

Early Literacy & Mathematics Benchmark Assessments Reports: Understanding Scale Scores and Performance Levels

To make the most of your benchmark assessment reports, it's important to understand scale scores and performance levels: what they are, how they are determined, and what exactly they can tell you about student performance. This article reviews the process of developing scale scores and performance levels for the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments, and outlines the 2023–2024 performance level scale score ranges for each grade and subject.

Scale Scores

Students receive an overall scale score for each valid test in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Scale scores are the basic unit of reporting test results. A scaled score is calculated from a total number of points the student scores on the item, statistically adjusted and converted into a consistent, standardized scale that permits direct and fair comparisons of scores from different forms of a test, either within the same administration year or across years. Established psychometric procedures are used to ensure that a given scale score represents the same level of performance regardless of the test form.

Scale scores are especially suitable for comparing the performance of different groups of students in the same grade from year to year and for maintaining the same performance standard across the years. While scale scores are comparable across tests in a given content area within the same grade, they are not comparable across content areas or grades.

On the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark reports, each overall scale score is indicated by a single number. An error band is noted for each scale score, indicating the range of scores that the student would be likely to achieve if he or she were to take the test multiple times.

Performance Levels

Scale scores within each subject area can be described in ranges. The labels applied to these ranges are known as performance levels. The performance levels are:

- **Needs Support** — The student's performance is not yet proficient and indicates a minimal or partial understanding and application of key academic content standards defined for Michigan students. The student needs intervention and support to improve achievement.
- **Demonstrates Proficiency** — The student's performance indicates understanding and application of key academic content standards defined for Michigan students. The student needs continued support to maintain and improve proficiency.
- **Demonstrates Mastery** — The student's performance exceeds academic content standards and indicates substantial understanding and application of key concepts defined for Michigan students. The student needs support to continue to excel.

The divisions between the levels are often referred to as cut scores. The cut scores are recommended by a panel comprised of educators and other stakeholders throughout the state in a process known as standard setting. To set these standards, the panel uses detailed descriptions of what students in each of the performance levels should know and be able to do. Based upon these detailed descriptions and actual assessment items, the panel recommends the score that best separates each performance level from the next. The recommendations are made to the Michigan State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who approves the final cut scores and performance level ranges.

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While the performance level descriptors necessarily differ by grade and subject area, student achievement—as defined by the obtained performance level—can be reasonably compared across subjects within a grade. Such a comparison can be used to indicate whether students are meeting Michigan Academic Standards in each subject and grade.

Michigan Department of Education BENCHMARK ASSESSMENTS Early Literacy & Mathematics		2023-2024 Performance Level Scale Score Ranges		
Subject	Grade	Level 1 Needs Support	Level 2 Demonstrates Proficiency	Level 3 Demonstrates Mastery
ELA	K	860-971	972-988	989-1020
	1	870-992	993-1023	1024-1060
	2	880-1007	1008-1031	1032-1100
Math	K	860-957	958-1006	1007-1020
	1	870-995	996-1035	1036-1060
	2	880-1006	1007-1057	1058-1100

For more information on using the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments, contact Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) by calling 877-560-8378 (option 2) or by email to misupport@datarecognitioncorp.com. You can also reference the resources posted within the [DRC INSIGHT Portal](https://mi.drccdirect.com/) (<https://mi.drccdirect.com/>); select the **Documents and Training Materials** link and filter for **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments** under the administration drop-down on the **Documents** tab.

Additional information and resources can be found on the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) [Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark web page](http://www.michigan.gov/earlylitandmath) (www.michigan.gov/earlylitandmath).

Reminders

Have You Seen the Revised M-STEP Online Test Directions yet?

Revisions to the test directions are available to view in the [Online Tools Trainings](https://bit.ly/49n5exN) (<https://bit.ly/49n5exN>).

If your school prefers to provide the more detailed information about each available tool, print and post the [MDE-Approved INSIGHT Tools poster](https://bit.ly/40znS1u) (<https://bit.ly/40znS1u>).

Here's the full [Spotlight article - November 9 issue](https://bit.ly/47d3xBC) (<https://bit.ly/47d3xBC>) that describes the changes.

Public Comment on Michigan's One Percent Alternate Assessment (MI-Access) Waiver

The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) caps the percentage of students who can take an alternate assessment for statewide testing at 1.0 percent of the total students tested. ESSA also allows states that may exceed the one percent cap to apply for a one-year waiver. (Michigan's alternate assessment program is MI-Access.)

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is formally requesting such a waiver for the Spring 2024 assessment administration. The waiver approval will allow MDE and local education agencies in the state to continue to ensure appropriate assessment selection for students with disabilities, and to further reduce participation numbers for Michigan's alternate assessment to meet the one percent cap requirement. This waiver request includes continued plans to reduce the number and percentage of students who take MI-Access as allowed under ESSA.

MDE is seeking public comment on Michigan's draft request for a waiver on the one percent cap on participation in MI-Access. **The online public comment window is open through 11:59 p.m. on Saturday, December 16.**

A draft of the [One-Percent Cap Waiver Request](https://bit.ly/3SO2kFL) (<https://bit.ly/3SO2kFL>) is available online.

[Public comments](https://bit.ly/3Glo76S) (<https://bit.ly/3Glo76S>) can be made online.



Writing Skills Field Test

Preparation for Passage-based Writing

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is looking for schools to participate in an M-STEP online Passage-based Writing Field Test **January 2 - February 9, 2024**.

Why have a stand-alone field test?

Field tests are used to check the adequacy of testing procedures and statistical characteristics of new test items by testing them in the field before they appear on an actual assessment. This test follows the same setup and security as the M-STEP. The field test helps to ensure that the items we are putting on the M-STEP are high quality. And, the more writing exposure your students receive, the more improvement you will see!

Who can participate?

Students in grades 3-8 can participate in field-testing items written by Michigan authors for Michigan's state assessments.

What is involved?

During the field test, students will read one passage, either literary or informational, from a variety of genres as prescribed by the standards. Students will then answer five multiple choice questions and respond to a writing prompt, which includes a checklist of components found in a well-written essay. They will not receive a score but will have an opportunity to prepare for the M-STEP and to use the checklist to improve their writing skills in the testing environment.

Where will it take place?

The online field test will take place in your school on computers.

When do I sign up?

Beginning November 13, 2023, go to the [OEAA Secure Site](https://baa.state.mi.us/BAASecure/Login.aspx) (<https://baa.state.mi.us/BAASecure/Login.aspx>) to Pre-ID students for testing. For information about how to Pre-ID students for testing or how to gain access to the Secure Site, go to the [Secure Site Training Site](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training) (<https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/secure-site-training>).

**Don't miss this great opportunity!
Sign up today!**



CB College Board Corner

Information on SAT[®], PSAT[™] 8/9, and PSAT[™] 10 provided by the College Board

WHAT'S NEW

SAT with Essay

As in past years, the Spring 2024 administration of the SAT will include the essay section. Students will have 50 minutes to complete the essay, and the prompt style will be the same as in previous administrations. Online testers will be required to type the essay into the Bluebook testing application.

Students approved to take the SAT with Essay in paper/pencil mode will have their multiple-choice answers transcribed into the Bluebook application; students' paper-based essay responses will be mailed back to College Board for scoring.

School Test Coordinator Webinar, Sessions 1 and 2

The SAT with Essay, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9 School Test Coordinator webinar scheduled for Tuesday, December 5, has reached participant capacity. For this reason, College Board will host **an additional School Test Coordinator webinar on Tuesday, December 12, at 1:00 p.m. ET**. This webinar will contain the same content as the December 5 session.

Intended primarily for School Test Coordinators, the webinar will include information about policies, procedures, available resources, student registration, accommodations, digital readiness, and communications that will be distributed leading up to the Michigan-provided SAT with Essay and PSAT-related assessments in Spring 2024.

If you were not able to register for the December 5 session, [register now](https://bit.ly/47FcUtV) (https://bit.ly/47FcUtV) for the additional session scheduled for December 12.

Note: Based on their initial registration date for the original session, some registrants for the December 5 webinar may receive a new invitation to attend the December 12 session. This is to ensure that earlier registrants will be able to attend the December 5 session.

A recording of the webinar will be shared with registrants from both sessions, for on-demand access. The recording will be posted on the [Michigan Merit Examination MME website](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/student-assessment/michigan-merit-examination-mme) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/services/student-assessment/michigan-merit-examination-mme) and the [Michigan PSAT website](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/psat) (https://www.michigan.gov/mde/Services/Student-Assessment/psat).

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District Test Coordinator Recording and Q&A

To support the Spring 2024 testing administration, College Board recently provided a District Test Coordinator Orientation webinar. This session provided district test coordinators with a high-level overview of the Spring 2024 digital testing platforms, implementation timeline, school establishment, and key differences between the fall and spring testing administrations.

A recording of the November 7, 2023, District Test Coordinator Orientation webinar, as well as the Q&A session compiled during the webinar, can be access at this link: [webinar recording](https://bit.ly/47xzncn) (<https://bit.ly/47xzncn>).

Questions about Spring SAT, PSAT 8/9, or PSAT 10?

- Call the Michigan Educator Hotline: 866-870-3127 (select Option 1)
- Email: michiganadministratorsupport@collegeboard.org



Reminder

Completing Manage Participation

Each school's WorkKeys Test Coordinator must indicate their school's WorkKeys participation status - either Participating or Not Participating - in the [PearsonAccess^{next} website](https://testadmin.act.org/) (<https://testadmin.act.org/>) by **December 8, 2023**, regardless of previous participation.

This process takes approximately five minutes; step-by-step instructions are provided in the [Spotlight newsletter - November 2, 2023 issue](https://bit.ly/40uONv4) (<https://bit.ly/40uONv4>) and in the ACT WorkKeys Spring 2024 Manage Participation Guide, which is located on the [MME web page](http://www.michigan.gov/mme) (www.michigan.gov/mme).

All schools, public and nonpublic, must confirm that they are participating in order to receive test materials and to administer the WorkKeys assessment.

If your school will participate in the WorkKeys assessments in Spring 2024, you must select the week in which you prefer to receive test materials. Be sure to select a week your school will be in session and not during spring break.

If your school will not participate this spring, complete the **Not Testing** section to be removed from future communications for the current academic year.

Deadline: You must submit your participation information by **Friday, December 8, 2023**.

If you miss this deadline, you will receive periodic past-due reminders.

For all upcoming events and deadlines, refer to the [ACT WorkKeys Schedule of Events](https://bit.ly/49wbZ02) (<https://bit.ly/49wbZ02>) posted on the [ACT state testing website](http://www.act.org/stateanddistrict/michigan) (<http://www.act.org/stateanddistrict/michigan>) on the **WorkKeys on Paper** page.

Questions about ACT WorkKeys?

Contact the ACT WorkKeys Customer Support Team:

- **email** ACT WorkKeys at workkeys@act.org
- **call** ACT WorkKeys at 800-967-5539; available 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. ET
- **email** accommodations questions to ACTStateAccoms@act.org

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15

Important Dates

December 2023

2023-2024 Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application [Response Deadline]

Ongoing through December 1, 2023

- Complete the 2023-2024 Benchmark Assessments Reporting and Funding Application form to identify benchmark assessments administered, report on local benchmark assessments and benchmark assessments with progress monitoring, and to apply for funding.

ACT WorkKeys Manage Participation Process [Response Deadline]

December 8, 2023

College Board Off-site Testing Request for Spring 2024 [Response Deadline]

Ongoing through March 1, 2024

- If your school is covered under a state contract in spring 2024, you must submit the [Off-site Testing Request Form](https://bit.ly/3N6ldXB) (<https://bit.ly/3N6ldXB>) and ensure that all off-site testing location(s) meet the digital testing policies and technical requirements.

January 2024

Winter Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments [Test Window]

January 2 – February 2, 2024

M-STEP Passage-based Writing Field Test [Test Window]

January 2 – February 9, 2024

Conferences & Webinars

December 2023

College Board School Test Coordinator Webinar, Part 1

Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 1:00 p.m.

- [Registration link](https://bit.ly/47FcUtV) (https://bit.ly/47FcUtV)

February 2024

Michigan School Testing Conference

February 14 – 15, 2024

- [Full conference details and registration form](https://bit.ly/3QhN87w) (https://bit.ly/3QhN87w)
- [Hotel registration featuring special conference rate](https://bit.ly/472c35G) (https://bit.ly/472c35G)

Contact Us

Assessment and Accountability Call Center

For assistance with assessment or accountability issues:

Call **877-560-8378** (select appropriate option)

Options	Topics
1	to report cheating and unethical behavior by a district/school in regards to state assessments
2	for support of Central Office Services (COS), DRC INSIGHT Portal, and INSIGHT for the online M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K-2)
3	for support of the OEAA Secure Site for <u>all</u> state assessments, administration and policy questions related to M-STEP, MI-Access, Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K-2), and accountability reporting
4	for questions about the College Entrance and WorkKeys assessments <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eligibility, MDE policies, and OEAA Secure Site Support 2. SAT, PSAT 8/9, and PSAT 10 – College Board 3. WorkKeys – ACT
5	for questions about the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, and support for WIDA AMS, INSIGHT, and Central Office Services (COS)
8	for all other questions

Email

For assessment questions:

mde-oeaa@michigan.gov

For accountability questions:

mde-accountability@michigan.gov

WIDA Client Services

Call **866-276-7735** for assistance with **WIDA Screener** and the **WIDA Secure Portal** questions (for questions not covered in options 3 and 5 in the table above)