

The Assist

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

March 2007

(Volume 6, Number 3)

Notes from the Contractor to District MI-Access Coordinators

Greetings from the MI-Access assessment contractor! We look forward to a very busy spring and welcome the opportunity to continue working with Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) staff and Michigan educators on this important assessment program.

MI-Access Spring 2007 Assessment Windows

The MI-Access spring 2007 assessment window for the grade 11 Functional Independence and grades 3 through 8 and 11 Participation and Supported Independence Version 1.5 (P/SI v1.5) English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments began on February 19 and will continue through April 6, 2007. The assessment window for the MI-Access science pilot assessments started on February 27—a little later—and will end on the same day, April 6.

Grade 11 Functional Independence and Grades 3 through 8 and 11 Participation and Supported Independence Version 1.5 (P/SI v1.5) English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Assessments

The first shipment of ELA and mathematics assessment materials was sent to districts in late January and included district materials (such as manuals, reference booklets, return packets, and so forth) *and* boxes of assessment materials (such as assessment booklets, accommodated version packets, and so forth) organized by school. These boxes had fluorescent yellow labels on them. An overage of about ten percent was provided for *some* materials to help reduce the need for ordering additional materials.

The second shipment of ELA and mathematics assessment materials—which were also packaged in boxes with fluorescent yellow labels—were shipped in early February. This shipment contained *District, School, and Teacher Identification Sheets, Teacher Return Envelopes*, and student scan documents and labels. The preprinted student scan documents and labels in this shipment were provided only for districts that completed the full Pre-ID process in the OEAA Secure Site (www.mi.gov/oeaa-secure) by the January 19, 2007 deadline.

Please keep in mind the following information when handling these materials.

- A detailed cover letter was included with each shipment explaining the specific materials enclosed and proper handling procedures.
- Organizational tools—such as packing slips, distribution sheets, and security serial number lists—were included to assist with inventorying and distributing the materials.
- Assessment-specific manuals were included to help coordinators and assessment administrators understand which materials they should have received and how to use them before, during, and after assessment administration.

After the first and second shipments of MI-Access Functional Independence and P/SI v1.5 ELA and mathematics materials arrive and are inventoried, District MI-Access Coordinators may place orders for additional materials, if necessary, by using the MI-Access Online System. Keep in mind, however, that additional materials orders *should not* be placed to rectify discrepancies (i.e., a packing slip indicates that eight booklets were shipped, but only six were included). If any discrepancies are found, or if there are questions regarding a shipment, district coordinators should call the MI-Access Toll-free Hotline immediately 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.

Grades 5, 8, and 11 Participation, Supported Independence, and Functional Independence Science Pilot Assessments

All of the MI-Access Science Pilot assessment materials were sent in one shipment on February 22. The boxes had fluorescent pink labels on them. This is the *only* shipment of science pilot materials that districts will receive. Note that the quantity of materials for the science pilot was based on the counts entered in the MI-Access Online System and DOES NOT include any overage. Ordering additional materials will not be permitted for this assessment.

Pre-Identification Required

Regardless of the content area being assessed—ELA, mathematics, or science—student scan documents NO LONGER include bubbles for filling in student demographic information; therefore, all students were supposed to have been pre-identified in the OEAA Secure Site. District MI-Access Coordinators who did not complete the Pre-ID process for a student by the January 19 deadline, must locally print barcode labels for that student. Whenever possible, a laser printer should be used to generate the barcode labels. This process is critical since student answer documents that are returned without labels will not be scored.

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 for tracking a shipment of any kind from the MI-Access contractor, but particularly for tracking shipments of assessment materials.

Once an order for assessment materials is placed, coordinators can click on “View MI-Access Shipment History” in the main menu, and then click on the order number to find the date the materials were shipped and the UPS tracking number assigned to the shipment. 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 the contractor. If a package is returned, the attempted delivery dates and other pertinent information can be obtained by clicking on the tracking number and “View Package Progress.”

Returning Spring 2007 Assessment Materials

Please note that all assessment booklets, (including the *District Coordinator Reference Booklets*) are secure, barcoded materials that **MUST** be returned to the MI-Access contractor along with all of the other assessment materials after the assessment window closes. (Only coordinator and assessment administrator manuals and rulers are not secure and, thus, should **NOT** be returned.)

When returning spring MI-Access assessment materials, please keep in mind that the science pilot assessment materials **MUST BE RETURNED SEPARATELY** from the grade 11 Functional Independence and/or grades 3 through 8 and 11 P/SI v1.5 ELA and mathematics assessment materials. District coordinators must be sure to use the UPS RS labels included in each assessment-specific *Return of Materials Packet*. (The ELA and mathematics operational packet is yellow and the science pilot packet is green.)

Early Returns

While District MI-Access Coordinators are required to return assessment materials to the MI-Access contractor by no later than April 16, districts are strongly encouraged to return their materials earlier if at all possible. Returning assessment materials early helps OEAA and contractor staff collect data that are used to verify the accuracy and performance of the scoring system.

In addition, early return materials will be used this spring for the P/SI v1.5 standard-setting process. In order for your data to be included in this process, materials must be received by no later than April 2, 2007. Once the standards are set and approved, they will be applied to all P/SI v1.5 assessments and will be used by the state to calculate No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress for each school and district in the state. A detailed letter outlining the purpose of the Early Returns Program was sent to all districts in February, along with a confirmation form, which, if completed and faxed back, commits the district to early returns.

We wish everyone a smooth assessment cycle. Thank you!