

The Assist

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

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Fall 2006 Arrives!

Welcome back! We hope the summer left you refreshed, reinvigorated, and ready for another challenging school year.

Over the past few months, the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program has taken some critical steps toward implementing the MI-Access assessments that are currently under development. In addition, we have worked hard to prepare for the second fall administration of the MI-Access Functional Independence English language arts and mathematics assessments for students in grades 3 through 8. This issue of *The Assist* is dedicated to updating you on the progress that has been made and preparing you for the fast approaching fall assessments.

Assessment Development

On the development front, MI-Access Sensitivity Review Committees (SRCs) and Content Advisory Committees (CACs) met in July to review hundreds of items in preparation for piloting (1) the Participation and Supported Independence version 1.5 English language arts and mathematics assessments, and (2) the new science assessments for Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence student populations. The article called “MI-Access Assessment Development Update” provides more information about these meetings. Thank you to SRC and CAC members for their detailed and comprehensive work.

Also in July, the MI-Access Functional Independence assessments that were administered for the first time statewide this past school year underwent an external alignment study to learn more about how well they assess Michigan’s extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs) and extended benchmarks (EBs). The article called “MI-Access Functional Independence External Alignment Study” describes this important facet of the assessment development and implementation process.

In addition, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has submitted additional documentation to the U.S. Education Department as part of the peer review process, which is used to determine the technical adequacy of state-level assessments and their compliance with NCLB requirements. The article called “Peer Review Update” contains detailed information on this critical assessment development topic.

Fall 2006 MI-Access

With regard to the fall assessments, in “Notes from the Contractor to MI-Access Coordinators,” BETA/TASA, the MI-Access contractor, outlines important information about the fall 2006 assessment materials and handling procedures. Please read this article carefully as you prepare for the upcoming MI-Access assessment window, which starts on October 9 and continues through November 17, 2006.

Please note that, following the contractor article, there are five tables intended to help you better navigate the assessment administration process. The first table shows the different functions of the MI-Access Online System and the OEAA Secure Site, the second table shows the 2006/2007 MI-Access assessment windows, the third table shows the 2006/2007 assessment windows for the other assessments in the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS) as well as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), the fourth table shows the dates the Michigan Merit Examination will be administered if it is approved by the U.S. Education Department, and the fifth table shows the content areas assessed at the state level. We hope you find these tables helpful and informative.

Finally, the fall OEAA conferences will provide MI-Access coordinators with another excellent opportunity to learn about the MI-Access assessments and the participation of students with disabilities in the MEAS. See the article called “Fall OEAA Conferences Fast Approaching” for details about when and where the conferences will be held, as well as the content that will be addressed.

Michigan Merit Examination

For those involved with assessing high school students, it is important to know that the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) is on track to replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program High School Test (MEAP HST) in spring 2007. The article called “Michigan Merit Examination Update” contains information on upcoming training opportunities and Webcasts, and discusses important issues related to providing assessment accommodations for students with disabilities.

Again, welcome back to school! The staff of the Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program looks forward to working with you throughout the year as we continue to face and conquer the challenges associated with ensuring that all students participate meaningfully in our state assessment system.

Sincerely,

Peggy Dutcher
Manager, Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program
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MI-Access Assessment Development Update

Throughout the 2005/2006 school year, the MI-Access team has been working hard to develop science assessments for all MI-Access student populations, and English language arts and mathematics assessments for Participation and Supported Independence students. Following is updated information on the progress that has been made since the last issue of *The Assist* was published. (To learn about how the process started, consult the August 2005 issue of *The Assist*.)

MI-Access Science Assessments

Sensitivity Review Committees (SRCs) and Content Advisory Committees (CACs) gathered in mid-July to review hundreds of science items in preparation for the pilot in 2007. The committees—which were comprised of Michigan teachers, administrators, and parents—were charged with ensuring that the items (1) were prepared according to the draft specifications developed for all three MI-Access populations (Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence), and (2) measured the draft science extended benchmarks (EBs) identified by the Science Assessment Plan Writing Team (APWT).



There were a total of nine committees, each of which reviewed one grade span (elementary, middle, or high school) for one MI-Access population (Participation, Supported Independence, or Functional Independence). For example, one CAC reviewed two hundred and twenty-five items that were written specifically for elementary Functional Independence students. Organizing the committees in this fashion enabled them to concentrate on the content of the items for a single population and a single set of EBs.

Most items were well-received and deemed ready for field testing; however, there were some items that the committees believed needed revision. The CACs or SRCs made comments on how those items could be reconstructed so that they were more appropriate and clear. The committees also made valuable comments on the draft EBs for each population and strand, which will be reviewed and considered by the MI-Access team.



Once all the revisions are made, a pool of items will be ready for field testing. This is a critical step in the assessment development process because it yields data on how students actually perform on the items. Following field-

testing, the CACs and SRCs will be reassembled to review the items in light of the data and determine which ones are viable to appear on operational forms.

When to Field Test? We Need Your Input!

The Assessment for Students with Disabilities Program staff is looking for your input regarding when to field test the MI-Access science assessments—either before or during the spring 2007 MI-Access assessment window. Please share your input by August 31st via the survey posted on the MI-Access Web page (<http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access>) under “Survey Information.”

MI-Access English Language Arts and Mathematics: Participation and Supported Independence

Rulings from the U.S. Education Department (USED) regarding the current Participation (P) and Supported Independence (SI) assessments have necessitated the development of new assessment instruments, which will be administered during the 2006/2007 school year. These new assessments, hereafter referred to as P/SI v1.5, need to be explicitly linked to Michigan's English language arts and mathematics content standards.

As noted in the last two issues of *The Assist*, revised P/SI v1.5 assessment activities have been developed based on the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs) and extended benchmarks (EBs) drafted by the P/SI ELA and Mathematics APWT. These assessment activities underwent a joint, one-day CAC/SRC review on July 21, 2006 to help ensure that they (1) were as appropriate as possible in terms of depth, breadth, and complexity; (2) were clear in regard to scoring; (3) were explicitly linked to EGLCEs and EBs in the content areas of English language arts and mathematics; and (4) contained little, or no, sensitive or biased content.

Following the review, the P/SI v1.5 assessment activities were revised based on CAC/SRC comments. Then, assessment activities were selected and compiled into pilot test booklets, which will be used during the fall 2006 MI-Access assessment window to obtain data and feedback from Michigan educators regarding (1) the content of the activities, (2) the clarity of expectations for students, (3) the new scoring rubrics, and (4) assessment administration procedures. The pilot is a critical part of the assessment development process because it helps ensure that the operational P/SI v1.5 assessments, which will be administered to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 during the spring 2007 MI-Access assessment window, are as well-developed as possible. Please note that the grade 3 through 8 P/SI v1.5 assessments will only be administered in spring for the 2006/2007 school year. Next year MI-Access will return to assessing students in grades 3 through 8 in the fall and assessing students in grade 11 in the spring.

MI-Access Assessment Development Status

The table below shows where the MI-Access program is currently and what assessments are on the horizon. It is organized by the grade level at which the assessments are or will be administered once they are finalized. The column labeled “Currently Administered” lists the MI-Access assessments that are operational at this time; the column labeled “Under Development” includes the English language arts, mathematics, and science assessments that are in the process of being developed; and the column labeled “Future Development” indicates the assessments that will need to be constructed at some point in the future.

MI-Access Assessment Development Table

Grade	Currently Administered				Under Development								Future Development			
	P	SI	FI-ELA	FI-M	SI-ELA	SI-M	P-ELA	P-M	P-SC	SI-SC	FI-SC	P-SS	SI-SS	FI-SS	MFL-ELA	MFL-M
3	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U							F	F
4	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U							F	F
5	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				F	F
6	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U				F	F	F	F	F
7	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U							F	F
8	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U				F	F
9												F	F	F	F	F
11	X	X	X	X	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	F	F	F	F	F

KEY
 P - Participation
 SI - Supported Independence
 FI - Functional Independence
 MFI - Modified Full Independence
 ELA - English Language Arts
 M - Mathematics
 SC - Science
 SS - Social Studies
 X - Currently Administered
 U - Under Development
 F - Future Development

Look for additional updates on assessment development activities in future issues of *The Assist*.

MI-Access Functional Independence External Alignment Study

One criterion the U.S. Education Department (USED) uses to determine if state assessments have sound technical adequacy is the extent to which the content embedded in the assessments intersects, or aligns, with the content embedded in the state's content standards. This "alignment" is a critical factor in determining the validity of assessments because it helps ensure that students are being measured on the content the state expects them to be taught.

The MI-Access Functional Independence English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments—which measure Michigan's extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs) for grades 3 through 8 and extended benchmarks (EBs) for grade 11—underwent an alignment study in July 2006. The study was conducted at Michigan State University by Norm Webb from the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Webb model—which has been used with more than ten states for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—combines qualitative expert judgments with quantified coding and analysis of the content standards and assessments.

Participants in the MI-Access Functional Independence external alignment study included three Michigan mathematics educators and three Michigan ELA educators, all of whom were very familiar with the state's EGLCEs/EBs. In addition, there were six external reviewers (three for each content area) who, by requirement, were unfamiliar with the EGLCEs/EBs and the MI-Access Functional Independence assessments. Staff from the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) were also present during the study, but acted only as observers. The facilitators for the meeting, as well as the external reviewers, had all participated in alignment studies for other states using the same process.



During the study, participants individually identified the EGLCEs/EBs that matched each assessment item. They started by determining the depth of knowledge required by each EGLCE/EB and coded them using one of four levels, or types, of knowledge: (1) recall, (2) skill/concept, (3) strategic thinking, and (4) extended thinking. Then reviewers determined the object of the EGLCE/EB represented by each item or task on the assessment being reviewed, and rated the level of knowledge necessary for a student to

successfully complete the item or task.

The results for each reviewer were entered into a spreadsheet by tracking the corresponding objectives for each item and whether the level of knowledge for the item was below, at, or above the level of knowledge for the corresponding EGLCE/EB. The content ratings and codes were statistically analyzed across reviewers to produce statistics and tabular reports on four criterion: (1) categorical concurrence, (2) depth-of-knowledge consistency, (3) range-of-knowledge correspondence, and (4) balance of representation. These criteria were used as lenses through which to examine other variables, such as the number of items that assess each EGLCE/EB, the range of complexity of the items, and the proportion of EGLCEs/EBs represented on the assessments. The process also helped answer such questions as

- are the assessments for one content area more complex than the other,
- is there a consistent or inconsistent increase in the complexity level across grade levels, and
- which content standards are over- or under-represented on the assessments?

The OEAA staff anticipates having the results of the alignment study very soon, and will post the final report at <http://www.michigan.gov/mi-access>. The results will be used to refine existing EGLCE/EB documents so that they are clear, of high quality, and can be used more effectively for instruction and assessment purposes. Notifications will be sent out by the OEAA staff once the EGLCE/EB revisions are complete.



To further study alignment between the MI-Access assessments and Michigan's content standards, the OEAA was invited to participate in another study, this one conducted by the National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC). The NAAC is researching the alignment of alternate assessments, content standards, and instruction through a hybrid alignment protocol using the Achieve, the Survey of Enacted Curriculum (SEC), and the Webb models. The NAAC has already implemented the protocol with a performance-based assessment state, and is currently implementing it with a portfolio state. They have plans to study two more states—in addition to Michigan—over the next two years. All of the MI-Access assessments will be reviewed in the NAAC study, including the Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence assessments for English language arts, mathematics, and science.

For more information on the NAAC, go to <http://www.naacpartners.org>. To learn more about the Achieve, the SEC, and the Webb analysis models, go to http://www.ccsso.org/projects/Alignment_Analysis/models/.

Peer Review Update

All general and alternate state-level assessments used for calculating No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) undergo a peer review process at the federal level to ensure that they meet (1) high standards of technical adequacy, and (2) the requirements set forth in NCLB.

To facilitate the process, states “submit evidence” on their assessments and content standards. The evidence is then thoroughly examined by peer reviewers specially trained by the U.S. Education Department (USED). There are seven distinct areas of review, each of which contains several “critical elements” that are defined by the USED. All states must provide documentation showing the efforts they have made towards meeting the critical elements, including comprehensive indications of reliability, validity, and evidence that each assessment and content standard within a state’s system was developed with opportunities for input from diverse stakeholders. After the peer review process is complete, the USED sends a letter back to each state (1) indicating whether their assessment system was approved, and (2) if not, providing guidance on how to make improvements to those parts of the system that did not meet peer review criteria.

In fall 2005, Michigan submitted evidence on its state-level assessments that are used to calculate AYP, including the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access assessments. This summer, the state received an official feedback letter from the USED—dated June 20, 2006—indicating that approval was pending because peer reviewers needed to see additional evidence before they could determine the technical adequacy of the MEAP and MI-Access assessments. (To see the official USED letter, which is commonly referred to as the “Michigan 2” letter, go to <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/index.html>.)

This feedback was not a complete surprise since Michigan was unable to submit comprehensive technical reports in fall 2005 because the MEAP and MI-Access were not yet fully administered nor were technical reports for all grades completed until after the spring 2006 assessment window. Therefore, in response to the official “Michigan 2” letter, the state submitted a second round of evidence, including the now completed technical reports and evidence on two new areas of development requiring peer review and USED approval—Participation and Supported Independence Version 1.5 and the Michigan Merit Examination.

Participation and Supported Independence Version 1.5 (P/SI v1.5)

During the fall 2005 peer review process, the USED determined that the operational Participation and Supported Independence (P/SI) assessments did not meet all the requirements of NCLB. In particular, (1) they were not explicitly linked to the state’s English language arts (ELA) and mathematics content standards, and (2) they did not report scores separately for ELA and mathematics. At that time, the development of the P/SI version 2.0 assessments—which were being designed to explicitly measure ELA and

mathematics and would report scores accordingly—was already underway. Unfortunately, the version 2.0 assessments were not ready for statewide implementation in the 2006/2007 school year. As a result, the USED response necessitated the development of new MI-Access Participation and Supported Independence ELA and mathematics assessments that could be administered during the 2006/2007 school year if approved by the USED. These new assessments—hereafter referred to as P/SI v1.5—(1) are clearly linked to Michigan's content standards via the ELA and mathematics extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs) and extended benchmarks (EBs) drafted by the P/SI Assessment Plan Writing Team, and (2) will yield separate ELA and mathematics scores.

Since the P/SI v1.5 assessments are new, evidence for many critical elements subject to peer review needed to be generated and submitted to the USED. Thus, this July, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) submitted evidence on the P/SI v1.5 assessments for USED review, including examples of assessment activities, the draft EGLCEs/EBs, draft item specifications, and a draft assessment plan. The draft plan contains (1) a proposed blueprint outlining the number of activities for each content area by strand, (2) new scoring rubrics, and (3) an updated timeline describing the steps needed to ensure that the P/SI v1.5 assessments will meet all the NCLB criteria for an operational assessment for the 2006/2007 school year.

If the P/SI v1.5 assessments meet all the criteria and are approved as valid alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards, they will be administered statewide as operational assessments in spring 2007 along with the MI-Access Functional Independence Grade 11 ELA and mathematics assessments. The ASWDP will share information on the results of the peer review process in future issues of *The Assist*.

Michigan Merit Examination (MME)

In spring 2007, the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) is scheduled to replace the current MEAP High School Test (HST). The MME will be administered in the spring *if* it is approved by the USED by November 1, 2006. Evidence describing all aspects of the MME was submitted to the USED in July 2006 to ensure that each component would be reviewed and any issues addressed by the Michigan Department of Education in order to secure approval no later than November 1. As was the case for P/SI v1.5, this necessitated comprehensive responses to each of the USED critical elements and a great deal of evidence gathering and compilation to ensure that NCLB criteria were met. If approval is not received by November 1, the MEAP HST will be administered in spring 2007.

As noted in the April 2006 issue of *The Assist*, the MME approval schedule has implications for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams since they will not know until late fall whether their high school students will be administered the MME or the MEAP. As a result, IEP Teams will need to plan for both assessments. MI-Access, of course, will continue to be available to students; however, as in the past, the percentage of students who participate in MI-Access will be small, as those assessments are designed only for students who have, or function as if they have, mild to severe cognitive



impairment. Please see the article called “Michigan Merit Examination Update” for a more comprehensive look at issues related to the MME, including planning for assessment accommodations.

Notes from the Contractor to MI-Access Coordinators

Greetings from BETA/TASA, the MI-Access assessment contractor! We hope everyone had an enjoyable summer. The 2006/2007 school year should prove to be a very busy, yet exciting year for MI-Access. We look forward to (1) the second administration of the Functional Independence assessments for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, (2) piloting the Participation and Supported Independence version 1.5 (P/SI v1.5) assessments for English language arts and mathematics in the fall, (3) piloting the new MI-Access science assessments in winter or spring 2007, and (4) the first statewide administration of the P/SI v1.5 assessments in spring 2007. As always, BETA/TASA welcomes the opportunity to work with the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) staff and Michigan educators on these important endeavors.

MI-Access Fall 2006 Assessment Window

The MI-Access fall 2006 assessment window starts on October 9 and continues through November 17, 2006. During that window, the grade 3 through 8 MI-Access Functional Independence assessments will be administered, and the P/SI v1.5 assessments for grades 3 through 8 and 11 will be field tested.

Districts will receive the Functional Independence assessment materials in two shipments beginning the week of September 18, 2006. Information as to when districts will receive the P/SI v1.5 assessment materials will be provided once the pilot schedule is finalized.

NOTE: The OEAA will administer the new operational P/SI v1.5 assessments to students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 before or during the spring assessment window (February 19-April 6, 2007). These assessment results will be the official ones used for accountability purposes (Education YES! and NCLB).

Following is a description of the MI-Access Functional Independence assessment materials that districts will receive in each shipment. Keep in mind that (1) a more detailed cover letter will be included with each shipment explaining the specific materials enclosed and proper handling procedures, (2) organizational tools—such as packing slips, distribution sheets, and serial number lists—will be included to assist with inventorying and distributing the materials, and (3) an overage of materials (calculated at about 10 percent of the standard print orders submitted in the MI-Access Online System) will be enclosed to help reduce the need for ordering additional materials.

Fall 2006: First Shipment

The first shipment of MI-Access Functional Independence assessment materials will include district materials and boxes of assessment materials organized by school.

District materials include:

- a *MI-Access Security Compliance Form* to be signed by the district coordinator *prior* to distributing assessment materials;
- *District Coordinator Reference Booklets* (one copy of each standard print assessment booklet being used in the district);
- a *Return of Materials Packet* with one UPS RS label for each box sent to the district, a divider sheet, a packing checklist, and paper strips for organizing materials for return;
- multiple copies of the *2006/2007 MI-Access Functional Independence Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manual* (one copy for the District MI-Access Coordinator and multiple copies for distribution to schools); and
- large and small *2006/2007 MI-Access Calendars* for distribution.

NOTE: If coordinators and assessment administrators want to see important 2006/2007 MI-Access dates before the calendars are shipped, they may view them at the MI-Access Information Center (www.mi-access.info) under the "Important Dates" tab. Please also note that MI-Access calendars will not be shipped again in spring 2007. Sufficient quantities for all staff involved with MI-Access will be included in the first fall shipment. Calendars should be disseminated to all staff—those who are involved with the fall and/or spring assessments—as soon as they are received.

School boxes include:

- Fall 2006 MI-Access Functional Independence ELA and mathematics standard print assessment booklets based on MI-Access Online System counts with approximately 10 percent overage;
- Fall 2006 MI-Access Functional Independence ELA and mathematics accommodated version assessment packets (Braille, enlarged print, audio CD, and audio cassette) based on MI-Access Online System counts;
- acetate and/or Braille/Large Print rulers when applicable; and
- *MI-Access Security Compliance Forms* to be signed and returned to the District MI-Access Coordinator *prior* to administering the MI-Access assessments.

Please note that all assessment booklets (including the *District Coordinator Reference Booklets*) are secure, barcoded materials that MUST be returned to BETA/TASA along with all of the other assessment materials after the assessment window closes.

Fall 2006: Second Shipment

The second shipment will contain *District, School, and Teacher Identification Sheets*, preprinted and blank *Functional Independence Student Answer Documents*, preprinted student barcode labels, and *Teacher Return Envelopes*. The materials in this shipment will be organized by school, but not “boxed” by school. A *School Distribution/Inventory Sheet* will be enclosed to explain how to distribute these documents.

The preprinted student answer documents and labels in this shipment are only provided for districts that complete the full Pre-ID process in the OEAA Secure Site (www.mi.gov/oeaa-secure) by the September 15, 2006 deadline. For more information on the Fall 2006 Pre-ID process, see the contractor article in the June 2006 issue of *The Assist*.

Tracking Shipments Using the MI-Access Online System

The MI-Access Online System allows District MI-Access Coordinators to view shipment histories. This is a useful tool when expecting a shipment of any kind from BETA/TASA.

Once an order for assessment materials is placed, coordinators can click on “View MI-Access Shipment History” in the main menu, then click on the order number and find the date the materials were shipped and the UPS tracking number. By clicking on the UPS tracking number, District MI-Access Coordinators can see a complete shipping history, including when materials were delivered (or the expected delivery date), who signed for them and at what time, the number of packages shipped, and other relevant tracking information.

Please note that if no one at the district is available to accept a shipment (because the district is closed due to inclement weather or on vacation, for example), UPS will make two more delivery attempts before returning the package(s) to BETA/TASA. If a package is returned, the attempted delivery dates and other pertinent information will be available by clicking on the tracking number and “View Package Progress.”

Additional Information Regarding Fall 2006 MI-Access Shipments

After a district receives its first and second shipments of MI-Access Functional Independence materials, the District MI-Access Coordinator may place orders for additional materials, if necessary, by using the MI-Access Online System. Please note, however, that additional materials orders *should not* be placed to rectify a discrepancy found after inventorying an earlier shipment (i.e., a packing slip indicates that eight booklets were shipped, but only six were included). If any discrepancies are found, or if you have any questions regarding a shipment, please call the MI-Access Toll-free Hotline at 1-888-382-4246 or send an e-mail message to mi-access@tasa.com so the discrepancy can be corrected or the question addressed.

Early Returns of Fall 2006 Assessment Materials

As mentioned earlier, the MI-Access fall 2006 assessment window is October 9 through November 17, 2006. Please note that while district coordinators are required to return assessment materials to BETA/TASA no later than November 28, districts are strongly encouraged to return their materials earlier if at all possible. Returning assessment materials early helps the OEAA and BETA/TASA staff collect student data that is used to verify that the scoring system is accurately calculating student results. For those districts that agree to participate in the Early Returns Program, all materials *must* be received by BETA/TASA no later than November 14, 2006. A detailed letter outlining the purpose of the Early Returns Program will be sent to all districts in early fall, along with a confirmation form committing the district to early returns. The form must be completed by participating districts and faxed back to BETA/TASA.

MI-Access Spring 2007 Assessment Window

In the coming months, district coordinators will receive a great deal of correspondence about the spring 2007 MI-Access assessments. Although many districts are currently focused on the fall 2006 window, BETA/TASA wants to remind everyone that important dates for the spring 2007 window are included on the *2006/2007 MI-Access Calendar*, as well as in the *2006/2007 MI-Access Functional Independence Coordinator and Assessment Administrator Manual*.

For example, district coordinators will want to make a special note that the MI-Access spring 2007 Pre-ID process will take place between December 1, 2006 and January 6, 2007, which is slightly *earlier* than last year. They should also note that MI-Access has a different assessment window closing date than the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Given these differences, BETA/TASA is asking districts to mark their calendars now and plan ahead!

From all of us at BETA/TASA, we wish everyone a productive and successful school year. Thank you!

Preparing for State Assessment in 2006/2007

As educators prepare for state assessment in the 2006/2007 school year, the following tables may be of assistance. Table 1 outlines the different assessment preparation functions that take place in the MI-Access Online System and the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) Secure Site; Table 2 shows the fall and spring assessment windows for MI-Access; Table 3 includes the fall and spring assessment windows for the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP); Table 4 shows the assessment dates for the Michigan Merit Examination if it is approved by the U.S. Education Department; and Table 5 indicates the content areas that are assessed at each grade level in the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS).

Table 1 MI-Access Online System/OEAA Secure Site Functionality Reference Table		
Functions	OEAA Secure Site	MI-Access Online System
Submit Teacher/Student Counts (which determine how many and what types of assessment materials are shipped)	NO	YES
Pre-ID Students	YES	NO
Locally Print Pre-ID Barcode Labels	YES	NO
Update Student Demographics	YES	NO
Review Tested Roster	YES	NO
Order Additional Materials	NO	YES
View Shipment History	NO	YES
Update MI-Access Coordinator Information	NO	YES
Access Electronic Reports	YES	NO
Access Data Files for Districts/Schools	YES	NO

Any questions regarding the MI-Access functions should be directed to the MI-Access Toll-free Hotline at 1-888-382-4246 or the MI-Access e-mail address at mi-access@tasa.com

Table 2 Fall 2006/Spring 2007 MI-Access Assessment Windows	
Fall 2006 Functional Independence Grades 3-8 P/SI v1.5 Pilot Grades 3-8 and 11	Spring 2007 Functional Independence Grade 11 P/SI v1.5 Operational Assessments Grades 3-8 and 11
October 9 - November 17	February 19 - April 6

Table 3 Fall 2006/Spring 2007 Assessment Windows for MEAP, ELPA, and NAEP			
	<i>MEAP Window</i>	<i>ELPA Window</i>	<i>NAEP Window</i>
Fall 2006	Fall Grades 3-9 October 9 - October 27 Fall High School Grade 12 (all as needed) October 23 - November 3 (retest)		
Spring 2007	<p>If the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) is <i>not</i> approved by the USED by November 1, 2006, the MEAP assessments for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies will be administered to grade 11 students (and grade 12 students as needed to qualify for the Michigan Merit Award or to improve scores) on the following dates:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Cycle 1: March 12 – March 23 or Cycle 2: March 19 – March 30 or Cycle 3: March 26 - April 6</p> <p>If the MME <i>is</i> approved, see Table 4 for the MME assessment dates.</p>	Grades K-12 April 2 - April 27	Mathematics and Reading (Grades 4 and 8) January 30 - March 9 Writing (Grades 8 and 12) January 30 - March 9

Table 4
Spring 2007 MME Assessment Dates

Day*	Assessment	Subject Session	Number of Parts	Total Items	Testing Time (minutes)	Estimated Time Required for Administration
Day 1 March 13 (Makeup March 27)	ACT Plus Writing	English	5	75 MC Items	45	Total test time including check in, instructions, breaks, and collection of materials - 5 hours
		Mathematics		60 MC items	60	
		Reading		40 MC items	35	
		Science		40 MC items	35	
		Writing		1 Prompt	30	
Day 1 Standard Testing Time: 205 minutes (3 hrs and 25 minutes)						
Day 2 March 14 (Makeup March 28)	WorkKeys	Reading for Info	3	33 MC Items	45	Total test time including check in, instructions, breaks, and collection of materials - 3 hours
		Applied Mathematics		33 MC Items	45	
	Michigan	Mathematics		14 MC items	20	
Day 2 Standard Testing Time: 110 minutes (1 hour and 50 minutes)						
Day 2, 3, or 4 March 14, 15, 16 (Makeup March 28, 29, 30)	Michigan	Science	3	52 MC items	50	Total test time including check in, instruction, breaks and collection of materials - 3.5 hours
		Social Studies		31 MC items and 1 prompt	50	
				26 MC items and 1 prompt	50	
One additional test session during Days 2, 3, or 4 Standard Testing Time: 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes)						
*More detailed information about this schedule and the MME program is available on the MME Web page at www.mi.gov/mme .				TOTAL minutes	465	
				TOTAL hours	7.75	

Table 5
Grades and Content Areas Assessed at the State Level

Content Areas	Grades							
	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	11th
English Language Arts	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Mathematics	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Science			X			X		X
Social Studies				X			X	X

At this time, there are no state-level alternate assessments for science or social studies. Therefore, Individualized Education Program Teams will need to determine how their students will be assessed in these content areas.

Fall OEAA Conferences are Fast Approaching!

Late this fall, two-day conferences will be held across the state to inform educators about important topics related to all the programs housed within the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA). Combining the conferences last year was a successful venture because it allowed people who serve as both MEAP and MI-Access Coordinators to attend all sessions in one location. In addition, it enabled the OEAA staff to jointly address the growing number of issues related to accountability and participation that cut across the state's assessments.

The first day of each conference will be primarily devoted to the MEAP, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA), the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), and accountability. The second day will be dedicated to issues related to assessing students with disabilities, using MI-Access as well as the other state assessments. Attendees may sign up for one or both days of the conferences, depending on their roles and interests. At the end of this article there is information on when and where the conferences will be held.

Topics for the joint, two-day conferences tentatively include updates on procedures, such as student pre-identification and using the OEAA Secure Site; the use of Michigan's grade level content expectations (GLCEs) and extended grade level content expectations (EGLCEs); and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Education Yes! school performance indicators. In addition, important new information, which should be of interest to all participants, will be shared on how the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) plans to address federal requirements for reporting the progress of individual students as they participate in state assessment from year-to-year. Presentations covering these topics, as well as many others, will provide valuable information for educators to use in planning school improvement efforts, and improving student performance and participation on all state assessments.

Fall 2006 OEAA Conferences	
<i>Dates</i>	<i>Locations</i>
November 28 & 29	Marquette - Northern Michigan University
November 30 & December 1	Grayling - Holiday Inn
December 4 & 5	Grand Rapids - Crowne Plaza on 28th Street
December 7 & 8	Novi - Sheraton Detroit Novi
December 11 & 12	Lansing - Lansing Center
December 13 & 14	Sterling Heights - Sterling Inn

Michigan Merit Examination Update

In Spring 2007, the Michigan Merit Examination (MME) is scheduled to replace the current MEAP High School Test (HST). The MME, however, will only be administered if it is approved by the U.S. Education Department (USED) by November 1, 2006. As noted in "Peer Review Update" in this issue of *The Assist*, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has submitted its application to the USED and is awaiting its decision.

As with other state-level assessments, Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams need to consider whether the MME is appropriate for their student and, if so, what assessment accommodations may be needed. To help IEP Teams in the decision-making process, this article describes the components of the MME, identifies opportunities to participate in training activities sponsored by the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA), and discusses some of the issues related to assessment accommodations.

Components of the MME

The following table lists the various components of the MME in addition to assessment dates, the number of parts per component, the number of items per part, the actual testing times per part, and estimated overall administration times.

Spring 2007 Test Organization						
Day*	Assessment	Subject Session	Number of Parts	Total Items	Testing Time (minutes)	Estimated Time Required for Administration
Day 1 March 13 (Makeup March 27)	ACT Plus Writing	English	5	75 MC Items	45	Total test time including check in, instructions, breaks, and collection of materials - 5 hours
		Mathematics		60 MC items	60	
		Reading		40 MC items	35	
		Science		40 MC items	35	
		Writing		1 Prompt	30	
Day 1 Standard Testing Time: 205 minutes (3 hrs and 25 minutes)						
Day 2 March 14 (Makeup March 28)	WorkKeys	Reading for Info	3	33 MC Items	45	Total test time including check in, instructions, breaks, and collection of materials - 3 hours
		Applied Mathematics		33 MC Items	45	
	Michigan	Mathematics		14 MC items	20	
Day 2 Standard Testing Time: 110 minutes (1 hour and 50 minutes)						
Day 2, 3, or 4 March 14, 15, 16 (Makeup March 28, 29, 30)	Michigan	Science	3	52 MC items	50	Total test time including check in, instruction, breaks and collection of materials - 3.5 hours
		Social Studies		31 MC items and 1 prompt	50	
				26 MC items and 1 prompt	50	
One additional test session during Days 2, 3, or 4 Standard Testing Time: 150 minutes (2 hours and 30 minutes)						
*More detailed information about this schedule and the MME program is available on the MME Web page at www.mi.gov/mme .				TOTAL minutes	465	
				TOTAL hours	7.75	

Professional Development Opportunities

Staff from the OEAA and the assessment contractor will conduct a statewide video conference on Tuesday, September 12 from 3:00 to 4:30 pm. The purpose of the video conference is to review the test center establishment process, review the applications sent out in late August, and remind high schools of the procedures that must be followed when preparing to administer the MME.

Major topics of the video conference include:

- administration of the MME,
- applications for site approval,
- the assessment schedule,
- required school personnel roles,
- applications for accommodations for students with disabilities and English language learners, and
- preparing schools and students for the MME.

The video conference can be viewed live at www.mistreamnet.com. Click on the “Live Stream” link at the time noted above or view the “Archived Event” any time after the conference concludes. If you have questions about accessing the video conference, contact the Mlstreamnet Help Desk at 1-888-570-6212. Videotapes and DVDs will be available for purchase from Wayne RESA by contacting Brenda Hose at 734-334-1437 or at hoseb@resa.net.

In October, teams from each high school—which must include a Test Supervisor, a Back-up Test Supervisor, and a Test Accommodations Coordinator—will be asked to sign up for a full-day test administration training session, which will be held in late November or early December. It is required that all team members attend the same session on the same day so they can work together to plan for the appropriate administration of the MME back in their own schools. Invitations for the training session will be sent in early October and will be due back by October 20. The Test Supervisor, Back-up Test Supervisor, and Test Accommodations Coordinator team will be notified shortly thereafter of the session to which they have been assigned.

Accommodations on the MME

The MME has two categories of assessment accommodations: ACT-approved assessment accommodations and state-allowed assessment accommodations. ACT-approved accommodations can only be used by students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan and will result in college reportable ACT scores. State-allowed assessment accommodations, however, may be used by students with an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, and by English language learners, but will not result in college reportable ACT scores. They will, however, result in MME scores that can be used for accountability purposes (Education YES! and NCLB).

- **MME Assessment Accommodations Summary Table**

In order to facilitate the use of appropriate assessment accommodations, the OEAA has worked closely with ACT to develop the *Spring 2007 Michigan Merit Examination (MME) Accommodations Summary Table*. This helpful document contains information on the MME component scores. For example, it lists all the pieces of the MME that contribute to the overall score for mathematics. The table also contains directions for reading the table, directions for requesting accommodations from ACT, a summary of the ACT review process, and information about local decisions for WorkKeys and the Michigan assessment components. The table then lists all the accommodations from the *State Board-approved Assessment Accommodations Summary Table* from June 2005, which covers the MEAP and MI-Access. Each accommodation contains comments from ACT and fields indicating whether they (1) are standard or nonstandard for Michigan components and MME scores, (2) may be requested for use on the ACT and WorkKeys components, and (3) will result in college reportable ACT scores. The table can be downloaded from <http://www.michigan.gov/mme> (look under “Assessment Accommodations”).

- **Requesting Accommodations**

If it is determined that a student will need accommodations on the MME, they must be officially requested. Each district is responsible for assigning a Test Accommodations Coordinator (TAC) to work with ACT to ensure that all accommodations decisions and approvals are resolved before the assessment window opens. The TAC is responsible for identifying which students need which type of accommodations and submitting supporting documentation for ACT-approved assessment accommodations. The type of accommodation (ACT-approved versus state-allowed) is important as students receiving one type will have different materials and be tested in a different location than students receiving the other type. In addition, it is important because it determines whether the student's ACT score is college reportable.

- **Application Forms**

ACT has developed custom application forms that must be used when submitting requests for assessment accommodations for Day 1 of the MME, which involves the ACT assessments. (The application that is posted on the ACT Web site may *not* be used.) Applications will be accepted by ACT from September through November 2006. Applications for all students who need an assessment accommodation (students with an IEP, a Section 504 Plan, or who are English language learners) will need to be completed and submitted to ACT. Applications for ACT-approved accommodations are due no later than December 1, 2006 while applications for state-allowed accommodations are due no later than January 10, 2007. The later due date for state-allowed accommodations will enable students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan to appeal any ACT-denied assessment accommodations or allow them time to provide additional information as requested by ACT. If a student with an IEP or Section 504 Plan does not get approved for ACT-approved accommodations, the later deadline will provide sufficient time to submit a state-allowed accommodation application.

Each district's TAC (or school principal if no TAC has been designated) should have received assessment accommodation application information in the packets that were mailed to high schools in late August. The deadlines for accommodations applications are set well before the assessment window to ensure that enough time exists for each TAC to appeal any accommodations requests denied by ACT, and to apply for state-allowed accommodations if the appeal is denied. Along with any denial, ACT will send information indicating why the application was turned down. Reasons for denial include insufficient documentation, no justification for the accommodation documented in the student's IEP, or no history of the accommodation being used prior to planning for the ACT. Specific requirements for ACT-approved accommodations include documentation of initial diagnosis, reconfirmation of disability within the last three years, and a copy of the accommodations page from the student's current IEP or Section 504 Plan.

Training Opportunities

The OEAA and ACT will provide Webcast training for all MME TACs and other interested stakeholders from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m. on October 18, 2006. The training program can be viewed live at Wayne RESA or viewed in real time on the live Webcast at www.Mistreamnet.com. In addition, it will be archived for later viewing at the same Web site. Videotapes and DVDs of the training program will also be available from Wayne RESA by contacting Brenda Hose at 734-334-1437 or at hoseb@resa.net.

In addition to the October 18 Webcast, the OEAA is in the process of developing an online learning program related to MME assessment accommodations. The program is expected to be available by October 18, or shortly thereafter, at the MI-Access Information Center (www.mi-access.info). The program can be completed individually or in groups.

Resources

To assist high schools as they plan and prepare for the implementation of the MME, the OEAA staff and the MME contractor have prepared a number of resources, all of which can be found on the MME Web page (www.michigan.gov/mme). Additional resources will be added as they are developed, so check the Web page periodically for updates.

Glossary

ACT-approved Accommodations: Assessment accommodations that result in ACT scores that are fully reportable to colleges, scholarship programs, and other entities in addition to being used for Michigan Merit Examination purposes. Only students with professionally diagnosed and documented disabilities who receive accommodations in school should apply for ACT-approved accommodations.

Alignment: The degree to which expectations and assessments are in agreement and serve in conjunction with one another to guide an education system toward students learning what they are expected to know and do. (*Analysis of STATE F Language Arts Standards and Assessments Grades 5, 8, and 11, 2001.*)

Assessment Item: A statement, question, exercise, or task in an assessment for which the test taker is to select or construct a response or perform a task. (*Standards for Educational & Psychological Testing, 1999.*)

Assessment Plan: Much like a builder's blueprint, an assessment plan guides how an assessment is built or developed. It includes detailed information on (1) the assumptions underlying the assessment; (2) the populations and subject areas assessed; (3) the number of assessment items and their formats; (4) prototype items to guide item writers; and (5) other information clarifying how and why the assessment should be developed.

Peer Review: A process used by the U.S. Education Department whereby specially trained education personnel review and provide feedback on programs and products developed by other states. For example, the process has been used recently to review states' assessment systems and accountability workbooks.

Standard Assessment Accommodation: The goal of an assessment accommodation is to minimize the impact of a student's disability on his/her performance on an assessment. The assessment accommodation is considered "standard" if it does not change what a specific assessment is measuring. The score received by a student using a standard assessment accommodation will count when calculating No Child Left Behind participation rates. A "nonstandard" assessment accommodation—which *does* change what a specific assessment is measuring—results in an invalid score.

State-allowed Accommodations: Assessment accommodations that result in ACT scores for Michigan Merit Examination purposes only. English language learners who do not have a disability but who receive accommodations in school should request state-allowed accommodations.

Important MI-Access Dates

Fall 2006 MI-Access Assessment Materials Shipped

Starting the week of September 18, 2006

Fall 2006 MI-Access Webcast

September 27, 2006 at <http://www.misteamnet.com>

Fall 2006 MI-Access Assessment Window

October 9 - November 17, 2006

OEAA and ACT MME Training Webcast

October 18 2006 at <http://www.misteamnet.com>

Fall 2006 MI-Access Assessment Materials Return Date

Ship to TASA no later than November 28

Fall 2006 OEAA Conferences

Nov 28 & 29	Marquette, Northern Michigan University
Nov 30 & Dec 1	Grayling, Holiday Inn
Dec 4 & 5	Grand Rapids, Crowne Plaza on 28th Street
Dec 7 & 8	Novi, Sheraton Detroit Novi
Dec 11 & 12	Lansing, Lansing Center
Dec 13 & 14	Sterling Heights, Sterling Inn

Bookmark These Web Sites

www.mi.gov/mi-access

MI-Access

www.mi-access.info

MI-Access Information Center

www.mi.gov/oeaa

Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability

www.mi.gov/meap

MEAP

www.mi.gov/mme

Michigan Merit Examination

www.mi.gov/elpa

Michigan English Language Proficiency Assessment

www.nochildleftbehind.gov

U.S. Education Department

www.naacpartners.org

National Alternate Assessment Center

www.ccsso.org/projects/Alignment_Analysis/models/

Council of Chief State School Officers