What Parents Should Know About Assessments

Have you ever wondered why students are given so many types of tests in school? You’re not alone. Just like each subject provides students with different content and information, each type of assessment measures student learning in different ways for different purposes.

For example:

Formative Assessment is a process used by classroom teachers and students on a regular basis to confirm, adjust, and support teaching and learning.

Interim or Benchmark Assessments are given to students multiple times throughout the school year to monitor student learning toward meeting learning goals over time.

Summative Assessments are given at the end of a learning cycle to certify that learning has occurred. End-of-chapter tests are one example of summative tests given at a local level. State and federal law require all students be tested in specific grades and subjects once a year to measure student progress in learning state content standards or other career- or college-ready goals. Our elementary and middle school assessment is called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-STEP. The Michigan Merit Exam, or MME, is the state high school exam. Some students with disabilities take an alternative state assessment called MI-Access; English language learners are given an assessment called WIDA. Schools also have the option to use Michigan’s Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessment in grades K-2.

Reporting Assessment Results

A Parent Report of your child’s assessment results is available from his or her school each fall. Statewide assessment results are reported at www.mischoold ata.org through the state’s new Parent Dashboard for School Transparency. In addition to test scores, the Dashboard is filled with important school-level information that parents and others say they want to know about Michigan public schools, including charter schools (www.mischoold ata.org/parentdashboard).

Families and others can use the dashboard to get a more complete picture of how their child’s school is serving students. They also can use the Dashboard to compare a school’s performance with the average performance of other similar Michigan schools. Your ideas can make the Parent Dashboard even better! Send feedback to MDE-ParentDashboard@michigan.gov.

Where to Find Assessment Resources

To provide parents with important information on student testing, state assessments, and how you can help your child prepare, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has developed several print and video communication tools (see back page for descriptions).

You can find parent resources on the following pages:

- M-STEP web page (www.michigan.gov/mstep)
- MME web page (www.michigan.gov/mme)
- MI-Access web page (www.michigan.gov/MI-Access)
- Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark web page (www.michigan.gov/earlylitandmath)


### Assessment Print Materials

**Student Testing**

**What Parents Can Do to Help Students Prepare**

As a parent and your child's first teacher, you can help your child understand and prepare for the assessments they will take in school. Here are some points that will help your child perform their best:

1. **Make a plan**: Sit down with your child and create a schedule that allows for regular practice and review.
2. **Stay positive**: Encourage your child to stay positive and focus on their strengths.
3. **Get enough sleep**: Ensure your child gets enough sleep the night before the test.

### Assessment Videos

**Parent/Student Video: Spring 2018 M-STEP video featuring computer adaptive testing**

[Watch Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_90_4TFbgUU)

**M-STEP: What students can expect when taking the test**

[Watch Video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9Q-1NZrZVY)

### Assessment Online Practice Tools for Students

**National PTA Guide on Michigan Assessments**

[Visit M-STEP](https://www.michigan.gov/mstep)

### State Assessment Overview

- **Overview**: Provides a summary of state assessments.
- **Features**: Details the features of each assessment.
- **Student Test Time**: Specifies the time allocated for each test.
- **Testing Dates**: Lists the dates for the assessments.

**Michigan’s Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessment**

[Learn More](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLQVv-NrTyyhLZWC8WhRGoxEyn)

**MSTEP Science and Social Studies**

[Explore](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmDUx8cXzY)

### Education Assessment

**What It Is, What It Means, And What It Offers**

- **Expecting More**: Outlines what the assessment aims to measure.
- **MSTEP**: Describes the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress.
- **Overview**: Provides a general overview of the assessment.

**State Assessments Provide**

- **Valuable information to parents on their child’s academic achievement**
- **Efficiency**: Measures student learning with less student time and a more individualized test experience for students and more precise measurements of student learning.
- **More Information**: Offers additional resources for parents.

**Additional Resources for Parents**

- **Overview of accountability for students, teachers, and schools**
- **Early Literacy**
- **Mathematics**

### Online Practice Tools

- **Online Tools Training**
- **K, 1, 2 Early Literacy**
- **National PTA Guide on Michigan Assessments**
- **Online practice for M-STEP English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies**