

Student Supports and Accommodations Overview

Relevant assessments:

All Michigan state assessments:

- **M-STEP**
- **MME**
 - » ACT WorkKeys®
 - » SAT® with Essay
 - » M-STEP (Science and Social Studies)
- **MI-Access**
 - » MI-Access Functional Independence (FI)
 - » MI-Access Supported Independence (SI)
 - » MI-Access Participation (P)
- **WIDA™**
 - » WIDA ACCESS for ELLs
 - » WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
 - » WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT)
 - » WIDA Screener
- **PSAT™ 8/9 and 10**
- **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments (K–2)**

- Assessment Coordinator Responsibilities
- Universal Tools, Supports & Accommodations
- Who Receives Them
- Who Determines Who Uses Them
- Online Testing
- Paper/Pencil Testing

Assessment Coordinator Training Guide

NOTE to Reader:

The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is composed of a series of documents published by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to provide information to District and Building Assessment Coordinators regarding their assessment-related roles and responsibilities. This guide provides the resources and knowledge base necessary to establish sound test administration practices and procedures that will allow for the reporting of valid and reliable test results. It will introduce you to Michigan's state assessment systems in general and will link you to the people, trainings, materials, tools, and resources needed throughout the process of coordinating state-provided assessments in your district.

This document is one chapter of the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** series. The **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide** is not meant to replace assessment-specific testing manuals, guides, training resources, or other documentation associated with each assessment program.

The web pages referenced in this document are active links. For the full URLs to these pages, please see the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide Quick Reference** chapter. In that resource you will find an interactive list, along with the full URLs of the assessment-related web pages you will need to access, as well as:

- A preface for the **Assessment Coordinator Training Guide**, which includes information on how to use the guide
- An interactive **Table of Contents** for the training guide
- A reference list of acronym definitions, and
- Important contact information

It is recommended that you keep the **Quick Reference** chapter readily available for future use.



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Intro

Providing appropriate **Universal Tools, Designated Supports, or Accommodations** to fit a student's needs is important in ensuring the student will have the best possible assessment experience, as well as ensuring that student results accurately reflect a valid and reliable measure of what each student knows and is able to do, compared to Michigan's academic standards. This chapter will introduce you to what you need to know as an Assessment Coordinator about Universal Tools, Designated Supports and Accommodations, by answering the following questions:

- ▶ What do I need to do in my role as a District or Building Coordinator?
- ▶ What is the difference between Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations?
- ▶ Who receives supports and accommodations during testing?
- ▶ Which individuals in the community determine which supports and accommodations students receive?
- ▶ How are supports and accommodations handled for online test administration?
- ▶ How are supports and accommodations handled for paper/pencil test administration?

What do I need to do in my role as a District or Building Coordinator?



New District and Building Coordinators have a lot to do when it comes to knowing which Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations are available for use during Michigan's assessments; which students receive the Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations; how they are assigned; and what materials need to be ordered. Furthermore, some Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations are common across all assessments, modes of administration, or content areas, while others are not.

Your main goal is to create a process across your district and/or within your building that ensures that students have access to what they need at the time of the state tests. A good process includes knowing the required steps, knowing where to go for more information, knowing who is going to do those steps, knowing the timelines for when activities need to be completed, and evaluating your process for improvements from year to year.

Be proactive and seek out your district's English Learner (EL) and Title III Directors, and Special Education Directors, as soon as possible to begin identifying students and the appropriate supports and accommodations needed. The following helpful planning documents for M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA are located on their Michigan Department of Education (MDE) assessment-specific web pages, under the **Supports and Accommodations** headers:

- [M-STEP Accommodations Worksheets](#)
- [Tracking Sheet for Supports and Accommodations, M-STEP, MI-Access, and WIDA](#)

For College Board Assessments, you will need to work with your school's **Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinator** to prepare for and administer accommodated testing. Be sure to review the [College Board Assessments Preparation](#) chapter of this training guide for additional information.

A general task list is helpful to ensure that all students can access content based on their individual needs, as well as for ensuring that students who do not need Designated Supports or Accommodations are not potentially given an advantage they might not have had otherwise. Here are the steps a District or Building Coordinator should follow for all assessments.

Before testing:

- Review the guidance and reference documents relevant to the assessment being given:
 - » [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document for M-STEP, MI-Access and WIDA](#)
 - » [Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments \(K-2\) Supports and Accommodations Table and Resources](#)
- Work with general education teachers to identify any Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and/or Accommodations students are already using in the classroom.
- Coordinate with the Special Education staff to identify the appropriate accommodations based on a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
- Review additional materials and resources for each assessment on the [Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability \(OEAA\) web page](#), under the Student Supports and Accommodations header.
- Ensure that the Test Administrators who are providing specific accommodations (for example, scribes) know what guidelines—including required scribing guidelines—and materials they need for testing.
- Use the [Tracking Sheet for Supports and Accommodations, M-STEP, MI-Access, and](#)

[WIDA](#) to track which students need specific Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations for each assessment.

- Assist in the coordination of practice testing to help students become familiar with the tools available for online and paper/pencil testing modes.
- Assign Designated Supports and Accommodations if needed in the [DRC INSIGHT Portal](#) (formerly known as eDIRECT) or [WIDA AMS](#). This process must be completed prior to printing test tickets in order to have the embedded Designated Supports and Accommodations available during testing.
- Assist the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Coordinator with [applying to the College Board for SAT or PSAT™ Accommodations](#).
- Order accommodated materials.

During and/or before testing:

- Ensure students have all materials and support staff needed as assigned to have the best possible testing experience.
- Schedule classrooms, testing spaces, and computer labs so that all students have a safe, distraction-free environment in which to test.
- Work with the Technology Coordinator to make sure all testing devices are set up properly and that embedded Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations are available to students as needed.

After testing:

- Work with English Learner teachers, special education teachers, general education teachers, and students to evaluate the effectiveness of the Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations implemented.

What are the differences between Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations?



Michigan offers a wide array of supports and accommodations that are broken down into three categories.

1. **Universal Tools:** These tools are available for all students and are provided on a student-by-student basis or as a standard tool embedded in the assessment. Examples of Universal Tools include: scheduled breaks; small group administration; repeating assessment directions; highlighters; sticky notes; scratch or graph paper; line guides; and other tools provided in online or paper/pencil test administration. For detailed information on the types of Universal Tools and their appropriate use, see the [Student Supports and Accommodations Table](#) for the assessment you are coordinating.
2. **Designated Supports:** These supports are assigned to students on a case-by-case basis and are based on a student's instructional need. Determination of whether a Designated Support is to be used during testing can be made by any educator who works with a student, regardless of whether the student has an IEP or Section 504 Plan. Students without IEPs or 504 Plans may use Designated Supports and do not need additional formal documentation to use them. Examples of a Designated Support may include (but are not limited to): oral translation of test items; off-site test administration; text-to-speech; read-aloud with a human reader; glossaries; and audio CDs.
3. **Accommodations:** Like Designated Supports, these supports are assigned to a student on a

case-by-case basis. However, there must be a documented need in a student's IEP or 504 Plan. **Only students with IEPs or 504 Plans are eligible to use supports identified as Accommodations.** Accommodations assigned as documented on a student's IEP or 504 Plan should mirror the supports the student receives as part of the instructional day. Examples of Accommodations include (but are not limited to): braille for students; read-aloud with a human reader; enlarged print; closed captioning; scribe; and American Sign Language (ASL) or Signed Exact English (SEE).

It is important to understand that what might be a Universal Tool for one assessment could be a Designated Support or even an Accommodation for another. This can also be the case within the same assessment, grade level, and content area. To best understand which Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations are allowable for the content area, grade level, and assessment being administered, see the [Student Supports and Accommodations Table for M-STEP, MI-Access, SAT, WorkKeys, and WIDA](#) in the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#), or the [Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments \(K-2\) Supports and Accommodations Table and Resources](#), both of which are available on each state assessment web page.

For more information on supports and accommodations for students, review the [MDE Supports and Accommodations Webinars](#).

Who receives supports and accommodations during testing?



All students, regardless of whether they have a program designation—English Learner [EL], Students with Disabilities [SWD], Section 504 Plan—may receive the support of a Universal Tool (see the description for universal tools in the previous

sub-section). Based on the individual instructional needs of some students, appropriate staff members need to determine whether more intensive supports are needed. For students who are English Learners (ELs), or receive supports and services through

a Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP), staff must evaluate the need for a particular support on a case-by-case basis. The selection of any Universal Tool, Designated Support, or Accommodation should mirror what students are familiar with using during regular classroom instruction. Further, offering a student a Universal Tool, Designated Support, or Accommodation that is not used during the student's regular instruction may cause difficulties during assessment and negatively impact the student's optimal testing experience and test results.

For EL students, characteristics such as their oral and literacy proficiency level, native language skills,

current language of instruction, and their formal education experience must be considered. Some EL students might also have an IEP or Section 504 Plan, which might identify the need for additional supports.

Any educator who works with the student during instruction can make the determination regarding which Designated Supports are needed during testing.

Accommodations for a student with disabilities who has an IEP or a Section 504 Plan must be documented in the student's IEP or 504 Plan and must mirror what the student requires to access their instructional program.

Which individuals in the school community determine which supports and accommodations students receive?



One of the first steps for a new District or Building Assessment Coordinator will be to identify the people in the school and/or district who fill the roles listed below and to enlist their help in reviewing the needs of students who are currently receiving instructional/classroom supports. Educators should then review the appropriate **Student Supports and Accommodations Table** in the **Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document**, available on each assessment's web page, to identify which supports are available/allowable for the assessment being administered. The following persons should be included in the decision-making process:

- » General education teachers (mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies)
- » Special education teachers
- » Intervention teachers/specialists
- » Bilingual and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers
- » District- and building-level special education administrators
- » Counselors, Title I specialists, curriculum directors, and building principals
- » Parents and students

How are supports and accommodations handled for online test administration?



Once the mode of assessment (either online or paper/pencil administration) has been established and, based on the mode of assessment, appropriate Designated Supports and Accommodations for a student have been selected, additional steps must be completed.

Some Designated Supports and Accommodations must be assigned in the online test management system, so that the appropriate supports are available for students during testing. Some supports might require schools to place orders for or download additional Designated Supports or accommodations

materials (such as audio CDs or enlarged print test booklets) from a secure server, such as the [DRC INSIGHT Portal](#) (formerly known as eDIRECT) or [WIDA™ AMS](#). For more information on how to select the appropriate support(s) in the online testing system, or how to obtain other Designated Supports and/or Accommodated materials, see the following resources:

- [MDE Assessment Coordinator Training Guide](#) chapters:
 - » [Selecting and Assigning Universal Tools, Designated Supports, and Accommodations](#)
 - » [Initial Materials Orders](#)
 - » [Additional Material Orders](#)
- Resources in the [DRC INSIGHT Portal](#)
 - » [Accommodations: Adding, Editing, and Mass-Assigning Mini-Module](#) (video resource)

How are supports and accommodations handled for paper/pencil test administration?



For schools using paper/pencil test administration for M-STEP and MI-Access, additional secure materials might need to be ordered for students, such as braille forms or enlarged print forms. For more information about how to access those secure materials, see the [Supports and Accommodations Guidance Document](#), available on each assessment's web page.

For the College Board suite of assessments, all accommodated materials will be delivered based on the information submitted by the [Services for Students with Disabilities \(SSD\) Coordinator](#) in the SSD portal. When requesting student accommodations for the SAT with Essay portion of the Michigan Merit Exam (MME), or for PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10, allow at least **seven weeks** prior to testing to ensure the request has been approved by College Board's SSD system.

Note: College Board sends accommodated materials based on the information entered in the SSD portal, and not based on the student accommodations that have been approved. The use of accommodations without approval by College Board will result in invalid

test scores. For more information, see the [College Board Assessments Preparation](#) chapter of this training guide.

For ACT WorkKeys test administration, students who need extra time and/or accommodations will use materials specific to the accommodation needed and will usually test in rooms separate from students testing with standard time materials. The quantity and types of accommodated materials needed are shipped to the school based on the initial material order placed through the [OEAA Secure Site](#). Additional material orders for makeup testing can also be ordered through the OEAA Secure Site. For more information, see the [ACT WorkKeys Assessment Preparation](#) chapter.

Some Designated Supports and Accommodations require a student to take the online version of the test. If a school is testing via paper/pencil but has a student who must take the online version, this student must be identified through the Secure Site so the appropriate mode of testing and supports can be provided. For more information on accommodated materials, contact the OEAA at 877-560-8378, or



Key Terms

- **Individualized Education Program (IEP):** The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document that is developed for each eligible child with a disability. This document outlines the student's needs, as well as programs, services, accommodations, and modifications the student requires for his or her educational programming.
- **Section 504 Plan:** This is a formal plan that schools develop for individuals with disabilities, so they receive the supports they need to have access to the same education as other individuals. Section

504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education. Section 504 provides: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . .".

For more information about Section 504 and the protection of students with disabilities, see [Protecting Students With Disabilities](#), authored by the U.S. Department of Education.