

MI-Access Assessment Development Update

Throughout the 2005/2006 school year, the MI-Access team has continued to engage in the assessment development process first described in the August 2005 issue of *The Assist*. Presented below are the three main areas of development—(1) science assessments for all three MI-Access populations, (2) English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments for Participation and Supported Independence populations, and (3) new MI-Access Modified Full Independence assessments.

MI-Access Science

As reported in the April 2006 issue of *The Assist*, draft sets of extended science benchmarks (EBs) have been completed for Functional Independence (FI), Supported Independence (SI), and Participation (P) populations. The EBs, for all three MI-Access populations, are organized by grade cluster (elementary, middle school, and high school) to correspond with the three grades in which science is assessed at the state level (grades 5, 8, and 11).

During its March meeting, the Science Assessment Plan Writing Team (APWT) made certain that each set of benchmark strands (Constructing New Scientific Knowledge, Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge, Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science) were appropriate in terms depth, breath, and complexity of content for each of the MI-Access populations. In addition, it recommended appropriate item formats and scoring rubrics. (For more information on the latter components, see the April 2006 issue of *The Assist*.)

Following the completion of those tasks, item writing commenced. To date, BETA/TASA, the MI-Access contractor, and Michigan educators—using sample items and draft item specifications developed with input from the Science APWT—have written hundreds of items that span all five science benchmark strands and all three MI-Access populations. The initial pool of items will be reviewed internally by MI-Access and BETA/TASA staff, and then, in July 2006, will be reviewed externally by Sensitivity Review Committees (SRCs) and Content Advisory Committees (CACs). The charge to these committees will be to ensure that the APWT's recommendations for items—such as length of multiple-choice item stem and answer choices, artwork, and language—were followed and consistently applied, as well as to reduce any biasing elements. In addition, the CACs will review the items for content accuracy and to ensure that each item assesses the extended benchmark to which it was assigned.

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

As many of you know, the U.S. Education Department (USED) ruled that the P and SI assessments that were administered during the 2005/2006 school year did not meet all of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) criteria for alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. Specifically the P/SI assessments were (1) not explicitly linked to the state's English language arts (ELA) and mathematics content standards, and (2) their scores were not reported separately by ELA and mathematics. This necessitated the development of P/SI v1.5 instruments to be used until the P and SI v2.0 assessments for ELA and mathematics are fully developed (see the article on the development of P/SI v2.0 in the April 2006 issue of *The Assist*.)

To develop the P/SI v1.5 assessments, Michigan educators and MI-Access staff are using the original P and SI activities that have been eligible for use on the operational assessments for the past five years and more clearly showing how students are engaging in English language arts or mathematics as they complete the activities. In addition, they are using the Draft English Language Arts and Mathematics Extended Grade Level Content Expectations (EGLCEs) and Extended Benchmarks (EBs) that the APWT drafted. (NOTE: These EGLCEs and EBs are in the process of being prepared for field review.)

The original P and SI assessment activities are being used as a performance context for assessing ELA or mathematics content because the MI-Access Team knows that P and SI students are routinely involved with these types of activities. In addition, the scoring rubric initially developed by the Science APWT, will replace the current P and SI scoring guides. Professional development related to the new scoring rubric will be created over the summer and will be available prior to the first administration of P/SI v1.5.

The P/SI v1.5 assessment activities will be field-tested throughout the state to gain teacher feedback on such things as whether or not the activities are easy to understand in relation to (1) the academic content being assessed, (2) what should be observed, and (3) using the scoring rubric.

The MI-Access team is putting together a packet of information on the P/SI v1.5 assessments, which will be sent to the USED for review to determine whether this version meets the NCLB alternate assessment criteria. These new assessments will be administered in 2006/2007 *only if* the USED approves them. The hope is that the USED will be able to make its determination in time to administer the P/SI grade 3 through 8 assessments during the fall 2006 MI-Access assessment window. If, however, the USED does not make its decision quickly enough, the P/SI v1.5 assessments will be administered during the spring 2007 MI-Access assessment window, along with the grade 11 MI-Access assessments. Please note that the MI-Access grade 3 through 8 Functional

Independence assessments will be administered during the fall 2006 assessment window, regardless of whether the P/SI v1.5 assessments get the “go ahead to administer” from the USED in time for Fall 2006.

MI-Access Modified Full Independence

The USED released a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) giving states the option of developing and administering alternate assessments based on “modified achievement standards.” Up to 2 percent of the scores from these alternate assessments (at the state level) could be included in the calculation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). (The proposed regulation did not mention a cap at the District Level.)

The proposed 2 percent regulation is posted on the MI-Access Web page (www.mi.gov/mi-access), along with Michigan’s comments on the proposed regulation. The Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has been discussing how Michigan might develop alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards and who might be eligible to take them according to the proposed regulation. If developed, these assessments would be called MI-Access Modified Full Independence (MFI) assessments.

One of the requirements of the proposed regulation is that the assessments must reflect the regular content standards, not extended content standards. It also states that for students to qualify to take the assessments, they must be receiving grade-level instruction for the grade in which they are enrolled. For example, a student who is enrolled in fourth grade but is receiving instruction in English language arts at the second-grade level would NOT be eligible.

One of the issues Michigan raised in its comments to the USED on the proposed regulation was that while Michigan was grateful for the additional flexibility for counting alternate assessment proficient scores when calculating AYP, it felt that the population addressed in the proposed 2 percent regulation was not the population that should be eligible for the new alternate assessments. Following is an excerpt from Michigan’s comments on the proposed regulation.

Unfortunately, this NPRM is limited to students with mild disabilities who can and should be working at grade level and who, with appropriate instruction, would likely be able to take the regular assessment with appropriate accommodations.

The NPRM as written addresses students working on grade level, but who may not complete all of the grade-level material in the course of a school year. The MDE has concerns about how assessment participation decisions will be made for students who have not mastered the previous year’s material. Under the

proposed regulation, in order to take advantage of this flexibility, they would have to move into the next school year without mastering the content of the previous year. This sets up students for academic failure or prevents Local Education Agencies (LEAs) from utilizing this flexibility for more than one year for these students. At best, this allows for only one year of flexibility to participate in a modified assessment. In an even less palatable scenario, in order to take advantage of this flexibility, students would be assessed on material that is instructionally inappropriate for them. This is an unintended consequence that may result in the inappropriate assessment of many students.

The USED has indicated to states that it received more than 450 comments on the proposed 2 percent regulation and, therefore, does not anticipate finalizing it until late November 2006. It is more likely, however, that it will not be finalized after the first of the year. Unfortunately, one of the requirements for states to be approved to use the interim 2 percent flexibility, which Michigan is using when calculating AYP for 2006, is that the state must have an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards in place for the 2006/2007 school year, which starts in September before the regulation will be finalized. As a result, the OEAA discussed with its national Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) possible ways in which Michigan could quickly develop a technically sound assessment that would meet the criteria described in the proposed 2 percent regulation. Since the regulation allows states to develop assessments that have reduced depth and breadth, the TAC suggested that, perhaps, the OEAA could take the existing MEAP ELA and mathematics assessments and modify their blueprints to reduce the depth and breadth of the assessments for grades 3 through 8. Following are the current MEAP blueprints for the ELA and mathematics assessments and the blueprints tentatively proposed by the TAC for the MI-Access MFL assessments.

Current Blueprint MEAP Mathematics Assessments Grades 3 - 8							
Grade	Core	Extended	Future	Linking	Field Test	Total # of Items	Constructed Response Items
3	60	2	1	0	8	71	0
4	58	4	1	7	9	79	2
5	57	3	2	7	10	79	2
6	56	2	4	7	9	78	3
7	60	2	2	7	8	79	0
8	54	0	1	13	7	75	1

Proposed Blueprint MI-Access Modified Full Independence Mathematics Assessments Grades 3 - 8							
Grade	Core	Extended	Future	Linking	Field Test	Total # of Items	Constructed Response Items
3	60	0	0	0	4	64	0
4	58	0	0	0	4	62	0
5	57	0	0	0	5	62	0
6	56	0	0	0	5	61	0
7	60	0	0	0	4	64	0
8	54	0	0	0	4	58	0

All Grade Level Content Expectations will be assessed, but there will only be two items per GLCE.

Current Blueprint Fall 2005 MEAP English Language Arts Assessment Grades 3 - 8									
Grd	Part 1 - Reading (1A) Paired Passages			Part 1- Reading (1B)	Part 2- Reading		Field Test	Part 4-Writing	
	Passage 1	Passage 2	Cross-Text Items	Response to the Paired Reading Selections	Passage 3	Linking Text	Passage 4	4A Writing from Knowledge	4B Student Writing Samples and Peer Response
3	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)
4	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)
5	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)
6	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)
7	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)
8	8 MC	8 MC	5 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	8 MC	8 MC	8 MC	1 prompt (6 pt)	5 MC & 1 prompt (4 pt)

Proposed Blueprint MI-Access Modified Full Independence English Language Arts Assessment Grades 3 - 8									
Grd	Part 1 - Reading (1A) Paired Passages			Part 1- Reading (1B)	Part 2- Reading		Field Test	Part 4-Writing	
	Passage 1	Passage 2	Cross-Text Items	Response to the Paired Reading Selections	Passage 3	Linking Text	Passage 4	4A Writing from Knowledge	4B Student Writing Samples and Peer Response
3	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)
4	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)
5	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)
6	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)
7	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)
8	8 MC	8 MC	0	0	8 MC	0	0	1 prompt (6 pt)	1 prompt (4 pt)

If the proposed 2 percent regulation changes the population of students eligible for alternate assessments based on modified achievement standards—as Michigan suggested—then the OEAA will have to review the final regulation and develop assessments that meet the criteria stated in the final regulation.

The OEAA will keep districts informed of what is going on with the development of the MI-Access MFL assessments in the content areas of ELA and mathematics. Stay tuned.

Status of MI-Access Assessment Development

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. 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 created; and the column labeled “Future Development” indicates the assessments that will need to be constructed at some point down the road.

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 assessment development updates in future issues of *The Assist*.