

Special Edition to Guide IEP Team Decisions

Dear Readers,

Thank you for working so diligently to complete the spring assessment cycle for high school students. With such a challenging year due to changing assessment windows, exciting new high school initiatives, and new MI-Access assessments, it is heartening to see Michigan educators handle the flux with such professionalism.

Information for IEP Team Deliberation

Since many of you are currently engaged in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) planning process, we have dedicated this issue of *The Assist* mostly to providing you with information to help guide important decisions related to student participation in statewide assessment.

For example, two articles below provide valuable information on new or changing statewide assessments. The first article, titled “IEP Team Decision-Making for the Michigan Merit Examination,” describes the different components of the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) and important considerations for IEP Teams, such as what accommodations are available for students with disabilities and how to apply for them. The second article, titled “IEP Team Decisions for the English Language Proficiency Assessment,” describes the state’s newest operational assessment and provides information that should inform and enrich IEP discussions related to students who are English language learners and also have disabilities.

The article below, titled “Accommodations Decisions for IEP Teams,” should be helpful to teams as they select and evaluate assessment accommodations. It contains general information on the different types of accommodations as well as a list of questions to ask when selecting them for instruction and assessment. This article should be used in conjunction with the articles on the MME and ELPA when considering state-level assessment accommodations.

Furthermore, this issue of *The Assist* contains updated information on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), including the content areas that will be assessed in the coming year and how many Michigan schools will be involved.

Finally, as in years past, we have included updated versions of three useful IEP Team decision-making tools: (1) an age-to-grade conversion chart, showing

which MI-Access assessments should be taken by students who are ungraded in the state's Single Record Student Database (SRSD), (2) a flow chart, which reminds IEP Teams of important factors to consider when selecting appropriate state assessments for their students, and (3) a checklist that accompanies the flow chart. Please feel free to copy these tools and use them during IEP Team deliberations.

Additional Assessment Information

In this issue of *The Assist* you will also find important information that is not directly related to IEP Team decisions but does impact the statewide assessment of students with disabilities. We have included articles on ethical assessment administration practices; medical emergencies that impact student involvement in the state's assessment system; MATR, an important state resource to use when considering accommodations involving technology; technology literacy, an important component of No Child Left Behind (NCLB); and information from the MI-Access contractor—BETA/TASA—on upcoming timelines and materials handling procedures that are critical for ensuring smooth assessment and reporting cycles.

We conclude this issue of *The Assist* with an update on the progress of the MI-Access Assessment Plan Writing Teams (APWTs). They reconvened in January and March to continue their important work of developing extended content expectations, extended benchmarks, and assessment plans for the MI-Access assessments that will soon need to be operational. The article titled "MI-Access Assessment Development Update" provides details about these meetings. Many thanks are due to the APWT members for their diligent work on these challenging tasks.

Again, thank you for your continued efforts to stay current with the many changes surrounding state assessment. We at the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program look forward to working with you throughout the remainder of the school year and thank you for your continuing support and professionalism.

Sincerely,

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