

Ethical Administration Practices

One purpose of state assessment is to accurately measure and report student achievement or what students know and are able to do in relation to Michigan's content standards, specifically in the areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In order to achieve accurate data and ensure equity for all students, however, the assessments must be administered in a standardized manner. To that end, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has developed procedures for districts and schools to follow when administering state-level assessments. Failure to follow these procedures could result in unethical practices with serious consequences for the students, schools, districts, and staff.

As noted in the *MI-Access Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manuals*, district and school staff can assist with ensuring accuracy and equity by doing five things: (1) maintaining the security of ALL assessment materials, (2) administering the assessments in a manner consistent with established assessment procedures, (3) establishing assessment conditions that prevent opportunities for students to engage in irregular behaviors, (4) reviewing student information on completed scan documents, and (5) following the communication procedures established for asking and answering questions. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) administration manuals have similar information related to security.

In August 2005, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved a document called *Professional Assessment and Accountability Practices for Educators* (commonly referred to as "the ethics document") to help meet the goal of ethical, standardized administration. The document was developed by the OEAA using professional guidelines that outline best practices in assessment and reporting of results. The ethics document has sections describing the roles and responsibilities of those involved with assessment administration, general issues of security and preparation, and what to do if an irregularity or unethical practice is suspected. It also has flow charts depicting the investigation process and a glossary. Everyone involved with the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS) should read this document and understand the "ground rules" for administering state assessments. The ethics document is available on the OEAA Web page at www.mi.gov/oeaa.

Two examples of ethical irregularities are presented below as well as some helpful tips on how to avoid them.

- **Example 1:** A student does not follow the standardized administration procedures. For example, he or she copies another student's answers or communicates or collaborates with another student during assessment administration. (Communication includes written, electronic, verbal, or gestured

forms of communication.) To avoid this situation, assessment administrators need to make it clear to students that all types of communication with other students during the assessment are prohibited. In the case where students may respond orally to questions, the IEP Team should consider having the assessment administered individually to the student in a setting where oral comments will not be heard by other students.

- **Example 2:** Teachers or proctors do not follow the standardized administration procedures. For example, an assessment administrator reads a portion of the assessment aloud, when reading aloud is prohibited. This violation will cause scores to be invalidated, resulting in some schools not making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). To avoid this situation, districts must make certain that all MEAP and MI-Access coordinators and assessment administrators are thoroughly aware of administrative procedures and provide substantive training to all proctors.

When problems occur or are discovered, an OEAA staff member must be contacted immediately. The table below shows who to contact depending on the assessment that was being administered when the violation or unethical practice took place.

OEAA Contacts for Unethical Practices				
MEAP	MI-Access	ELPA	Education YES! NCLB	OEAA
Mike Radke radkem@mi.gov 517-241-0206	Peggy Dutcher dutcherp@mi.gov 517-241-4416	Marilyn Roberts robertsm@mi.gov 517-335-0567	Paul Bielawski bielawp@mi.gov 517-335-5784	Edward Roeber roebere@mi.gov 517-373-0048 or Marilyn Roberts robertsm@mi.gov 517-335-0567

Depending on the particular situation, the OEAA can sometimes rectify the situation or approve the use of emergency tests, which must be specially ordered at a cost to the district of \$50 per student per content area. Getting approval to administer emergency tests will prevent a school from possibly not making AYP as a result of invalid scores, but the expense is yet another reason why it is wise to have high quality, careful training and close monitoring of coordinators, assessment administrators, accommodations providers, and proctors.