



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

March 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This spring, your school district will administer state tests designed to provide important information on student knowledge and their progress toward being career- and college-ready upon graduation. These tests are required by federal and state laws. Schools and districts use these test results for school improvement initiatives that benefit all students. The data gathered from this year's state assessments will help educators support students when they return to school in the fall and move forward with their education.

**Students in grades 3-10 will participate in the following assessments:**

- M-STEP English language arts (ELA) and mathematics (grades 3-7)
- PSAT 8/9 (grade 8)
- M-STEP science and social studies (grades 5 and 8)
- PSAT 8/9 (grade 9)
- PSAT 10 (grade 10)

**Grade 11 students will participate in the Michigan Merit Examination (MME), which has three required components:**

- SAT with Essay college entrance exam that also measures student knowledge on Michigan's ELA and mathematics standards
- ACT WorkKeys work skills assessment
- M-STEP science and social studies

**MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program**

MI-Access is Michigan's alternate assessment system for students in grades 3 – 8, and 11. It is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose instruction is targeted to Michigan's alternate content expectations (known as essential elements), and whose IEP (Individualized Education Program) Team has determined that General Assessments, even with accommodations, are not appropriate. MI-Access satisfies the federal requirement that all students with disabilities be assessed at the state level.

We want your child's state testing experience to be as stress-free as possible. Your positive outlook will support your child's experience. State assessment results do not affect your student's grades in any way.

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On average, a student will spend no more than three hours on M-STEP mathematics and ELA tests. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will spend an additional two hours on science and social studies testing.

While we support parents in making choices for their children, there is no acceptable way under state or federal law to allow an "opt-out" of state assessments. Last year, requirements for 95 percent participation in state assessments were waived by the U.S. Department of Education due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, this is no longer the case for 2022. Students who are not assessed this year will count against their school's required 95 percent participation rate, which will create an incomplete picture of their school's performance.

Annual assessments provide information on how Michigan students perform and how well our schools and districts are teaching students compared to those in other communities, states, and nations. Assessment results help target support and resources to students and schools that need them most. The test results may also inform future state education programs and policies to help Michigan students catch up on learning that was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can find information about Michigan's state assessment system on our website, [www.michigan.gov/oeaa](http://www.michigan.gov/oeaa). An excellent place to start is with the handout "Michigan's State Assessment System: What It Is, What It Means, and What It Offers." Additional information to help your child prepare for M-STEP and MI-Access testing is available online. Visit [www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) and [www.michigan.gov/mi-access](http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access), and look for "Parent/Student Information."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Rice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Michael F. Rice, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent