



SPOTLIGHT

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Brady, a first-grade student at Peck Elementary School in Center Line Public Schools, explores the wonders of light and shadow during a science lesson. Photo credit: Meghan Evoy, principal, Peck Elementary School, Center Line Public Schools



Enjoying this newsletter?
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Share Your School or District's Story with Spotlight!

Help us shine a Spotlight on your school or district by sharing your school/district's points of pride, programs and accomplishments.

1. Make sure you have permission to share the photo (check your school/district's policy)
2. Add a short caption (up to 250 characters)
3. Include a photo credit (or we'll credit your school or district)
4. Email everything to mde-oeaa@michigan.gov.

Let's celebrate the vibrant life and learning of Michigan schools!



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Icon Key

-  Now Available
-  Reminder
-  Deadline
-  Survey
-  Thank You

NEWS INFO

M-STEP Test Administration Manual Available Now

The [2026 M-STEP Test Administration Manual \(TAM\)](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/M-STEP/M-STEP_Test_Administration_Manual.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/M-STEP/M-STEP_Test_Administration_Manual.pdf) is now available on the [M-STEP web page](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) (www.michigan.gov/mstep) under the **What's New** and **Current Assessment Administration** sections. This manual is an essential resource for a successful test administration and contains information about required policies and procedures that test administrators must know.



The important information about test administration updates for Spring 2026 in M-STEP TAM includes:

Online Testing Updates

- New DRC INSIGHT Testing Engine Application Logo
- Online Tools Training (OTT) Updates: New Link and New View
- Updates to M-STEP OTT: English language arts (grades 4 and 6) Passage-based Writing, Social Studies Updates
- New INSIGHT Login Page Look
- And more!

Paper/Pencil Testing Updates

- Removal of Research Code Section on Answer Document Covers
- Discontinued Do Not Score Labels

Be sure to follow the M-STEP web page for updates and other important information related to the test administration process.

NEWS INFO

Mark Your Calendar! Building and District Coordinator Administration Trainings

The training webinars for District and Building Coordinators of online test administration of the Spring 2026 M-STEP and MI-Access are coming soon. These webinars, offered by Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), provide training about:

- what's new for 2026
- helpful online testing tips
- where to find important resources
- Q&A

The dates and times of each webinar are listed below. The PowerPoint and recorded presentations of the live webinars will be posted in the [DRC INSIGHT Portal](https://mi.drcdirect.com) (<https://mi.drcdirect.com>) by the next day.

M-STEP Building and District Coordinator Administration Training

February 17, 2026 | 10:00-11:00 a.m. ET
[Spring 2026 M-STEP District/Building Coordinator Administration Training | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#) (<https://bit.ly/4jRlpbb>)

(recording available February 18, 2026)

Microsoft Teams Online Virtual meeting

Meeting ID: 229 533 371 068 67
 Passcode: Vh7Ui3uU
 Dial in by phone: +1 612-704-8944, 976750554#
 United States, Minneapolis
 Phone conference ID: ID: 976 750 554#

MI-Access Building and District Coordinator Administration Training

February 18, 2026 | 10:00-11:00 a.m. ET
[Spring 2026 MI-Access District/School Coordinator Administration Training | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#) (<https://bit.ly/45QkZgs>)

(recording available February 19, 2026)

Microsoft Teams Online Virtual meeting

Meeting ID: 217 2003 859 684 97
 Passcode: WL7W998L
 Dial in by phone: +1 612-704-8944, 696410952#
 United States, Minneapolis
 Phone conference ID: 696 410 952#

NEWS INFO

Ordering WIDA Alternate ACCESS Materials

Educators can still pre-identify students and obtain materials for the WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment. To pre-ID students for this assessment, use the directions found on the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability [OEAA Secure Site Training web page](http://www.michigan.gov/securetraining) (www.michigan.gov/securetraining) under the **Pre-Identification of Students** section. The student's Tier must be updated to "Tier T".

Note: Pre-identifying students in the OEAA Secure Site will not result in the automatic delivery of materials from the assessment vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), at this time. To receive materials, educators must place an Additional Material Order in WIDA AMS when **the Additional Material Order window opens today, January 22, 2026.**

Bubbling-in Student Information on WIDA Test Booklets

Districts and educators are reminded that even if a Pre-ID label is affixed to the student test booklet, some information must be bubbled-in by hand. If a student's pre-printed label is damaged or falls off and the minimum amount of information is not bubbled-in on the booklet, there is a risk that DRC and the Michigan Department of Education will be unable to match a test booklet to the particular student.

For the list of the minimum information to be bubbled-in, refer to the [WIDA Label and Bubbling document](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/WIDA-Assessments/25-WIDA-Label-and-Bubbling-Information.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/WIDA-Assessments/25-WIDA-Label-and-Bubbling-Information.pdf) on the [WIDA web page](http://www.michigan.gov/wida) (www.michigan.gov/wida).

NEWS INFO

Screening Potential English Learners During the WIDA ACCESS Testing Window

Michigan schools are still federally required to screen newly enrolled students who have not been previously identified as English learners (ELs) using the WIDA Screener, even if the WIDA ACCESS testing window is open.

If a student is determined to be an EL while the WIDA ACCESS testing window is open, per the criteria outlined in [Michigan's Entrance and Exit Protocol \(EEP\)](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OES/Programs/Title-III/EL_Entrance_and_Exit_Protocol.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OES/Programs/Title-III/EL_Entrance_and_Exit_Protocol.pdf) – the summative WIDA ACCESS or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment must be administered to that student.

The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) strongly recommends that students be allowed as much time as possible between the WIDA Screener and the summative test, to ensure students do not experience testing fatigue.

WIDA Additional School/District Labels

By now, most schools and districts should have received an adequate supply of School/District Labels. However, if any schools/districts need to order additional labels, the district must send an email to mde-oeaa@michigan.gov with the following information, so the OEAA can request a shipment of those materials from DRC (the testing vendor):

- District Name
- School Name
- Quantity of School/District Label Sheets (1 sheet = 10 labels)

COLLEGE BOARD INFO

Publications

Updated College Board manuals, guides, handbooks, and tip sheets for Spring 2026 testing (SAT with essay, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9) [will be available here](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/student-assessment/michigan-merit-examination-mme/sat-suite-manuals-handbooks-and-guides) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/student-assessment/michigan-merit-examination-mme/sat-suite-manuals-handbooks-and-guides>) on **Friday, January 30.**

Test Coordinators should review these resources in preparation for testing and ensure that proctors and other test staff review the necessary publications prior to test day.

Welcome Former SISS Meredith McKelvey as College Board's new K12 Delivery Specialist

College Board is excited to announce that the seasonal State Implementation Support Specialist (SISS) role that has served Michigan state testing for the past two springs is now a full-time, year-round K12 Delivery Specialist role.

Resident Michigander [Meredith McKelvey](mailto:mmckelvey@collegeboard.org) (mmckelvey@collegeboard.org) returns to College Board and Michigan spring testing in this new position.

Welcome, Meredith!

In February, you will have the opportunity to meet Meredith and her College Board colleagues at the Michigan School Testing Conference and at subsequent College Board/MDE-hosted virtual Office Hours for Spring 2026 SAT Suite of Assessment School Day testing.

Off-Site Testing Request Form

If any students enrolled in your institution need to test at a location other than a school building (e.g., conference center, library, district office), please submit an off-site testing form at www.sat.org/off-siterequest by **March 2, 2026.**



Questions about the College Board Assessments (PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, SAT)

Call: Michigan Educator Hotline at 866-870-3127 (Option 1)

Email: michiganadministratorsupport@collegeboard.org

COLLEGE BOARD INFO

COLLEGE BOARD KEY DATES

Item	Date(s)	Description
Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Accommodations Request Deadline	Wednesday, February 18, 2026	<p>Deadline to submit all known accommodations in SSD Online, to ensure they are processed and available well in advance of testing and that new students/accommodations identified after the deadline can be prioritized.</p> <p>This deadline includes State Allowed Accommodations (SAAs). However, SAAs, while permitted by the Michigan Department of Education, are not considered approved accommodations by College Board. For that reason, scores obtained with SAAs are not college-reportable.</p>
Student Rosters Available in the State Data Management System (SDMS) and Test Day Toolkit	Wednesday, February 18, 2026	Schools can confirm the accuracy of their student roster in SDMS and begin to prepare rooms in Test Day Toolkit, assigning students and staff to those rooms, as well as access test ticket information to facilitate student readiness checks and practice tests.
School Test Coordinator Webinar, Part 2	Wednesday, March 4, 2026 1:00 - 2:30 p.m.	Register here (https://college-board.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bRg7vVcGRqGBFAvynIGL-WQ#/registration)

College Board Past Webinar Materials

The recording and presentation decks from the following webinars may be accessed using the links below:



- District Test Coordinator Webinar:
[recording](#) | [deck](#)
- Services for Students with Disabilities Training for the Visually Impaired:
[recording](#) | [deck](#)
- School Test Coordinator Webinar Part 1:
[recording](#) | [deck](#)
- Comparing and Contrasting Text-to-Speech & Screen reader Accommodations:
[recording](#) | [deck](#)
- SSD Online Webinar:
[recording](#) | [deck](#)
- **New!** Technical Readiness Webinar:
recording (coming soon) | [deck](#)

Questions about the College Board Assessments (PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, SAT)

Call: Michigan Educator Hotline at 866-870-3127 (Option 1)

Email: michiganadministratorsupport@collegeboard.org

COLLEGE BOARD INFO

SSD Online Access & Accommodations Deadline

Please remember to ensure all known accommodations are accurate in SSD Online by February 18, 2026. SSD Coordinators are typically responsible for ensuring accommodations are accurate in SSD Online however, they may be assisted by other appropriate personnel at their school. For any school personnel supporting this to have access to SSD Online, they must complete the [SSD Online Access form](https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/eb56b797c0e64cf392fbeb-5d28edee4b) (https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/eb56b797c0e64cf392fbeb-5d28edee4b).



For more details on these activities, please see the section “College Board Past Webinars Materials” ([on page 7](#)).

Spring SAT Suite Pre-ID Window

The Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) student Pre-Identification (Pre-ID) window for Spring SAT Suite testing is January 5 – February 13, 2025. Students’ Pre-ID is conducted in MDE’s Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) [Secure Site](http://www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure) (www.michigan.gov/oeaa-secure).



More information about the Pre-ID window is available in the [Spotlight newsletter - January 8 issue](#) (https://bit.ly/3ZenVzL).

Access to College Board’s State Data Management System and Test Day Toolkit

- **Week of February 2:** School test coordinators will receive access to Test Day Toolkit
- **February 19:** District test coordinators, school test coordinators, and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinators will gain access to SDMS.

Student Data Management System (SDMS) and Test Day Toolkit (TDTK) are systems used by College Board to enroll students based on OEAA-provided pre-identification data in spring school day testing and to provide access to student tests in Bluebook.

College Board receives Pre-ID data from the OEAA Secure Site to register students in the SDMS. Students registered in SDMS auto-populate in TDTK. Once students are populated in TDTK, student test tickets will be available in the TDTK Roster (which will be available beginning on February 20, 2026) and tests are generated in Bluebook.

Data from SDMS also integrates with accommodations from SSD Online. Approved accommodations in SSD online are viewable in the student record in SDMS.

Test staff will be notified via email about their access to each application. Educators can also access these systems from their College Board educator account.

Questions about the College Board Assessments (PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, SAT)

Call: Michigan Educator Hotline at 866-870-3127 (Option 1)

Email: michiganadministratorsupport@collegeboard.org

WIN LEARNING INFO

Need assistance with WIN Learning?

Email: mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

Call: 877-560-8378

Select Option 2, then Option 3

Online Testing Training Recap

WIN Learning recently held a training session for Testing Coordinators focusing on online testing. A recording of the training and video are now available:

- [Test Administration for Test Coordinators Online Testing Presentation](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/MI-Test-Administration-Training-for-Test-Coordinators---Online-Testing-11326.pdf) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/MI-Test-Administration-Training-for-Test-Coordinators---Online-Testing-11326.pdf>)
- [Test Administration Training for Test Coordinators Online Testing Video](https://winlearning.wistia.com/medias/8mxoprww1j) (<https://winlearning.wistia.com/medias/8mxoprww1j>)

Both are available on the [MME web page](https://www.michigan.gov/mme) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mme>).

The training covered the test preparation process and walked through WIN's online testing portal to demonstrate how to navigate the system, create testing groups, and assign and administer the assessments.

If you were unable to attend this training session, a repeated live training for online test administration will be held next month, on February 24, 2026. [Click here to register](https://bit.ly/4r7MPwV) (<https://bit.ly/4r7MPwV>).

WIN LEARNING INFO

Need assistance with WIN Learning?

Email: mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

Call: 877-560-8378

Select Option 2, then Option 3

Technology Checklist/Requirements

In order to prepare for testing, Technology Coordinators must complete Technology Verification to ensure that all devices meet WIN's technical requirements, which are outlined in the [Technical Requirements](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/WINCRS_Tech_Specs_MI.pdf) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/WINCRS_Tech_Specs_MI.pdf).

The Technical Requirements document includes information about browser, storage, network, and bandwidth requirements for all devices being used for testing.

More detailed technology information can be found in the [Technology Training presentation](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/MI-PM-Tech-Training-Nov-2025-FINAL.pdf) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/MI-PM-Tech-Training-Nov-2025-FINAL.pdf>).

Technology Coordinators can also review the [Technology Checklist](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/20251007-WIN-Work-Readiness-Assessment-Checklist-for-Tech-Coordinators-(2).pdf) ([https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/20251007-WIN-Work-Readiness-Assessment-Checklist-for-Tech-Coordinators-\(2\).pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/OEAA/MME/20251007-WIN-Work-Readiness-Assessment-Checklist-for-Tech-Coordinators-(2).pdf)), which provides a timeline for technology preparation leading up to the testing window.

After the Technology Coordinator has verified that the WIN Respondus Lockdown Browsers are installed and testing devices are prepared for testing, the [Technology Verification Survey](https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/jlML7Z) (<https://survey.zohopublic.com/zs/jlML7Z>) must be completed by March 7, 2026. **Note:** Only one survey is required for each district.

Be sure that your Technology Coordinator has access to this information and the links provided in this article.

TRAINING & CONFERENCES

2026 Michigan School Testing Conference

February 10–12, 2026 | Ann Arbor Sheraton Hotel

The Michigan School Testing Conference (MSTC) returns in person this February—bringing together assessment and education professionals from across the state for three days of learning, connection, and preparation.

Whether you support assessment at the classroom, district, intermediate school district, or state level, MSTC 2026 is your opportunity to dig into current practices, sharpen your expertise, and get ready for the spring assessment season with confidence.

What to Expect

Tuesday, February 10 | Preconference Workshops 9:00 a.m.–Noon & 1:00–4:00 p.m.

Kick off the conference with eight interactive workshops designed for deep learning and hands-on engagement:

- Six half-day workshops
- Two full-day workshops

These sessions offer extended time to explore tools, practices, and challenges that matter most to educators and assessment leaders right now.

Wednesday–Thursday, February 11–12

Main Conference

Join colleagues for 37 clinic sessions and three high-impact keynote presentations that blend policy, practice, and perspective:

- **Dr. Carla Evans**, Associate Director, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment
Wednesday Morning Keynote
- **Andy Middlestead**, Director, Michigan Department of Education, Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability
Wednesday Plated Lunch Keynote
- **Dr. Steve Sireci**, Distinguished University Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst
Thursday Morning Keynote

Why Attend MSTC 2026?

Participants will:

- stay current on Michigan Department of Education policies, requirements, and updates
- strengthen understanding of high-quality, equitable assessment practices
- learn practical strategies to support instructional improvement and student learning
- prepare thoughtfully and effectively for spring state assessments

Registration & Hotel Information

- **Register now and view full conference details:**
[Register for MSTC 2026](https://gomasa.org/events/2026-michigan-school-testing-conference/1770710400/1770912000/) (https://gomasa.org/events/2026-michigan-school-testing-conference/1770710400/1770912000/)
- **Special conference hotel rate available:**
Reserve your room at the [Ann Arbor Sheraton Hotel](https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1757516831607&key=GRP&app=resvlink) (https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1757516831607&key=GRP&app=resvlink) while rooms last

IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY 2026

Start Date	Assessment/Event	End Date
Ongoing	2025-26 NexSys Benchmark Reporting & Funding — Application window open	Friday, January 30, 2026
Ongoing	Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments — Winter Test Administration Window	Friday, February 6, 2026
Ongoing	M-STEP, MI-Access, WIN Work Readiness — Initial Material Order Window by 5:00 p.m. (paper/pencil testing)	Friday, February 13, 2026
Ongoing	M-STEP, WIN Work Readiness — Pre-identification of students for preprinted barcode labels by 5:00 p.m. (paper/pencil testing)	Friday, February 13, 2026
Ongoing	MI-Access — Pre-identification of students for preprinted barcode labels by 5:00 p.m. (paper/pencil testing) Expressing Ideas only	Friday, February 13, 2026
Ongoing	SAT, PSAT-Related — Pre-identification of students by 5:00 p.m.	Friday, February 13, 2026
Ongoing	SAT, PSAT-related — Services for Students with Disabilities Accommodations Request Deadline	Wednesday, February 18, 2026
Ongoing	M-STEP, MI-Access — Request alternate online testing engine access outside of the standard testing hours of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on school days. Alternate INSIGHT Availability Request Form (https://forms.office.com/g/53vDaenS8y)	Thursday, March 12, 2026
Ongoing	WIDA ACCESS — WIDA AMS Test Setup Available	Friday, April 3, 2026
Ongoing	SAT, PSAT-Related — Pre-identification of late-arriving students - paper/pencil and 2-day accommodation testing by 11:59 p.m.	Friday, April 24, 2026

IMPORTANT DATES

JANUARY 2026 (continued)

Start Date	Assessment/Event	End Date
Ongoing	M-STEP — Pre-identification of students - online	Thursday, May 14, 2026
Ongoing	MI-Access — Pre-identification of students. (online and paper/pencil testing)	Thursday, May 21, 2026
Thursday, January 22, 2026	WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS — Initial materials orders arrive in districts	Monday, January 26, 2026
Thursday, January 22, 2026	WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS — Additional Material Order window open in WIDA AMS	Friday, March 27, 2026
Monday, January 26, 2026	WIDA ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS — Test Window Open	Friday, April 3, 2026

FEBRUARY 2026

Start Date	Assessment/Event	End Date
Monday, February 16, 2026	SAT, PSAT-related — Pre-identification of late-arriving students - online testing by 11:59 p.m.	Tuesday, April 28, 2026
Monday, February 16, 2026	M-STEP, WIN Work Readiness — Pre-identification of students for local printing of barcode labels by 5:00 p.m.	Friday, May 1, 2026
Monday, February 16, 2026	MI-Access — Pre-identification of students for local printing of barcode labels by 5:00 p.m. Expressing Ideas only	Thursday, May 21, 2026

REMINDERS

NexSys Benchmark Reporting and Funding Application Deadline is January 30, 2026

The 2025-26 NexSys Benchmark Reporting and Funding Application is now available. The deadline for application submission is **Friday, January 30, 2026.**



Reminder: Alternate INSIGHT Availability Request Window is Open

The request window for Alternate INSIGHT Availability for M-STEP and MI-Access is open. Schools that need access to the INSIGHT online testing engine outside of standard testing hours (7:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ET on school days) can submit requests through **March 12, 2026.**

The form is also available on the [M-STEP webpage](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep) (www.michigan.gov/mstep) and [MI-Access page](http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access) (www.michigan.gov/mi-access) under **What's New** and **Current Assessment Administration.**

Read the full INSIGHT availability request window announcement article in the [Spotlight newsletter - January 8 issue](https://bit.ly/3ZenVzL) (https://bit.ly/3ZenVzL).

OEAA ABBREVIATIONS

A rotating list of OEAA abbreviations frequently used in Spotlight

Acronym	Name	Acronym	Name
MSTC	Michigan School Testing Conference	SSD	Services for Students with Disabilities
SDMS	Student Data Management System	TDTK	Test Day Toolkit

OEAA PHONE TREE OPTIONS

For assistance with assessment or accountability issues, **call 877-560-8378** (select the appropriate option):

Option 1 - For inquiries related to state assessment policy; the OEAA Secure Site; administration of the M-STEP, MI-Access, Early Literacy and Mathematics; and Accountability Reporting

Option 2 - For inquiries related to the SAT, PSAT, or WIN Work Readiness testing:

Option 1 - eligibility to test and the OEAA Secure Site

Option 2 - administration of the College Board assessments (PSAT 8/9, PSAT 10, SAT)

Option 3 - administration of the WIN Work Readiness skills test

Option 3 - For inquiries related to WIDA, the English Language Learner assessment; Call 866-276-7735 for assistance with the WIDA Screener and the WIDA Secure Portal

Option 4 - For all other calls

Option 5 - To report known unethical testing practices by a school on any state assessment

Option 6 - To repeat these options



Questions or Comments?

Contact MDE at:

Mail: 608 W. Allegan St., PO Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48915

Assessment Questions: mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

Accountability Questions: mde-accountability@michigan.gov

Phone Assistance: 877-560-8378

Website: www.michigan.gov/oeaa