

The Assist

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

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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!