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<http://michiganassessmentconsortium.org/>

What It Is

The annual Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) is designed to provide parents, educators, and other members of the public with a snapshot of the performance of all students statewide at end of grades 3-8 and grade 11. Performance information is reported at the student, teacher, school and district levels. School and district summary information are available to the public.

Purpose of M-STEP

The purpose of this test is to report a students' current level of performance in each grade tested, at the conclusion of the academic year, on Michigan State Board of Education-approved content standards.

Purpose of a Once Per Year Annual Assessment

Annual tests serve as one metric that can be used to verify whether students have learned what we say they should have learned. In the U.S., these summative tests, required at the state level, are used to determine how public schools are doing and how they are doing in comparison to themselves over time.

Appropriate Uses of M-STEP

It is appropriate to use tests such as M-STEP to gauge the level of achievement of students at the point of time when they were assessed. It is appropriate to compare the performance of a school or a district to itself over time to determine whether more (or fewer) students are achieving the SBE-approved content standards. In the future, when there are multiple years of M-STEP data, it would be appropriate to compare M-STEP results for a school or a district to itself over time.

Classroom and school summary data can be used by schools to review their K-12 instructional programs for coherence and completeness, providing opportunities to improve curricula and instructional programs, assuring that all students learn the Michigan content standards assessed.

Finally, it is appropriate to use M-STEP results in required school and educator accountability programs as the state measure of student performance. School accountability and educator evaluation programs will examine the M-STEP results from the previous year to the current one to gauge the impact of the school or the educator on individual student performance.

Inappropriate Uses of M-STEP

It is not appropriate to use the M-STEP tests to make comparisons between schools or districts, or to rank order schools in order to determine academic "winners" or "losers." Tests such as M-STEP do not take into account the differences in the students who attend the schools, the nature of special services needed by these students, the quality of the instructional programs provided, nor the impact of the schools on the students they serve. The annual M-STEP test results are just one of several measures of the effectiveness of Michigan's schools; taken together, they would provide a more accurate picture of school effectiveness.

Caveats for the First Year of M-STEP

Spring 2015 was the first administration of the M-STEP test. M-STEP is substantially different from MEAP, both in terms of content standards assessed and the test items used. This means that the M-STEP cannot be compared to MEAP test results from past years.

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