



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 28, 2023

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Delsa D. Chapman, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports

SUBJECT: Academic Year 2023-24 Benchmark Assessments Funding and Reporting

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is informing intermediate school districts (ISDs) and local educational agencies (LEAs), both traditional public school districts and public school academies (PSAs), about the use of benchmark assessments to evaluate student academic competency in grades K-8 in both reading and mathematics.

With the repeal of [Michigan Compiled Law \(MCL\) 388.1698b](#), effective October 1, 2023, there is no longer a requirement to administer benchmark assessments in order to receive state aid. However, funding through [MCL 388.1704i](#) is available if a district continues to administer an approved benchmark assessment. Pre-pandemic, more than 90 percent of Michigan districts recognized the need for the administration of a benchmark assessment, and MDE strongly recommends the continued use of benchmark assessments.

[MCL 388.1704i](#) provides funding for the 2023-24 academic year for districts that administer the NWEA MAP, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, and Renaissance Star benchmark assessments if specific administration and reporting requirements are fulfilled. The Smarter Balanced Interim assessments (grades 3-8) and the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark assessments (grades K-2) remain free to districts and schools.

To receive funding for benchmark assessments, MCL 388.1704i requires the administration of benchmark assessments within the first nine weeks of school and again before the last day of the 2023-24 academic year. Additionally, this law requires districts to provide student data to parents or guardians within 30 days after administering the benchmark assessments. Lastly, MCL 388.1704i requires districts receiving funding to report benchmark information from all benchmark assessments administered during the 2023-24 academic year. Data collection will be similar to last year.

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- Districts administering NWEA Map, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, Renaissance Star, Smarter Balanced Interim, or Early Literacy and Mathematics benchmark assessments are expected to report assessment results, including growth data if available, and primary mode of instruction to the Michigan Data Hub (MiDataHub) within 30 days of test administration in both the fall and spring.
- For districts using local benchmark assessments or assessments that contain progress monitoring tools, information will be collected in late fall using the Grant Electronic Monitoring System/Michigan Administrative Review System (GEMS/MARS).

ISDs and LEAs may apply for 2023-24 benchmark assessment funding if they administer NWEA Map, Curriculum Associates i-Ready, or Renaissance Star benchmark assessments in reading or math to students in any grade K-8. Funding eligibility for this grant opportunity is based on all of the following legislative requirements:

- administering NWEA MAP, i-Ready, or Star benchmark assessments in reading or mathematics during both fall 2023 and spring 2024;
- reporting of NWEA MAP, i-Ready, and Star data correctly to MiDataHub within 30 days of test administration;
- reporting the mode of instruction correctly to MiDataHub within 30 days of test administration;
- applying for funding through the GEMS/MARS system by the application deadline; and
- reporting to parents/legal guardians within 30 days of test administration.

MDE encourages districts to implement a benchmark assessment system as part of a balanced assessment system that includes assessments that can be used to improve student learning and support district academic goals contained in the Michigan Integrated Continuous Improvement Process (MICIP). Also, MDE encourages administering the same benchmark assessment used in prior years.

Awards will be \$12.50 per membership pupil in grades K-8 for each eligible district. An application will be available in GEMS/MARS in November 2023, with awards made through the State Aid Management System (SAMS) in February 2024. Failure to comply with the eligibility requirements may result in loss of funding.

Nonpublic schools and districts that do not have students in grades K-8 do not need to report data and are not eligible for funding.

To learn more about benchmark assessment requirements, please visit the [MDE Benchmark Assessments web page](#). For questions related to benchmark assessments, please contact MDE's Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability at MDE-OEAA@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Confederation of Michigan Tribal Education Departments