

# The Assist

Helping Students Access and Make Progress in the General Curriculum

March 2007

(Volume 6, Number 3)

---

## Tools for Determining Participation in State Assessment

Each year, the spring issue of *The Assist* is designed, in large part, to help Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams make decisions regarding participation in statewide assessment. To help with those decisions, the Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability (OEAA) has developed a number of tools, which are provided below, including

- a table showing the content areas and grades that are assessed at the state level;
- a table for determining which “grade” assessment a MI-Access student should take if he or she is ungraded in the state's Single Record Student Database (SRSD);
- an updated chart of student characteristics that can be used to help determine which state assessment is most appropriate based on the student’s cognitive functioning level, instruction, and curriculum;
- a flow chart that walks teams through the assessment decision-making process (remember, for students in high school the MME is considered, not the MEAP) and
- a checklist, which can be used along with the flow chart, to remind IEP Teams of the important factors that need to be considered when selecting state-level assessments.

When using these tools, there are three critical factors to keep in mind.

1. The decision to have a student participate in alternate assessment should always be made on an individual basis. It is **never** appropriate to designate one assessment as being appropriate for all students within a specific disability category (e.g., all students with cognitive impairment must take MI-Access Functional Independence).
2. There is no cap on the number of students who may **participate** in alternate assessment based on the state’s guidelines, only on the number of proficient scores that may be used when calculating Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
3. Assessment participation decisions should be made using all available information on the student, never solely on the student’s anticipated performance (e.g., the student will not be proficient on the MEAP/MME due to excessive absences or lack of instruction and, therefore, should be administered MI-Access Functional Independence).

**Table 5**

| <b>Grades and Content Areas Assessed at the State Level</b> |        |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|---|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Content Areas   | Grades |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |
|   | 3rd    | 4th | 5th | 6th | 7th | 8th | 9th | 11th |
| English Language Arts                                       | X      | X   | X   | X   | X   | X   |     | X    |
| Mathematics   | X      | X   | X   | X   | X   | X   |     | X    |
| Science   |        |     | X   |     |     | X   |     | X    |
| Social Studies  |        |     |     | X   |     |     | X   | X    |

At this time, there are no state-level alternate assessments for social studies. Therefore, Individual Education Program Teams will need to determine how their students will be assessed in this content area.

**Table 6**

| <b>MI-Access Assessments for Ungraded Students</b> |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Ungraded Student Age *                             | Corresponding MI-Access Assessment |
| 9  | Grade 3                            |
| 10   | Grade 4                            |
| 11   | Grade 5                            |
| 12   | Grade 6                            |
| 13   | Grade 7                            |
| 14   | Grade 8                            |
| 17   | Grade 11                           |

\* Students must be these ages on or before December 1st of the school year in which the assessment is administered

**Table 7**

**Using Student Information to Determine the Appropriate State Assessment**

| <b>Level of Independence</b> | <b>Student Characteristics</b>   | <b>Anticipated Life Roles</b>   | <b>Curriculum</b>  | <b>Instruction</b>   | <b>Likely State Assessment</b>   |
|------------------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Full Independence            | Have physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. Function in the normal range of intelligence. Have the cognitive ability to transfer or generalize learning across performance contexts. Have the capacity to apply knowledge and skills to the tasks, problems, or activities encountered in life.  | Are expected to achieve full independence in adulthood.   | Based on the <i>Michigan Curriculum Framework's</i> content standards and GLCEs/benchmarks.  | May require accommodations, assistive devices, adaptive strategies, and/or technology to assure student success in the general curriculum. Must address knowledge and skills needed to effectively use the above.  | MEAP with or without accommodations. Content areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. |
| Functional Independence      | Have, or function as if they have, mild cognitive impairments that impact their ability to transfer and generalize learning across performance contexts. Learning rate is significantly slower than age-level peers (roughly one-half to three-quarters the rate). Restricted knowledge base. Tend not to be very aware of environmental cues or details. Do not learn incidentally. | Are expected to achieve a functional level of independence in adulthood.  | Based on the Michigan Curriculum Framework's standards and extended GLCEs/benchmarks. Focuses on basic academics, social effectiveness, health and fitness, community access and use, work, and personal and family living. Stresses minimal reliance on others and maximum functional independence. | Direct instruction and repetition with practical, authentic, and concrete experiences reflecting real-world contexts. After mastery should continue to present concept/skill through gradually varying contexts and instructional situations to maximize knowledge/skill transfer. Includes frequent reminders to be alert to environmental cues. Highlights salient information and reduces distracting and irrelevant stimuli. | MI-Access Functional Independence Content areas: English language arts and/or mathematics.                           |
| Supported Independence       | Have, or function as if they have, moderate cognitive impairments that seriously impact their ability to generalize or transfer learning.  | Are expected to achieve supported independence in adulthood. Will require some supervision throughout lives, but can learn skills to maximize independence.   | Based on the <i>Michigan Curriculum Framework's</i> standards and extended GLCEs/benchmarks, as well as the instructional strategies provided in such tools as the AUEN.   | Direct instruction, in context, and targeted towards specific, essential independent living skills and basic academics. Focus is on completing activities of daily living, enhanced quality of life, and maximizing personal effectiveness.  | MI-Access Supported Independence Version 1.5 Content areas: English language arts and mathematics.                   |
| Participation                | Have, or function as if they have, severe or profound cognitive impairments that preclude their ability to (or our skills to ascertain their abilities to) generalize learning.  | Are expected to participate in major adult living roles. Will require extensive, ongoing support in all areas of functioning throughout life. Will be dependent on others for most, if not all, daily living needs. | Based on the <i>Michigan Curriculum Framework's</i> standards and extended GLCEs/benchmarks, as well as the instructional strategies provided in such tools as the AUEN.   | Requires collaboration among teachers, parents, and therapists to determine the "maximum extent possible concept" for each student. Encourages consistent instructional focus among educators. Requires that home, school, and community work together to integrate each student as much as possible into major life roles. Includes use of assistive devices and accommodations.  | MI-Access Participation Version 1.5 Content areas: English language arts and mathematics.                            |



Figure 3



## IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Checklist

Updated April 2006



Use the *Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities* to complete this checklist.

1. To start, determine if your student is in a grade assessed by the state. If so, proceed with the checklist.
2. Review the four “levels of independence” or how your student will likely function in adult life roles. Determine whether your student is Full, Functional, Supported, or Participation.
3. Review the assessment options in the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS), including the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access, Michigan’s Alternate Assessment Program.
4. Use your student’s level of independence, curriculum, and instruction to determine which state assessment program is most appropriate for him/her. Is it MEAP (with or without assessment accommodations) or MI-Access?  
*If the team chooses the MEAP, proceed to number 6. If it chooses MI-Access, skip to number 11.*
6. Will your student take *all* of the MEAP content-area assessments required at his/her grade level?  
*If yes, proceed to number 7. If no, skip to number 9.*
7. In **each** content area, determine whether your student will need assessment accommodations.
8. If so, specify which assessment accommodation(s) your team recommends for each content area. **CONSEQUENCE:** Keep in mind that if the accommodations are “standard,” your student will count as “assessed” for NCLB. If the assessment accommodations are “nonstandard,” your student will count as “not assessed” for NCLB.  
*Now, skip to number 15.*
9. As required by IDEA, if your team determines that it is not appropriate for your student to participate in one or more MEAP content-area assessment(s) (English Language Arts, as an example), the student’s IEP must indicate why that content-area assessment(s) is inappropriate for him/her.
10. The IEP must also indicate that your student will participate in MI-Access Functional Independence in those content areas and explain why that assessment is appropriate.  
*Now, skip to number 12.*
11. Will your student take MI-Access Participation, Supported Independence, or Functional Independence?  
*If the team chooses Participation or Supported Independence, skip to number 15. If it chooses Functional Independence, proceed to number 12*
12. **CONSEQUENCE:** If the team determines that your student should participate in MI-Access Functional Independence, his/her scores may count as “not proficient” for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).
13. In **each** content area for which your student is taking MI-Access Functional Independence, will he/she need assessment accommodations?
14. If so, specify which assessment accommodation(s) your team recommends for each content area. **CONSEQUENCE:** Keep in mind that if the accommodations are “standard,” your student will count as “assessed” for NCLB. If the assessment accommodations are “nonstandard,” your student will count as “not assessed” for NCLB.
15. Record all decisions in the student’s IEP.