

Participation in State Assessment Programs for Michigan Public Schools



It is the policy of the Michigan State Board of Education and Michigan Department of Education that all students participate in the state assessment programs in the grades and content areas where applicable. The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is committed to helping educators inform their instruction and to updating Michigan parents, educators, and other stakeholders on the educational progress of all public school students toward college- and career-readiness in schools and districts statewide.

To determine the educational progress of Michigan public school students toward college- and career-readiness, it is crucial that districts and schools regularly assess their students in the content areas and grade levels required by state and federal laws. Adequate participation in state assessment programs ensures that the MDE is able to provide accurate information to parents, educators, and other stakeholders to improve student educational outcomes for all Michigan public school students. Michigan's state summative assessment programs are the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-Step), Michigan Merit Exam (MME), and MI-Access (Michigan's alternate assessment system). Michigan's state assessment programs are based on the Michigan Academic Standards.

The student participation rate for all public districts and schools in Michigan is 95% of enrolled students in tested grades for each content area assessed. The 95% test participation rate ensures that Michigan public schools are in compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, which requires that 95% of students enrolled are tested with the state's assessment programs.

The number of students expected to be tested for a district or school's 95% participation requirement is determined from information in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS), collected by the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI).¹ Both the MDE and CEPI are committed to protecting confidential education records. Our privacy policies and procedures meet or exceed data sharing guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and data security protocols follow strict State of Michigan standards and best practice technology protocols. Additionally, NCLB explicitly prohibits the release of personally identifiable information about an individual student.

It is important that students are assessed for the reasons above and also to ensure that school and district performance reports reflect the most accurate information possible to aid in the process of improving educational outcomes through informed instruction. Parents of students that elect not to have their child take the state assessment program and students themselves that elect not to test may present certain challenges to their local school district. Districts and schools that do not meet the participation rate receive consequences of lowered Scorecard outcomes. Furthermore, schools that consecutively fail to meet the test participation requirement have potential to be named Priority Schools and fall under the supervision of the School Reform Office (SRO) for interventions and supports. Ensuring that *all students* participate in the state assessment programs is necessary for a student's progress toward college- and career readiness to be provided to their school and district to help inform their instruction.



¹ To review CEPI's data collection practices and commitment to personal privacy, please visit <http://www.michigan.gov/cepi/0,4546,7-113-985-336886--,00.html>.