Preparing Students and Parents for Testing

Relevant assessments:

All Michigan state assessments:

- **M-STEP**

- **MME**
  - » ACT WorkKeys®
  - » SAT® with Essay
  - » M-STEP (Science and Social Studies)

- **MI-Access**
  - » MI-Access Functional Independence (FI)
  - » MI-Access Supported Independence (SI)
  - » MI-Access Participation (P)

- **WIDA™**
  - » WIDA ACCESS for ELLs
  - » WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
  - » WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)
  - » WIDA Screener

- **PSAT™ 8/9 and 10**

- **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2)**

☐ Preparing Students

☐ Engaging Families

Assessment Coordinator Training Guide

Updated: September 14, 2020

MICHIGAN Department of Education

NOTE to Reader:

The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is composed of a series of documents published by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to provide information to District and Building Assessment Coordinators regarding their assessment-related roles and responsibilities. This guide provides the resources and knowledge base necessary to establish sound test administration practices and procedures that will allow for the reporting of valid and reliable test results. It will introduce you to Michigan's state assessment systems in general and will link you to the people, trainings, materials, tools, and resources needed throughout the process of coordinating state-provided assessments in your district.

This document is one chapter of the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** series. The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is not meant to replace assessment-specific testing manuals, guides, training resources, or other documentation associated with each assessment program.

The web pages referenced in this document are active links. For the full URLs to these pages, please see the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide Quick Reference** chapter. In that resource you will find an interactive list, along with the full URLs of the assessment-related web pages you will need to access, as well as:

- A preface for the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide,** which includes information on how to use the guide
- An interactive **Table of Contents** for the training guide
- A reference list of acronym definitions, and
- Important contact information

It is recommended that you keep the **Quick Reference** chapter readily available for future use.

Intro

A number of **resources and tools** have been developed to help parents ease their child's anxiety about state assessment and to **help students gain valuable experience** with online test tools and sample test items prior to testing. It is highly recommended that schools make parents aware of these resources and tools, and provide students with opportunities to practice using these resources before they take the online or paper/pencil tests. This chapter will introduce you to these tools and resources, by answering the following questions:

▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments?

▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the PSAT, SAT, and WorkKeys?

▶ What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for WIDA assessments?

▶ What resources are available to engage families in preparing for assessments?

What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the M-STEP, MI-Access, and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments?

The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has developed online resources that prepare students to take state assessments. These resources provide students with the opportunity to learn about the tools and features of the online testing engine and ensure students are able to focus on the content of the test on testing day, and not on the testing technology.

Student Tutorials These tutorials (see Figure 1) are student-narrated videos that introduce students, teachers, and parents to the online tests and tools contained in the M-STEP, MI-Access (FI only), and Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2). The tutorials are designed to be administered to students in a group setting, such as the classroom, using a projector or other similar resource. They can be accessed three different ways:

1. **DRC INSIGHT Portal** – Select "here" in the Documents and Training Materials bullet point, select the Test Tutorials tab, then select the icon under the Action column.
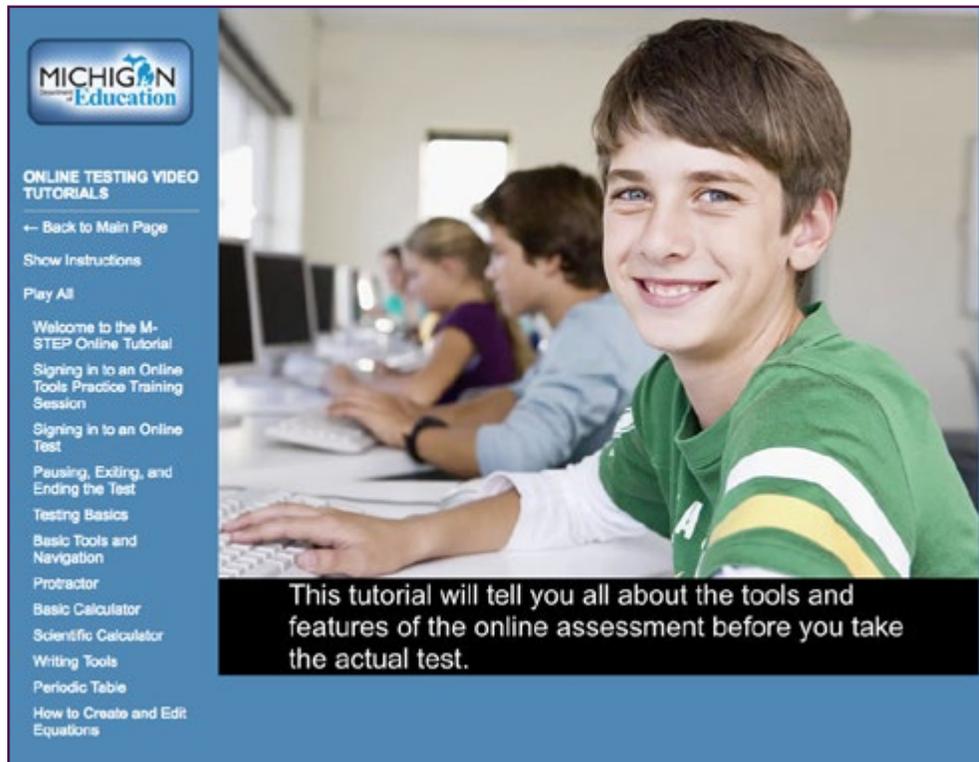
2. **INSIGHT** (the online testing environment) – Select the Student Tutorials link under the appropriate assessment program logo (see Figure 2).

3. **Online Tools Training (OTTs)** (must be opened in Chrome browser) – Select the Student Tutorials link under the appropriate assessment program logo (see Figure 2).

An important component of the Student Tutorials is that they provide explicit training on the pause/exit/end test functionality of the online testing engine, as well as how to access and use the online assessment tools.

Online Tools Training (OTTs) and Sample Item Sets
The Sample Item Sets are a select group of test items in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies that encompass various kinds of technology-enhanced items, such as drag and drop and hot spots. The Sample Item Sets are embedded within the OTTs by test system (see Figure 2). Teachers can model and students can practice using the sample items. Items in the Sample Item Sets are

Figure 1 – Online Testing Video Tutorials

selected to ensure that each grade and content area has a sample for each tool and item type that students will see in the actual test. The sets provide students and teachers with practice solving grade-level and content-specific test items aligned to Michigan's content standards, and provide practice navigating the online test delivery system. The OTTs can be accessed two ways:

1. **INSIGHT** – Open INSIGHT and then select the Online Tools Training link located under the appropriate assessment for students testing online.

2. **Using Chrome** – You must use the Chrome browser to access the OTTs if you are not accessing them through INSIGHT. If you do not use Chrome as your default browser, you will need to launch Chrome, and then copy and paste the full INSIGHT URL (https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi) into the Chrome address bar. Once you reach the INSIGHT landing page, choose the Online Tools Training link located under the appropriate assessment (see Figure 2).

Figure 3 shows the **M-STEP OTTs**. These include:

- » Sample Item Sets (by grade)
- » calculator practice
- » graphing practice
- » practice using some of the online supports and accommodations

MI-Access has an OTT for the Functional Independence (FI) assessment. The Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments OTT has Sample Item Sets for ELA and mathematics (see Figure 2).
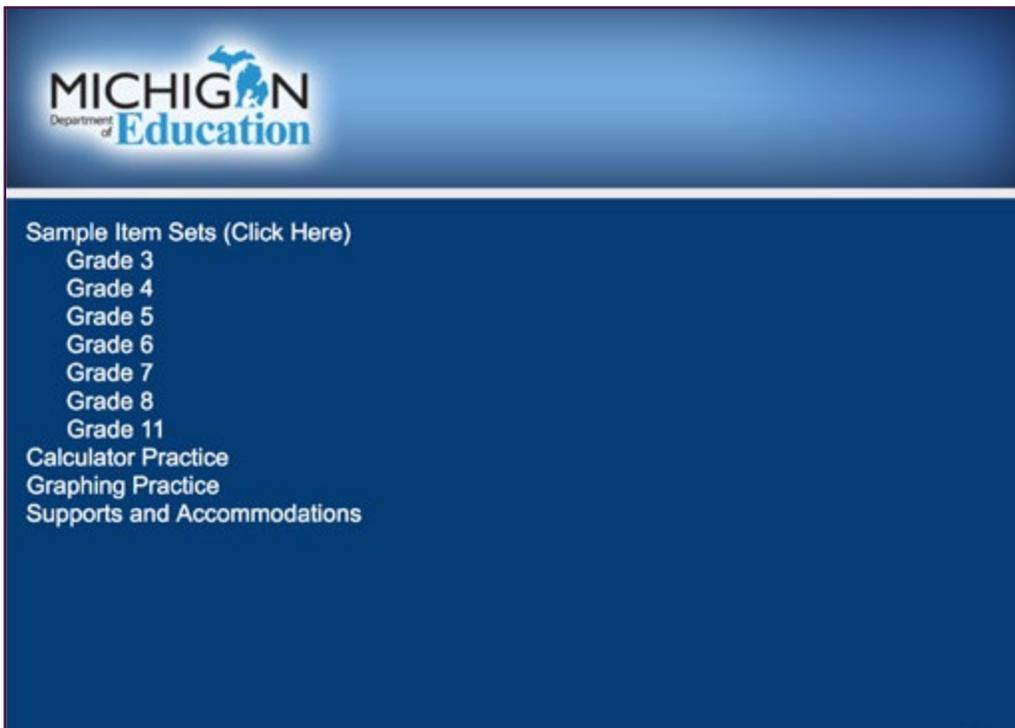
Paper/Pencil Sample Item Sets For students who will take the M-STEP paper/pencil assessments, grade-level paper/pencil sample item sets are available for all content areas on the M-STEP web page under the Parent/Student Information section.

Note: The sample items sets are not considered practice tests, as "practice test" implies a test with the same number of items and similar level of difficulty as an actual test.

Figure 2– DRC INSIGHT Online Tools Training and Assessment Tutorials

Figure 3 – M-STEP OTTs

Feedback collected from previous assessment administrations indicates that students and teachers who utilized the OTTs felt more prepared for online testing; students reported feeling confident about taking assessments online; and school administrators and teachers

experienced fewer issues related to online testing than students and teachers who did not take advantage of this resource.

As an Assessment Coordinator, you can provide training for teachers and test administrators to ensure they are aware of these tools. Show them how to find the resources, review the videos and materials, and assist them in creating a schedule for both classroom and individualized student review and practice.

The OEAA recommends that classroom teachers introduce online testing to parents via email or notes, and to their students by playing the Student Tutorial videos in class to show students how the online testing system and tools work. Once the Student Tutorial video is shown and discussed in the classroom, teachers should then show the Online Tools Training (OTTs) to the entire class (on the same or another day). Additionally, each student should be provided hands-on practice with the online Sample Item Sets contained within the OTTs, ideally using the device they will use during testing.

What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for the PSAT™, SAT®, and ACT WorkKeys®?

The SAT Test Coordinator should inform students about SAT test day activities and testing schedules well in advance, so that they can know what to expect, what to bring (and what NOT to bring), where to report, and how to practice for the test.

The Test Coordinator should hold a pre-administration session in advance of test day for students. The pre-administration session allows students to:

» go over test day procedures

» complete required personal information

» identify the colleges, universities, or scholarship programs to which they want their four free score sends to be sent

» opt into the Student Search Service and complete the optional questionnaire

This will save time on test day as these processes can take up to 45 minutes to complete. For more information on conducting the pre-administration session for College Board assessments, review the Before Test Day/Prepare Your Students and the Prepare Your Pre-administration Session sections in the applicable **SAT** or **PSAT Michigan Coordinator Manuals** with testing staff.

In addition, students and their parents should be made aware that the College Board offers resources,

including SAT sample test items and PSAT sample test items, to help grade 8 and high school students prepare for assessments. College Board also provides the **SAT School Day Student Guide**, which is included in pre-administration shipments. In addition, Khan Academy has partnered with College Board to provide free online practice sessions to Michigan SAT with Essay School Day test takers, tailored to each student's academic strengths and weaknesses. Go to the Official SAT Practice Page for more information on student resources.

The ACT WorkKeys Assessment Coordinator will inform students about where to report and what to bring (and not bring) to the test sessions. Consider holding a special student preparation session a few weeks prior to test day so that students can fill out demographic information on the answer documents, be informed of test day activities and guidelines, and learn where to go for ACT WorkKeys sample questions. For more information, advise students and parents to browse the Students and Parents information page on the ACT Testing: Michigan website. Here they will find sample questions for each WorkKeys assessment as well as access to a free online practice test. Topics to be communicated to students during this session include:

» what to bring to the test session (several #2

pencils with erasers, photo ID, permitted
calculator)

» how to prepare for the test

» when and where to report; if testing off-site,
how they will be transported

» what not to bring (cell phone, prohibited
calculators)

What steps should be taken and what resources are available to prepare students for WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments?

WIDA offers a variety of assessment preparation materials and tools and guidance for educators, parents, and students on the Michigan-specific WIDA website. Additionally, WIDA suggests that schools take the following steps to acclimate students to the online test platform prior to testing:

1. Preview with students the ACCESS for ELLs online assessment using the online **Test Demo**.

2. Use the **Interactive Sample Items** in conjunction with the **ACCESS for ELLs Online Sample Items User Guide** document to familiarize students with the test engine and assessment item types.

   Note: The Interactive Sample Items are not considered "practice tests," as a practice test implies a test with the same number of items and similar level of difficulty as an actual test.

3. Have students independently preview the online **Practice Test** prior to the start of testing.

Note: For the online Test Demo, the Interactive Sample Items, and online Practice Test, it is advised that you use a Chrome browser. If you do not use Chrome as your default browser, you will need to launch Chrome, and then copy and paste the full URLs found on the **WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs** web page into your Chrome browser address bar.

Educators preparing students to take the ACCESS for ELLs paper/pencil assessment can use the Student Booklet links (by grade level) on the **WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs** web page to preview Paper Sample Items and acclimate students to the format of the Listening and Speaking domains, delivered by CD. (Sample items for Reading and Writing are not available for ACCESS for ELLs Paper at this time.) The **WIDA Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs** web page also offers a user guide to Paper Sample Items – ACCESS for ELLs Grades 1-12 Paper-Based Sample Items – which includes more instructions on how best to utilize the paper sample items with students.

What resources are available to engage families in preparing for assessments?

The OEAA has a growing set of resources designed to help families learn more about the assessments their child takes, how to prepare for the testing experience, and how results are reported.

Included in these resources is a **Communications Toolkit** for school administrators that offers timely and accurate information that can be shared with families. The toolkit is updated annually—during the test administration window and the results reporting window—and can be found on each assessment's

web page; updates also are announced in the weekly Michigan Department of Education (MDE) **Spotlight on Student Assessment and Accountability** newsletter. Building Administrators can use the toolkit's helpful documents and customizable templates to communicate with parents before the testing window opens, and again when state assessment results become publicly available. The toolkit documents can also help answer questions that might arise, including requests to allow children to "opt out" of testing.

Here is a sample of the type of resources included in the toolkit; these resources are also listed separately under the Parent/Student Information header on each assessment web page:

- **M-STEP: What can students expect?** (a video resource)

- **Michigan's State Assessment System: What it Is, What it Means – And What it Offers** (a handout and companion PowerPoint presentation)

- **Parent Guide to MI-Access**

- **Student Testing: What Parents Can Do to Help Students Prepare** (a handout)

- **M-STEP/MME: How to Read Your Child's Score Report** (handouts)

- **Parent Guide to State Assessments in Michigan – National PTA**

- **Superintendent Parent Letter on M-STEP and MME** (includes opt-out information)

- **What Parents Should Know About Assessments**

New and updated resources for families are occasionally posted to each Michigan state assessment web page, so be sure to revisit these pages whenever you have questions about what families can do to experience successful assessments.