M-STEP: What Do the Scores Mean?

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M-STEP reports and data are an important part of a balanced assessment system that provides Michigan schools and districts important information as they consider curriculum alignment, instructional program evaluation, and/or differences in achievement among reported student demographic subgroups.

M-STEP reports also provide the public a snapshot of Michigan students' overall performance based on the Michigan Academic Standards. This information can be helpful to understand student learning as measured against the standards in a Michigan school or district, or to compare student performance across Michigan schools or districts.

M-STEP reports do not provide grade-level equivalency data. Criterion-referenced tests—such as M-STEP—only provide data regarding student achievement based on the measured standards. They do not make any claim regarding "grade level" performance.

Test Scores

The M-STEP assessments are not Pass/Fail. Questions on the ELA and mathematics tests are associated with a scale score that, in part, describes each question's relative difficulty along a continuum of student performance. Student test scores are based on each student's unique performance pattern in terms of both the number and difficulty of questions answered correctly. M-STEP science and social studies tests are not computer adaptive assessments; however, they have a modern test design that includes more problem-solving and critical-thinking questions.

Reporting Test Scores

The M-STEP tests report overall student performance in each content area, as well as more specific subscore information in each content area (ELA, math, science, and social studies).

Interpretation and Use

Students' overall performance in each content area (ELA, math, science, and social studies) is categorized into one of four performance levels which describe the relative breadth and depth of students' performance. The levels may be interpreted as described in the table.

Students have achieved grade-level understanding with increasing breadth and depth of understanding of the Michigan Academic Standards for the grade and content area.	**Level 4 (Advanced):** Students consistently demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills of the Michigan Academic Standards measured in the assessed grade and content area with deep understanding and a full range of complexity.
	Level 3 (Proficient): Students consistently demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills of the Michigan Academic Standards measured in the assessed grade and content area with a broad range of complexity.
	Level 2 (Partially Proficient): Students demonstrate foundational knowledge and skills of the Michigan Academic Standards measured in the assessed grade and content area with a limited range of complexity.
	Level 1 (Not Proficient): Students do not consistently demonstrate knowledge and skills of the Michigan Academic Standards measured in the assessed grade and content area.

Policymakers can use M-STEP assessment results to help describe statewide student performance and to help focus state resources to best impact student outcomes.

Educators can use results, along with information from interim assessments and other locally collected data and information, to help identify performance patterns among their students and to inform decisions about educational program improvement, curricular decisions, and continuous improvement plans.

Families and students can use results together with local assessment data to support conversations with students' teachers about opportunities for their students to benefit from additional support.