

The Assist

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

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MI-Access Continues to Grow!

Dear Readers,

Thank you for everything you have done to ensure that each MI-Access assessment cycle runs smoothly. This task is becoming increasingly significant as new assessments are developed, piloted, and administered in an effort to comply with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements.

We understand that it takes a lot of your time and effort, and we truly appreciate your continued support of the program.

Assessment Administration Information

In this issue of *The Assist*, we have included an article called “Notes from the Contractor to District MI-Access Coordinators,” which provides information that should be helpful as you administer the spring MI-Access assessments and begin returning materials to the MI-Access contractor. Most of the information can be found in the coordinator and assessment administrator manuals, but we thought it would be helpful to repeat some of the key tasks in this newsletter.

There also is an article discussing ethical assessment administration, why it is important, and what to do when an unethical practice occurs. Since we are currently in the midst of a MI-Access assessment cycle, this information may prove valuable to districts and schools.

Information for IEP Team Deliberation

On another front, we know that many of you are, or will soon be, engaged in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, developing programming for your students for next year. To help you in your efforts, we have included information designed to guide important decisions related to participation in statewide assessment. For example, the article called “Accommodations Decisions for IEP Teams” should help with the selection and evaluation of accommodations for statewide assessment. It contains general information on the types of accommodations that are allowed, as well as a list of questions to ask around the IEP table when selecting them for instruction and assessment. We recommend that this article be used in conjunction with the article on the Michigan Merit Examination (MME), which deals with accommodations specific to that assessment.

We also have an article that describes the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and its test cycles, inclusion practices, and strategies for selecting assessment accommodations so that more students with disabilities can participate.

And, as always, we have included a section called “Tools for Determining Participation in State Assessment,” which contains a table showing which grades and content areas are assessed at the state level, an age-to-grade conversion chart, an updated student characteristic table, an updated

flow chart, and an updated checklist. All of these tools can be used by IEP Teams as they consider important factors related to selecting the appropriate state-level assessment for their students.

Additional Assessment Information

In this issue of *The Assist* you will also find important information that is not directly related to IEP Team decisions but does impact the statewide assessment of students with disabilities. For example, there are articles on

- the progress of the MI-Access Assessment Plan Writing Teams (APWT), Sensitivity Review Committees (SRCs), and Content Advisory Committees (CACs), which met to review pilot items and develop descriptions of performance for the operational Participation and Supported Independence v1.5 assessments; and
- what the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) and the Office of School Improvement (OSI) have been doing to develop new School Performance Indicators based on the School Improvement Framework. (Since the School Performance Indicators account for one-third of a school's Education YES! letter grade, this article is particularly timely and important!)

We hope you find all of the information of interest and use. Again, thank you for staying current with MI-Access and working to ensure that our students with disabilities are appropriately and meaningfully assessed.

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