M-Step™

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress

4

A companion guide to the grade 4 Parent Report

M-STEP Parent Report Guide

MICHIGAN Department of Education

August 2026

Thank you for partnering with your school to provide a positive education for your student. As parents and educators working together, we will ensure our children receive an education that prepares them to thrive in a global economy and civic life.

Michigan's Academic Standards (www.michigan.gov/academicstandards) set clear and consistent educational expectations for what students should learn and be able to do at each grade level. A student who follows these standards is ready to succeed in college and the workplace by the time they graduate from high school.

The Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress assessment (M-STEP) is one way to measure student progress in grade 4 based on the academic standards in English language arts and in mathematics. Results from M-STEP are just one source of information about your child's learning progress. Local tests, classroom work, and report cards can add more insight into how well your child is learning. To learn more, visit the M-STEP web page (www.michigan.gov/mstep).

As you review your child's results, remember these assessments are a snapshot of your student's progress. Something as simple as a student not feeling well on the day of the assessment could affect their performance. This is why your child's school and teachers use a number of tools and strategies—such as projects, classroom activities, and assessments—to identify learning and achievement levels.

We all share the responsibility of helping every child be successful. At home, you can play an important role in setting high expectations and helping your child meet them. If your child needs extra support or wants to learn more, work with their teacher to identify resources and opportunities that are appropriate for them. Talk with your child's teacher regularly about how your child is doing and how you can support their learning at home. Building a connection between home and school will greatly improve the impact of your child's learning.

Together as partners, we can ensure success for every child.

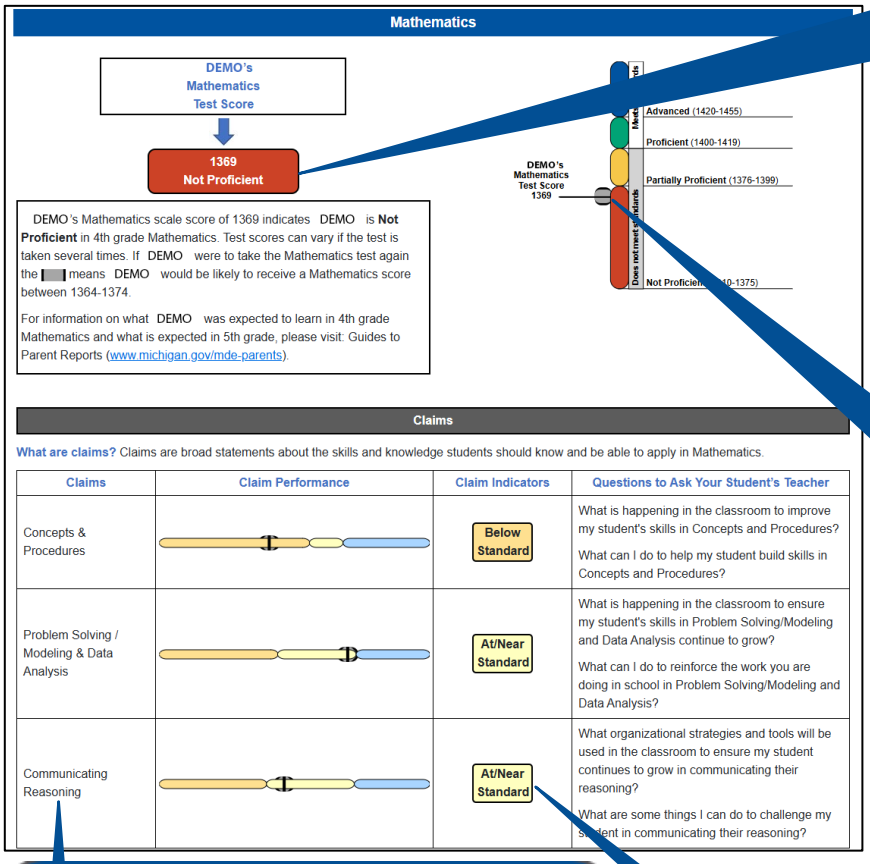
How to Read Your Child's Score Report

Michigan schools assess the progress of fourth grade students on the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, or M-STEP. The M-STEP measures what students know and are able to do in relation to Michigan's academic standards. Students in grade 4 take M-STEP tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics.

M-STEP results are released in late summer to provide parents and teachers with valuable information on where students are doing well and where they might need additional support. Scores also can support instruction by helping educators better align curriculum and instruction to state standards.

Score Report Components

M-STEP results: grade 4 mathematics example



Mathematics

DEMO's Mathematics Test Score

1369
Not Proficient

DEMO's Mathematics scale score of 1369 indicates DEMO is **Not Proficient** in 4th grade Mathematics. Test scores can vary if the test is taken several times. If DEMO were to take the Mathematics test again the ▮▮▮ means DEMO would be likely to receive a Mathematics score between 1364-1374.

For information on what DEMO was expected to learn in 4th grade Mathematics and what is expected in 5th grade, please visit: Guides to Parent Reports (www.michigan.gov/mde-parents).

DEMO's Mathematics Test Score 1369

Advanced (1420-1455)
Proficient (1400-1419)
Partially Proficient (1376-1399)
Not Proficient (1310-1375)

Claims

What are claims? Claims are broad statements about the skills and knowledge students should know and be able to apply in Mathematics.

Claims	Claim Performance	Claim Indicators	Questions to Ask Your Student's Teacher
Concepts & Procedures		Below Standard	What is happening in the classroom to improve my student's skills in Concepts and Procedures? What can I do to help my student build skills in Concepts and Procedures?
Problem Solving / Modeling & Data Analysis		At/Near Standard	What is happening in the classroom to ensure my student's skills in Problem Solving/Modeling and Data Analysis continue to grow? What can I do to reinforce the work you are doing in school in Problem Solving/Modeling and Data Analysis?
Communicating Reasoning		At/Near Standard	What organizational strategies and tools will be used in the classroom to ensure my student continues to grow in communicating their reasoning? What are some things I can do to challenge my student in communicating their reasoning?

Student Overall Performance Level and Scale Score
Students receive a numerical scale score and, based on that score, are assigned one of four performance levels: Not Proficient, Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced. This section of the report provides your student's numerical score and performance level.

Confidence Interval
Test scores can vary if the test is taken several times; this bar shows the ranges of scores your child would be likely to receive if they took the test another time.

Claims
Assessments in ELA and mathematics include sub-categories, called claims, which relate directly to Michigan's learning standards for those subjects. This section describes the claims that were assessed.

Claim Performance Indicators
The report shows at a glance whether your student's score on this claim shows above standard, at or near standard, or below standard. The bar chart indicates the range of possible performance within each claim. The black vertical lines indicate your student's performance.

Content Areas on the M-STEP

When you review your child's score report, you will see an overall score as well as other information on how your child is progressing in each content area. The test results, which are aligned to Michigan's Academic Standards, tell you, your child, and your child's teachers how well your student is mastering the standards.

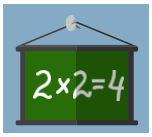
English Language Arts

The English Language Arts (ELA) M-STEP is organized into four areas, or claims:

	Reading	Students can read, understand, and analyze a variety of texts, including stories and nonfiction. This includes identifying main ideas and details, comparing passages, and using content clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words. Students can also draw conclusions and make inferences.
	Listening	Students can understand, evaluate, and respond to information they hear after listening to passages.
	Writing	Students can develop a well organized written response for a variety of purposes and audiences. Their writing must include appropriate detail and evidence to support their main idea, as well as the use of grade-appropriate spelling and grammar.
	Research/Inquiry	Students respond to questions using evidence from multiple passages to support their main idea. This involves being able to identify important information in a text that supports their writing.

Mathematics

The mathematics M-STEP is organized into three areas, or claims:

	**Concepts & Procedures**	Students can understand and use strategies correctly and explain why certain strategies work the way they do.
	Problem Solving: Modeling and Data Analysis	Students can use problem-solving strategies and skills to solve real-world mathematics problems. Students can also identify important information in a word problem and determine how to use it to solve the problem.
	Communicating Reasoning	Students can explain their thinking and draw conclusions when solving a problem.

What Your Child Learned in GRADE 4

English Language Arts

- Identifying the purpose of a story, drama, or poem.
- Identifying the main idea of a historical, scientific, or technical text.
- Summarizing the main topic of a text using the key supporting details.
- Comparing characters, events, settings, theme, or point of view in stories and myths.
- Explaining how an author uses facts, details, and evidence to support their points.
- Writing on a topic using facts, details, definitions, quotations, or other information.
- Writing a story with an event sequence that unfolds naturally, using dialogue, description, and sensory details, and providing a conclusion.
- Writing complete sentences with correct capitalization and spelling.
- Conducting short research projects using evidence from books and other sources.
- Participating in discussions by listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, and building on the ideas of others.

Mathematics

- Adding and subtracting whole numbers within 1,000,000 quickly and accurately.
- Developing an understanding of and building fluency with multi-digit multiplication and division (Example: 36 × 15 = 30 × 15 + 6 × 15; and 20 × 15 + 10 × 15 + 6 x 15 = 36 × 15).
- Solving multistep problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, and explaining why the answer makes sense.
- Adding and subtracting fractions with the same denominator (Example: 5/8 = 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8 + 1/8).
- Extending the understanding of fractions by comparing the size of two fractions with different numerators (top numbers) and different denominators (bottom numbers).
- Developing an understanding of equivalent fractions by using pictures, number lines, and fraction models (Example: 1/2 is the same as 3/6 and the same as 5/10).
- Converting fractions with denominators of 10 or 100 into decimals, and locating decimals on a number line.
- Connecting addition and subtraction of whole numbers to multiplying fractions by whole numbers.

What Your Child Will Learn in GRADE 5

English Language Arts

- Summarizing the key details of stories, dramas, poems, and nonfiction materials, including their themes or main ideas.
- Identifying how an author is using evidence to explain or support a topic.
- Giving in-depth descriptions of characters, setting, and events in a story.
- Explaining the relationship or interaction between two or more individuals, events, or ideas based on specific information in one or more texts.
- Writing opinions that offer reasoned arguments and provide facts and details that are logically grouped.
- Writing narratives that develop the plot with dialogue, description, and effective pacing.
- Strengthening writing by planning, revising, editing, or rewriting.
- Using technology to produce and publish writing.
- Conducting short research projects in which a topic is investigated using several sources.
- Participating in discussions by listening, asking questions, sharing ideas, and building on the ideas of others.

Mathematics

- Multiplying multidigit whole numbers quickly and accurately.
- Adding and subtracting fractions with unlike denominators (bottom number) by converting them to equivalent fractions with the same denominator (Example: 2/3 − 1/2 = 4/6 − 3/6 = 1/6).
- Measuring volume using what is known about multiplication and addition and explaining why the measurement makes sense.
- Dividing up to four-digit whole numbers by two-digit divisors (Example: 6,132 ÷ 14 = 438; Use compatible numbers and think: (5600 + 420 + 112 ÷ 14 = 400 + 30 + 8).
- Using models and story contexts to multiply and divide unit fractions by whole numbers and whole numbers by unit fractions. Multiply fractions by fractions (Examples: 2400 ÷ 1/4 = 9600; 3/5 × 3/4 = 9/20).
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide decimals to the hundredths place (Example: 0.7 + 1.25 = 1.95).

MICHIGAN Department of Education

608 W. Allegan Street
Lansing, Michigan 48915
Phone: 1-877-560-8378
Website: www.michigan.gov/mstep