

# *The Assist*

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

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## **Fall 2006 Arrives!**

Dear Readers,

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,

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