, 1999 PA 94, MCL 390.1451 to 390.1459, and who wants to repeat the Michigan merit examination may repeat the Michigan merit examination in the next school year on a designated testing date. The first time a pupil repeats the Michigan merit examination under this subsection shall be without charge to the pupil, but the pupil is responsible for paying the cost of any subsequent repeat.

(9) The superintendent shall ensure that the length of the Michigan merit examination and the combined total time necessary to administer all of the components of the Michigan merit examination are the shortest possible that will still maintain the degree of reliability and validity of the Michigan merit examination results determined necessary by the superintendent. The superintendent shall ensure that the maximum total combined length of time that schools are required to set aside for administration of all of the components of the Michigan merit examination does not exceed 8 hours.

(10) A district shall provide accommodations to a pupil with disabilities for the Michigan merit examination, as provided under section 504 of title V of the rehabilitation act of 1973, 29 USC 794; subtitle A of title II of the Americans with disabilities act of 1990, 42 USC 12131 to 12134; the individuals with disabilities education act amendments of 1997, Public Law 105-17; and the implementing regulations for those statutes. The provider or providers of the Michigan merit examination and the superintendent shall mutually agree upon the accommodations to be provided under this subsection.

What the Michigan Merit Exam Law Says (continued)

(11) *To the greatest extent possible, the Michigan merit examination shall be based on grade level content expectations or course content expectations, as appropriate.*

(12) *A child who is a student in a nonpublic school or home school may take the Michigan merit examination under this section. To take the Michigan merit examination, a child who is a student in a home school shall contact the district in which the child resides, and that district shall administer the Michigan merit examination, or the child may take the Michigan merit examination at a nonpublic school if allowed by the nonpublic school. Upon request from a nonpublic school, the superintendent shall direct the provider or providers to supply the Michigan merit examination to the nonpublic school and the nonpublic school may administer the Michigan merit examination. If a district administers the Michigan merit examination under this subsection to a child who is not enrolled in the district, the scores for that child are not considered for any purpose to be scores of a pupil of the district.*

(13) *In contracting under subsection (3), the department of management and budget shall consider a contractor that provides electronically-scored essays with the ability to score constructed response feedback in multiple languages and provide ongoing instruction and feedback.*

(14) *The purpose of the Michigan merit examination is to assess pupil performance in mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts for the purpose of improving academic achievement and establishing a statewide standard of competency. The assessment under this section provides a common measure of data that will contribute to the improvement of Michigan schools' curriculum and instruction by encouraging alignment with Michigan's curriculum framework standards and promotes pupil participation in higher level mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts courses. These standards are based upon the expectations of what pupils should learn through high school and are aligned with national standards.*

(15) *As used in this section:*

(a) *"English language arts" means reading and writing.*

(b) *"Social studies" means United States history, world history, world geography, economics, and American government.*

Background Information (NEW)

Under the new law outlined above, the Michigan Department of Education must develop or select and approve assessments for at least each of the following credits: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Earth Science, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, World History and Geography, United States History and Geography, Economics, Civics, and English in Grades 9 through 12. The assessments for each credit must measure a student's understanding of the content expectations or guidelines for that credit.

Status (NEW)

Currently, the Department is in the process of creating Secondary Credit Assessments, which includes summative assessments in 17 course content areas.

As of May 2007, the Department has developed prototypes of Secondary Credit Assessments in two areas: Algebra I and Geometry. These exams were written by Michigan educators in the summer of 2006 and were pilot-tested in Michigan classrooms in January 2007. They represent a first attempt to create instruments that schools can use. They cannot at this time be considered the official state Secondary Credit Assessment but are being provided at the request of districts who would like some state instrument to verify the rigor of their classes or, in some cases, to use for purposes of student assessment. These prototypes are now available to download in Adobe Acrobat PDF format on the OEAA secure website at <https://oeaa.state.mi.us/meap/>.

No testing services (printing of test booklets and answer documents, assessment administration services, scoring and reporting) are available. Districts, however, may print, use, and score the prototype exams to assess students who have taken these course/credit areas and/or to help gauge the extent to which current course content is aligned with the High School Content Expectations for Algebra I and Geometry. The Department indicated a recommended passing score for earning credit when the tests were posted on the web.

Guidelines for the use of Secondary Credit Assessments are still under development. At this time, however, the Department strongly advises that where an Secondary Credit Assessment is used as the final exam for a student taking a class or course (as opposed to “testing out” without having taken the class), the score on the Secondary Credit Assessment should not count for more than 20-25% of the student’s final grade in the class.

In addition, the Department has requested funding to begin the development of the assessments for the other course/credit areas. If provided by the legislature, this funding would permit the Department to begin the development of some of the assessments in summer/fall, 2007. Our priority areas are course/credit areas that freshman or sophomores would typically take, including Algebra I, Geometry, Biology, and English 9. If funds permit, assessments would also be created in Chemistry and English 10. (Updated 10.07)

Questions & Answers

1. Q: Who determines the type of secondary course/credit assessment a district could choose?

A: The local district has the flexibility to determine when an assessment(s) is given, as well as develop or select district or state assessments that measure students’ understanding of the content expectations for credit.

2. Q: Who determines the score a student or students must meet to pass or meet the assessment requirements?

A: A district can select or develop a local assessment for which it establishes a passing score. Alternatively, the district can elect to use a state assessment, in which case the state determines a passing or cut score.

3. Q: What if the student has passed the class, but fails the assessment? Does the student fail the course?

A: Districts continue to have authority to establish policy on this issue. While the law requires a district to base a student’s successful completion, at least in part, on student performance on subject area assessments, the amount the assessment counts toward a student’s total grade is up to the district. Therefore, awarding credit is a local district decision. The department strongly urges, however, that when a district or state Secondary Credit Assessment is used as a “final exam” in the course, the exam not count more than 20-25% of the student’s final grade. This is to honor and respect the student’s performance on other aspects of the course: the teacher’s assessments, homework, assignments or class projects, class participation, etc. (Updated 8/07)

4. Q: Will the state be developing credit assessments?

A: The information previously included has been updated and may now be found in the Background and Update information in this document outlined prior to the Questions and Answer section.

5. Q: Will assessments be created for integrated math sequences and integrated science sequences?

A: Not at this time. These sequences are optional versus mandated in the Michigan Merit Curriculum. Therefore, districts using an integrated math approach should determine at what point in the integrated math sequence students are ready to be assessed on the Course Content Expectations for Algebra I, etc. Districts also will be responsible for selecting the credit assessment to measure a student's understanding of the content expectations for credit. The goal of creating interim assessments (sometimes referred to as "testlets" or "modular tests") is to permit students who are receiving integrated or applied instruction to be assessed on the state's Secondary Credit Assessments. Districts would need to determine how the Secondary Credit Assessments would be divided among the grade levels and courses.

Assessment 8/07 Additions

6. Q: How will the testing out option be equitable when each school determines the criteria? Or, how will the state ensure that Algebra I Course Content Expectations (and the content expectations for all other courses) are being learned by all students in Michigan in the absence of a state developed test?

A: All schools will determine their requirements for student proficiency in the subject area content expectations. Schools using their own Secondary Credit Assessments will need to verify to themselves that the assessments used produce reliable and valid information, are aligned to and cover the content expectations for the credit area, and that the cut score they select is valid for the assessment. (Updated 10.07)

7. Q: What assessments will schools use until all the summative assessments are complete in 2009?

A: There are various assessments schools may use. Here are some examples, not intended to be comprehensive: (a) A series of shorter tests, used by the teacher over the course of the class which, taken together, cover the content expectations; (b) an assessment consisting of the end-of-unit examinations used by the teacher which, combined, provides coverage of the content expectations; (c) a written assessment plus a demonstration, performance, or participation element; (d) a "portfolio, performance, paper, project, or presentation" (380.1279b).

8. Q: Doesn't the ACT test cover all the HSCEs?

A: The ACT covers only some of the High School Content Expectations (and only those appropriate through the end of Grade 11), so it is necessary each year for the Department to determine which content is not covered by the ACT so that augmented assessments can be provided to ensure full alignment with State content expectations. (Updated 10.07)

9. Q: When will the Department's Secondary Credit Assessments be ready?

A: Prototype summative assessments for Algebra I and Geometry have been developed, piloted and are available on the MEAP secure testing site. Prototype unit and/or summative assessments are being developed for Biology and English 9 for release in May 2008. (Updated 10.07)

10. Q: Will there be requirements suggested for testing out options that exceed a paper/pencil test as many of the HSCE/ELA proficiencies cannot be measured in that way?

A: The state does not intend at this time to develop requirements or guidelines for assessments districts use for “testing out” purposes. Districts have the option of determining these and may include things beyond a paper-and-pencil Secondary Credit Assessments. Here are some examples, not intended to be comprehensive: (a) A written assessment plus a demonstration, performance, or participation element; or (b) a “portfolio, performance, paper, project, or presentation” (380.1279b).

11. Q: Does the MDE plan on offering professional development once the assessments are ready?

A: The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability plans to offer workshop sessions at their Fall Conferences and at the Michigan School Testing Conference in February of each year.

12. Q: What districts are developing or working on benchmark and secondary credit assessments?

A: Several Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) and local educational agencies have been working on benchmark and secondary credit assessments, including Monroe ISD, Oakland Schools, Calhoun ISD, Bay-Arenac ISD, Ann Arbor Public Schools and others.

13. Q: Will 8th graders take the new test in 2010?

A: Yes. Students who were in the 8th grade in 2006-07 will be required to take assessments to verify that they have gained the knowledge and skills needed to earn credit for course content. This will not necessarily be a single test, but a series of assessments taken over the course of the students’ high school years. These assessments may be developed or approved by the local district, and may indeed be the assessments teachers are already using if these can be demonstrated to cover all the new course/credit content expectations. The law states that the award of credit must be based “in part” on assessments developed by the district or the state.

14. Q: Is the formula for determining high school graduation rate in Michigan changing? If so, how?

A: Yes. In 2005, governors of all 50 states signed the National Governor’s Association (NGA) Graduation Counts Compact, committing the states to a common method for calculating graduation rate. In 2008, Michigan will report its graduation rate publicly according to the Compact formula. The State will use the Single Record Student Database (SRSD), which is able to track students as they move from school to school within the State, making the graduation rate very accurate. For more information, visit <http://www.nga.org/files/pdf/0608GRADPROGRESS.PDF>.

15. Q: What is the plan, status and timeline for the Secondary Credit Assessments for each content area?

A: Over the next four years, the OEAA plans to offer interim and summative assessments for all 17 required course content areas, provided that funds are available. The proposed schedule is shown on the following page.

Proposed SCAS Development Schedule

Year	English	Math	Science	Social Studies
2007-08	English 9	Algebra I Geometry	Biology	
2008-09	English 10		Chemistry Earth Science	US & World History plus Geography*
2009-10	English 11	Algebra II Statistics & Probability	Physics	Civics Economics
2010-11	English 12	Pre-Calculus		

16. Q: We need further guidance about assessments: When will draft documents become available and how is MDE envisioning they will be implemented?

A: The Department plans to release assessment blueprints as each of the 17 course area assessments are developed.

17. Q: Will the Michigan Department of Education be providing short cycle formative assessments or summative assessments for the High School Content Expectations in the four core content areas?

A: The Department plans to offer interim benchmark (unit) and Secondary Credit Assessments as resources permit. In addition, the Department will offer assistance to local educators in how to implement meaningful formative assessment.

18. Q: What does the wraparound portion of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME) look like? Will the HSCEs make more sense to teachers once they've seen the actual assessment?

A: The Michigan portions of the MME will look like earlier versions of the MEAP. There is no plan currently to release any of the items from the MME, since ACT and WorkKeys are secure assessments and the Michigan portions are very resource consuming to produce.

19. Q: When will MDE make specific MME item analysis data available at the high school level?

A: There are no plans to make item analysis available, since it would not be meaningful in the absence of released items. In addition, ACT will not release the ACT or WorkKeys tests.