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# The Assist

Helping to Improve Access to and Progress in the General Curriculum

April 2003

SPECIAL ISSUE

Volume 2, No. 4

## Preparing for IEP Team Meetings

Wow! It has been a very busy year so far. In January we hosted the 3rd Annual MI-Access Live Teleconference, which went very well. By using that medium, we were able to reach a substantial number of coordinators, assessment administrators, and others across the state. We (1) reviewed what was new with the assessment materials, (2) explained the roles and responsibilities of District MI-Access Coordinators, and (3) updated everyone on Phase 2 MI-Access.

In addition, we answered some of the many questions we continue to receive about MI-Access and how it relates to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and Education Yes! Every day decisions are being made at the federal and state level that affect what we do at the Department and what you do in the school and classroom. Therefore, it is critical that we use every means possible to keep in touch and stay up to date.

I would like to thank all of you who have given us feedback on the teleconference already. Your input is invaluable. For those who have not yet had a chance to provide feedback, our on-line survey is still active. You may access it (1) at

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## TOOLS FOR IEP DECISION-MAKING

Deciding which state assessment a student should take is not an easy task. There are several options to consider and every student is unique. Unfortunately, there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

To assist with this task, the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) has developed five decision-making tools for IEP Teams to use. One tool is the *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*. The Guidelines are required by both No Child Left Behind (NCLB)<sup>1</sup> and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA),<sup>2</sup> and they provide information IEP Teams need to determine which state assessment is most appropriate for their students. If you do not have a copy of the Draft Guidelines, you may obtain one through the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)), the "What's New" button on your MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM, or the 2002/2003 MI-Access Training Materials.

Second, OSE/EIS has produced a twenty-minute video called "In Michigan, All Kids Count! PREVIEW." You may want to have IEP Team members review the

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Footnotes appear on page 9.



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Education.

## NOTES FROM THE CONTRACTOR

### Ship completed MI-Access materials by April 11, 2003.

We hope the administration of MI-Access went smoothly in your district. If you have any lingering questions, please call the toll-free MI-Access hotline at 1-888-382-4246 or e-mail us at [mi-access@tasa.com](mailto:mi-access@tasa.com). Our staff will be happy to assist you.

As you know, the assessment window ended March 31, 2003. We hope you returned all of your completed assessment materials to your District MI-Access Coordinator by the date you were given. District Coordinators need to ship all used materials for the district to BETA/TASA no later than April 11, 2003. That date was set to allow the materials to be scanned, scored, and reported before the end of the school year. Remember, **if your district's assessments are not post-marked by April 11, your students will count as zeros in your participation rate and Adequate Yearly Progress calculations.**

Please note that it is especially important that the district and school codes be filled in accurately on the *School ID Sheets* (they determine to whom the

scores are returned). If you are a District MI-Access Coordinator and have not already done so, please be sure to check the envelopes before packing your boxes to make sure the codes are correct.

If you have not already shipped your materials back to us, please be sure to review the return procedures on pages 13 and 14 of your *MI-Access Winter 2003 Coordinator/Administration Manual* or your fluorescent yellow "Return of Materials Instruction Sheet" that was shipped along with your assessment materials. Please follow the instructions carefully. **Do not use paper clips, rubber bands, or foam when assembling and packing materials.** Our staff will be able to work more efficiently if the materials are organized and packed properly.

Thanks again for your hard work. We look forward to scanning and scoring your materials and getting results back to your districts before the end of the school year.

## Tools for IEP Team

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tape prior to your meeting so everyone is familiar with MI-Access. Multiple copies of the video were sent to every District MI-Access Coordinator in spring 2002. If you need more copies, feel free to duplicate those you already have.

Third, in this issue of *The Assist*, we have included a flow chart (see page 4) and a checklist (see page 5), both of which pinpoint the critical assessment

decisions IEP Teams must make. Using the flow chart and/or checklist should help teams keep their meetings focused and productive.

Last, but certainly not least, the OSE/EIS has updated its *Individualized Education Program Team Manual* which guides teams through the entire IEP process.

After you and your team members review and use the Draft Guidelines, let us know

if they were helpful. You may do so through our on-line survey at [http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1714916#item\\_6](http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1714916#item_6). You can also access the survey through the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)) or the "What's New" button on your MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM. The MDE will use your feedback to adjust the Draft Guidelines before sending them to the State Board of Education for approval.

## On-line Data Collection System Under Development for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access

In order to accurately calculate No Child Left Behind (NCLB) participation rates and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), the MDE needs to know how many students in Michigan were assessed and how many were "proficient" on the state assessments they were administered. Systems to obtain that information are available for students taking all of the MEAP assessments and students taking Phase 1 MI-Access assessments. There is not, however, a system in place to obtain that information for (1) students who are taking other alternate assessments until Phase 2 MI-Access is developed or (2) students who take some but not all of the MEAP assessments.

To remedy that situation, the MDE is in the process of developing a new secure on-line data collection system. In that system, interactive data files will be created for all students for whom a *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Form* was submitted. Those interactive files will be made available to districts so they can submit information

on what alternate assessments the students took and whether or not they were proficient on them. (Guidelines for determining what "proficient" means for these students are also under development.)

In the same on-line system, districts can submit information for students who took one or more, but not all, of the MEAP assessments required at a student's grade level. (For example, a grade four student may take the MEAP English Language Arts assessment but not the MEAP Mathematics assessment. In that case, the student would need to be administered an alternate mathematics assessment.) On those data files, districts will need to enter the student identifying information (e.g., name, UIC, ethnicity) and indicate what alternates the students took by subject area and, again, whether or not they were "proficient" on them.

Finally, a mechanism will also be developed for districts to list in the data files any grade 11 students who were scheduled to take the MEAP, but whose IEP Team changed its determination after the

April 11<sup>th</sup> MI-Access deadline (hence making it too late for the students to take that as an alternate). Once the on-line data collection process is fully developed, information on how to submit data for your district will be disseminated to both MEAP and MI-Access District Coordinators. That ensures that all special education students in the district are accounted for either in MEAP or MI-Access.

Because the Phase 2 MI-Access on-line data must be merged with MEAP data and Phase 1 MI-Access data to determine NCLB participation rates and calculate AYP, the state must complete data collection by May 23, 2003. Therefore, it is important not to wait until the end of the year to administer alternate assessments to your students. If they are completed before the deadline, the state will have the information it needs to submit accurate data to the federal government. Please watch *The Assist* and the District MI-Access Coordinator ListServ for more information and instructions.

## Preparing for IEP Team Meetings

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<http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1985805>, (2) at the Michigan Department of Education's (MDE) web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)), or (3) through the "What's New" button on your updated MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM. Your feedback will help ensure that future teleconferences meet your needs.

By the time you receive this issue of *The Assist*, you also will have finished the second statewide administration of MI-Access. I hope it went well, that you learned something from the process, and that you will continue to provide us with feedback on what works and what does not. Remember, the final date for

shipping completed assessment materials to the contractor is APRIL 11, 2003. As you may know, this year we are asking for teacher and MI-Access Coordinator feedback on the assessment administration process and assessment materials on-line. That survey can be accessed at <http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1872631> as well as at the MDE web site and through the "What's New" button on the CD-ROM.

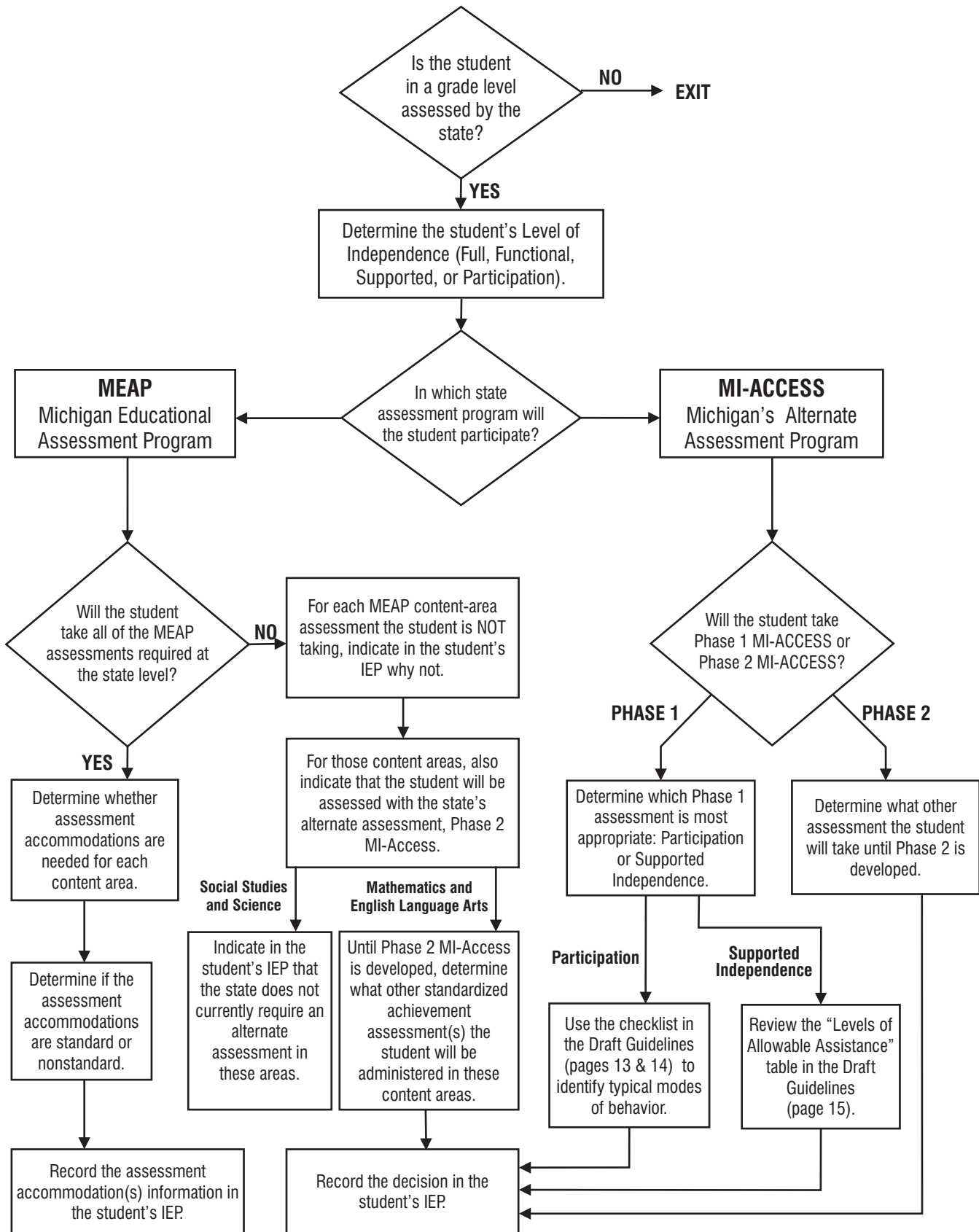
Looking forward, we want to focus this issue of *The Assist* primarily on information related to preparing for IEP Team meetings. We know that many meetings take place in spring,

so we want to provide useful information that teams can use as they contemplate which state assessment their students should take. Some articles also provide valuable information on how teams can help students access and make progress in the general curriculum.

As always, we appreciate your efforts to make MI-Access successful. By working together as a team, we can continue to make it so.

Peggy Dutcher  
Coordinator,  
State Assessment for Students  
with Disabilities  
E-mail: [dutcherp@mi.gov](mailto:dutcherp@mi.gov)

# IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Flow Chart



# IEP Team State Assessment Decision-Making Checklist

Using your *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities...*

- Determine whether the student is in a grade level assessed by the state. If so, proceed with the checklist.
- Review the four “levels of independence” or how your student will likely function cognitively in adult life roles. Is your student Full, Functional, Supported, or Participation? (The “At a Glance” Table on page 5 of the Draft Guidelines may be helpful.) Remember, this decision is based on the student’s *cognitive* functioning level, not on his or her special education category or physical disability(ies).
- Review the assessment options in the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS), including the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), MEAP with assessment accommodations (standard and nonstandard), Phase 1 MI-Access, and Phase 2 MI-Access. (See pages 6-9 of the Draft Guidelines.)
- Use the student’s level of independence to determine which state assessment program—the MEAP or MI-Access—is most appropriate for him or her. (See pages 10 and 11 of the Draft Guidelines.)
- If the team chooses the MEAP, determine if the student will take one or more of the MEAP assessments required at that grade level. You must go through this, content area by content area.
  - For **each** content area, determine whether the student will need assessment accommodations and specify which ones the IEP Team recommends. Keep in mind that some accommodations are considered “standard” while others are considered “nonstandard.” If the team chooses nonstandard accommodations, the student’s score will not be eligible for Merit Awards and it will be counted in Adequate Yearly Progress calculations as a zero or “not proficient.” (See pages 7 and 8 of the Draft Guidelines.)
  - As required by IDEA, if the IEP Team determines that it is inappropriate for the student to participate in a MEAP content area assessment (English Language Arts, as an example), determine what alternate achievement assessment the student will be administered in that content area.
  - Indicate in the student’s IEP why the MEAP content-area assessment(s) is inappropriate for him or her.
- If the team chooses MI-Access as the student’s state assessment program, determine whether MI-Access Participation, MI-Access Supported Independence, or Phase 2 MI-Access is most appropriate. (See pages 3, 4, and 9-11 of the Draft Guidelines.)
- If the team chooses MI-Access Participation, use the checklist in the Draft Guidelines (pages 13 and 14) to provide the student’s teacher with guidance on how the student behaves in specific situations. The behavior should reflect the student’s curriculum and instruction.
- If the team chooses MI-Access Supported Independence, review the “Levels of Allowable Assistance” Table (page 15 of the Draft Guidelines) to see what assistance will be allowed the student during the assessment. Levels of Allowable Assistance vary by student age.
- If the team determines that the student should participate in Phase 2 MI-Access, which has not yet been developed, indicate in the IEP what other standardized achievement assessment(s) the student will be administered.

## Completing the IEP Assessment Form

The form below is an excerpt from the revised model *Individualized Education Program Manual—State- and Districtwide Assessment Form*, which can be found in the MDE Office of Special Education and Early

Intervention Services' *Individualized Education Program Team Manual* (January 2003). The form has been included in this issue of *The Assist* because the MDE wants IEP Team members to know that, as required by IDEA

and NCLB, it has been revised and calls for more detailed information on state assessment than in previous years. Full copies of the manual and the form can be viewed on the MDE web site at [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde).

MEAP, MI-Access are not given at the grade levels covered by this IEP.

Statewide Assessment	Assessment Appropriate?		If yes, list appropriate accommodations if needed. If no, state the reason why the MEAP content area is inappropriate and indicate the appropriate MI-Access assessment.	Standard accommodations?	
	Yes	No		Yes	No
<b>MEAP</b>					
English Language Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Social Studies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>MI-Access</b>					
Eligible for Phase 2*	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Supported Independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Participation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

\*For Phase 2 eligible students, indicate what other standardized achievement assessments the student will be administered.



## MEAP Accommodations

*If IEP Teams determine that their student should participate in one or more of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) assessments, they will need to decide whether or not the student—because of his or her disability—needs assessment accommodations.*

*Keep in mind that some accommodations are considered "standard" while others are considered "nonstandard." Why does it matter? Because when nonstandard accommodations are used, the student's score is NOT eligible for Merit Awards or endorsements. In addition, the student's score will count as a zero or "not proficient" in Adequate Yearly Progress calculations. OSE/EIS wants to make sure that IEP Teams are fully aware of these ramifications.*

*Also remember that READERS, AUDIOTAPES, and SIGNING ARE NO LONGER CONSIDERED STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS for the reading component of the English Language Arts MEAP assessment. This change went into effect in the 2002/2003 school year.*

*The article below provides a full listing of both standard and nonstandard accommodations, which IEP Teams may want to refer to during their team meetings. This list also can be obtained on the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)) and in the Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities.*

*As indicated in the MEAP Coordinator Manual, all questions related to assessment accommodations for students with disabilities should be e-mailed to Peggy Dutcher, Coordinator, State Assessment for Students with Disabilities, at [dutcherp@mi.gov](mailto:dutcherp@mi.gov).*

The following test accommodations will be considered "standard accommodations" for Michigan Merit Award purposes.

### STANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS

#### Scheduling

- Provision of additional testing time
- Allowance of frequent or extended supervised breaks

- Administration of the test at a time most beneficial to the student, with appropriate supervision by a school district professional

#### Location

- Provision for test administration

- at home or in a care facility with appropriate supervision by a school district professional
- Provision for distraction-free space or alternate location

*continued on page 7*

## MEAP Accommodations

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(e.g., study carrel, front of classroom)

- Placement of student where he/she is most comfortable (e.g., front of room, back of room)
- Administration of test in a special education classroom
- Provision for individual test administration (supervised)
- Provision of special lighting
- Provision of adaptive or special furniture
- Provision for freedom to move, stand or pace during an individualized test administration
- Provision of special acoustics
- Provision for test administration in a small group
- Provision of soft, calming music to minimize distractions

### Assistance with Test Directions

- Reading directions to student
- Re-reading of directions for each subtask, as required
- Use of directions that have been highlighted
- Simplification of language in directions (paraphrase)
- Emphasis on verbs in directions
- Provision for student restatement of directions in his/her own words
- Use of sign language or oral interpreters for directions and sample items
- Clarification of directions by asking students to restate them

### Assistance During Assessment

- Administration of test by special education teacher or similarly qualified person
- Reading of assessment content and questions to student (**except for the reading test**)
- Signing of assessment content and questions to student (**except for the reading test**)
- Use of page-turner
- Recording of student responses (writing or audiotape)

- Placement of teacher/proctor near student

### Equipment and Assistive Technology

- Use of talking calculator (**mathematics test only**)
- User of sign language to indicate student response, **except for constructed response items**
- Use of text-talk converter (**except for the reading test**)
- Use of visual magnification devices
- Use of auditory amplification devices
- Use of masks, overlays or markers to maintain place
- Use of tape recorder for use of audiotape version of tests (**except for the reading test**)
- Use of Braille writer for recording responses
- Use of communications device to indicate responses
- Use of calculator (**mathematics assessments only**)
- Use of rulers as provided by Michigan Educational Assessment Program
- Use of pencils adapted in size or grip
- Use of list of formulae as provided by Michigan Educational Assessment Program
- Use of noise buffers
- Use of computer or word processing equipment (spell check, thesaurus and grammar check must be disabled)
- Use of bilingual translation dictionary
- Use of Braille ruler
- Use of acetate colored shield to reduce glare and increase contrast
- Use of voice-activated word processor (**except for writing assessment**)
- Use of devices or equipment to secure paper to desk

### Test Format

- Use of lined or grid paper for recording answers
- Provision of Braille or large print

- editions of the assessments
- Permission to mark answers in test booklet, to be transferred to answer document by teacher or proctor
- Use of computer for task presentation
- Communication of test questions by audiotape (**except for the reading test**)
- Use of scribe for constructed response items (student must indicate punctuation and spell all key words)
- Permission to accomplish subtests in different order

Accommodations not on this list will be considered “nonstandard,” and MEAP test scores accomplished by use of nonstandard accommodations will not be considered eligible scores for Michigan Merit Award purposes. Examples of such nonstandard accommodations would include the following:

### NONSTANDARD ACCOMMODATIONS

- Any accommodation not included as a standard accommodation that violates the Michigan Merit Award Test Administration Ethics Procedure
- Use of a calculator on any MEAP assessment other than mathematics assessments
- Use of electronic spell checkers, thesaurus or grammar check
- Use of a dictionary, thesaurus or spelling book for mathematics, science, social studies or reading assessments
- Any test administration not directly supervised by a school district professional

Accommodations not included on the Standard Accommodations list, which, in the opinion of school officials, parents, teachers, or other interested parties, do not violate the MEAP Test Administration Ethics policy and do not interfere with the intent of the assessments, may be approved by the Michigan Merit Award executive director, pending review by the Michigan Merit Award Board.



# No Child Left Behind: Who Counts?

*Do students who take MI-Access count in No Child Left Behind (NCLB)? Below are excerpts from the 3rd Annual MI-Access Teleconference in which Peggy Dutcher, Coordinator, State Assessment for Students with Disabilities, responds to that question. Her comments were based on the knowledge available at the time of the teleconference (January 2003). Text that appears in brackets indicates information that has since become available and was added for this article.*



In recent weeks, I have been getting a lot of questions about students with disabilities and NCLB assessment requirements.

First, I would like to emphasize that NCLB and IDEA both require that ALL students be assessed in the state assessment system, which in Michigan includes MI-Access and the MEAP. There also is an alternative assessment for Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. If you want more information about that, call MaryAlice Galloway—Supervisor, Central Support Unit, Office of Field Services—at 517-335-1194. [Also see the article on page 15 titled “What Is the Limited English Proficiency Alternative Assessment?”]

Second, I have been deluged with questions about if and how students taking MI-Access count for NCLB. To answer that question, let me start by clarifying that there are two issues in NCLB that relate to assessment: (1) reporting and (2) accountability.

“Reporting” really is the same thing as “participation rate.” NCLB wants to know how many of the students enrolled in a school are participating in the state assessment system, in this case the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS). [NCLB requires that each school and district have, at a minimum, a 95 percent participation rate overall, as well as in six required sub-groups: (1) the major racial and ethnic groups, (2) students with disabilities, (3) limited English proficient students, (4) economically disadvantaged students,

(5) students with migratory status, and (6) mobile students. The 5 percent leeway allowed in NCLB is intended to give schools and districts room for students who are absent during the testing window. It is NOT intended to allow schools and districts to exclude 5 percent of its students from being assessed.]

Maybe it would be helpful for me to show an example of how participation rates will be calculated. Let’s say a school has 100 7<sup>th</sup> graders enrolled. Of those students,

- 50 take the MEAP,
- 5 take the MEAP with nonstandard accommodations,
- 30 are eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access,
- 5 take Phase 1 MI-Access
- 5 take the LEP alternative assessment, and
- 5 are absent.

To determine participation rates, the state will add

- the 50 students who took MEAP,
- the 5 who took the MEAP with nonstandard accommodations,
- the 30 who were eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access,
- the 5 who took Phase 1 MI-Access (Participation or Supported Independence)
- the 5 who took the LEP alternative assessment, and
- the 5 students who were absent, all of whom count as zeros.

$$50 + 5 + 30 + 5 + 5 + (5 \times 0) = 95$$

As the equation shows, 95 of the 100

students enrolled in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade participated in the state assessment system. To calculate a participation rate, you simply divide 95 by 100 and you get 95 percent. That is your participation rate. [This example is at the school level, but again, remember that you must have a 95 percent participation rate for each of the sub-groups as well.]

“Accountability,” which is also addressed in NCLB, is different than “reporting.” It wants to know how many students are “proficient” on the state assessments they take. This is where Adequate Yearly Progress—or AYP—comes into play. Based on current knowledge:

- AYP will use MEAP, MI-Access, and the LEP alternative assessment results.
- Scores for students who take the MEAP with nonstandard accommodations will count as zeros or “not proficient” in AYP.
- AYP shows the number of students enrolled for a full academic year who were “proficient” on the MEAP, MI-Access, and the LEP alternative assessment.
- The percent of students who are “proficient” on the MEAP, MI-Access, and the LEP alternative assessment will be used to calculate the total percent of students who are “proficient” in English language arts and mathematics.
- “Proficient” for the MEAP means the student achieved categories 1 or 2.
- “Proficient” for MI-Access means

*continued on page 9*



## No Child Left Behind

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that the student "Surpassed" or "Attained" the performance standards.

- "Proficient" for the LEP alternative assessment will be determined soon.

Two things the MDE is still working on are (1) guidelines for determining what "proficient" means for students who are eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access, and (2) a method for collecting that information on-line. (See article on page 3 titled "On-line Data Collection System Under Development for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access.") By the time you receive this newsletter, decisions may have already been made. We will let you know as soon as something is decided.

What I have just described for AYP is what the MDE has proposed so far to the U.S. Department of Education. Michigan's plan will go through the review and approval process at the federal level. We will post any updates on the process on the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)).

[Interestingly, participation rates and AYP do, eventually, connect. How? The first criterion used to determine whether or not a school has made AYP is whether or not it achieved a 95 percent participation rate overall and in the four sub-groups specified for AYP. If one sub-group does not meet the 95 percent rate, the school will not achieve AYP.]

For more answers to your questions about NCLB, refer to the 2003 Teleconference Q & A. It is available on the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)) and through the "What's New" button on your MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM. The MDE's "Quick Links" contains an NCLB link. You may find additional information there.

## WHO COUNTS IN EDUCATION YES!

Many questions have been asked about if and how students taking MI-Access count in Education Yes! After all the other Education Yes! calculations are made, the final filter for a school's grade is whether or not it met AYP. Since MI-Access is included in the AYP calculation, that is how they are counted in Education Yes!

## Remember Appropriate Testing Practices Apply to MI-Access

The April 2002 issue of *The Assist* included an article titled "Proposed Merit Award Board Policy on MEAP Testing Practices." The policy was developed to help ensure (1) that MEAP assessments are administered fairly to all students and (2) that the assessment results are reliable and valid.

The proposed policy is now in place. To obtain copies of the final policy—referred to now as the "Michigan Educational Assessment Program Testing Practices"—go to [www.meritaward.state.mi.us/testingpolicy.htm](http://www.meritaward.state.mi.us/testingpolicy.htm). Click on "MEAP Testing Practices" and a PDF will appear if you have Adobe Acrobat Reader on your computer. The MEAP office encourages MEAP Coordinators and others to print the

document and share it as widely as possible with their peers.

Why are we writing about the practices again? To remind readers that the same testing practices apply—where appropriate—to MI-Access. Assessment booklets, scan sheets, and results must be handled in a safe and secure manner at all times. Do not take them home, leave them on desks, or provide copies to parents or students. (Sample assessment booklets are available on the MDE web site at [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde) if parents want to see what types of activities are included in the assessment.) We want to make sure that MI-Access, like the MEAP, is administered fairly and that results are reliable and valid.

## HOW TO ACCESS TELECONFERENCE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Following the broadcast, the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS) developed a Q & A that includes all of the questions asked during the MI-Access teleconference as well as those submitted afterward or not addressed live.

The Teleconference Q & A can be accessed through the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)) or through the

"What's New" button on your MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM.

In addition, you can still give us feedback on the teleconference through our on-line survey at <http://esrealitycheck.com/rc/takeit.asp?i=1985805>. You may also access the survey through the MDE web site or through the "What's New" button on your CD-ROM.

<sup>1</sup> NCLB § 200.12 requires states to include in their accountability systems guidelines for identifying the students with disabilities who should take alternate assessments and requires that states report on the number of students who take an alternate assessment.

<sup>2</sup> IDEA § 300.138 (b)(1) develops guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in state- and district-wide assessment programs.

## What should you do if a grade 11 student who is scheduled to take the MEAP ends up not taking it?

As you know, *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Forms* must be completed for all students who are not taking any part of the MEAP, the MEAP with accommodations, MI-Access Participation, or MI-Access Supported Independence. These forms should be shipped to the MI-Access contractor along with your other MI-Access assessment materials by April 11, 2003.

If, however, a student's IEP Team determines after April 11<sup>th</sup> that a student who was originally scheduled to take the MEAP will not be taking it after all, theoretically, a *Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access Scan Form* should have been completed for that student as well. But, since it is past the deadline, that student's information must be collected by some other means. An on-line data collection process is under development to deal with this situation, as well as with several other NCLB and IDEA reporting requirements that have arisen for students who are eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access (see article titled "On-line Data Collection System Under Development for Students Eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access" on page 3).

### IEP TEAM RESOURCE!

MDE IEP manuals, forms, and model documents are available at:

[www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)

- ✓ Click on "Administrators"
- ✓ Click on "Special Education"
- ✓ Click on "Administrative Forms, Guidelines, and Procedures"

## Tools for Informing Parents— Ahead of Time—About MI-Access

Since parents are vital members of IEP Teams, they need to come to IEP meetings prepared to contribute. One way schools can help them is by sending a letter out in advance of the meeting informing them about MI-Access and their responsibility in helping to determine which state assessment their child (or children) will take. The OSE/EIS has prepared a sample letter (see page 11) that may be modified for local purposes.

In addition to the sample letter, there are other tools you may want to share with parents ahead of time or make available through your lending library, including

- the "In Michigan All Kids Count! PREVIEW" videotape, which briefly explains MI-Access, why it was developed, and how it will be used;
- the *Draft Guidelines for Determining Participation in State Assessment for Students with Disabilities*, which includes information to help IEP Teams make informed assessment decisions;
- the flow chart and checklist included in this issue of *The Assist*;
- the MI-Access 2002/2003 Interactive CD-ROM;
- the MI-Access general brochure (camera-ready copies are available on the MDE web site at [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde));
- Section 2 of the 2002/2003 MI-

Access Training Materials, which provides a brief explanation of MI-Access, who it is for, and how it is designed; and

- the Participation and Supported Independence sample assessment booklets, which can be found on the MDE web site ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)). Seeing the booklets may help parents better understand what teachers are looking for during assessment observations.

All of these materials can be duplicated by schools and districts and shared as needed.

You also may want to let parents know that the MDE web site has additional information on MI-Access, including Q & As, surveys, and more. Once they are on the MDE home page ([www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)), they will need to

- click on "Administrators" in the left-hand column,
- click on "Special Education,"
- click on "Assessment & Accommodations," and in the box titled "Assessment,"
- click on "MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program."

Remember, the more information parents have *before* IEP Team meetings, the better able they will be to assist with making assessment decisions. Since they have not necessarily had the benefit of attending conferences, watching teleconferences, or reviewing training materials, they need MI-Access information from you.

*(Pre-IEP Team Meeting)*

Dear (name):

In addition to our many responsibilities as IEP Team members, one important decision must be made this year—that is, which state assessment your child will take part in. Because you are a vital member of the team, we need your help with that decision.

As you may know, Michigan has two assessment programs from which we can choose: the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) and MI-Access, Michigan's Alternate Assessment Program. When we meet in (fill in blank) we will need to determine—as a team—which of these programs is most appropriate for your child. The state has developed several tools that can help us with making our decision. To that end, we are sending you some of those tools to review ahead of time, including

- (list of materials mailed)

We also have several other tools in our lending library that you may want to review before our meeting, including

- (list of additional tools not mailed but available for review)

If you would like to look at the materials just described, simply (include instructions for how they can obtain copies or come in and view the additional materials).

You also may want to visit the Michigan Department of Education's web site to learn more about MEAP and MI-Access. To do that, go to [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde). In the left-hand column,

- click on "Administrators,"
- click on "Special Education," and
- click on "Assessment & Accommodations."

If you have any questions about the MEAP or MI-Access that you would like answered before our meeting, please feel free to call me at (include phone number of appropriate contact person), or you can call your child's teacher at (include phone number). We would be happy to assist you, as needed, in becoming more comfortable with the decision before us.

Thank you and we look forward to seeing you on (fill in date of meeting).

Sincerely,

(Fill in appropriate signature)

# Age or Grade: How Do I Decide Which Students to Assess and Make Sure ALL My Students Count?

One aspect of MI-Access that has always been difficult to address is whether IEP Teams should use a student's age or grade to determine whether or not he or she should be assessed at the state level. When Phase 1 MI-Access was being developed, the MDE was advised by its expert committees to use AGE because the majority of students who would participate in Phase 1 MI-Access (Participation and Supported Independence) typically were not designated a grade level by their districts. Since that made sense, the MDE indicated that IEP Teams and districts should use age as the determining factor for who should be assessed. The current assessment booklets, which are designated by age, reflect this decision.

Now, however, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has caused the MDE to rethink the use of age as the determining factor. Why? Because the new law—which was passed *after* Phase 1 MI-Access was developed—requires that participation rates and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) be calculated by GRADE. That means that students who are assessed by age may or may not be counted in NCLB calculations even though they are assessed at the state level. Furthermore, you may have students in a grade that is assessed, but because they were not a current Phase 1 MI-Access assessment age, they did not participate. In the latter case, the students would count as zeros in your participation rates. Since the MDE, like you, wants to

make sure that ALL students count in NCLB calculations, it is considering a change.

This is an issue that also must be addressed by local and intermediate school districts. Why? Because many special education programs, such as center programs, do not assign grade levels to their students, but submit to the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) that the student is ungraded. This creates problems because these students are not included in the total number of students enrolled in a particular grade—the denominator for NCLB calculations. If schools, districts, and states do not count all the students actually assessed at the state level (the numerator) or count all the students enrolled in each grade (the denominator) they cannot possibly submit accurate participation rate and AYP calculations to the federal government. (For more information on these calculations, see the article titled “No Child Left Behind: Who Counts?” on page 8.)

Because we want to ensure that all students count, the OSE/EIS has determined that, starting with the 2003/2004 school year, Phase 1 MI-Access (Participation and Supported Independence) will use GRADE instead of age as the determining factor for who should be assessed at the state level. (Phase 2 MI-Access has always used grades as a determining factor so no change is necessary.) The MI-Access

Participation and Supported Independence assessment booklets will be changed accordingly. This means that if a special education student is enrolled in grade 4, 5, 7, 8, or 11, he or she MUST be assessed at the state level. (Grades 3 and 6 are tentatively scheduled to be added in 2004/2005, the year in which NCLB must be fully implemented.)

Remember, if a student is assigned a grade level, his or her age does NOT matter. For example, if you are a 4th grade teacher and you have students aged 9, 10, 11, and 12 in your classroom, they ALL will take the grade 4 MI-Access assessment because they are enrolled in grade 4.

It is ONLY in those instances where special education students are NOT assigned a grade level by their district that IEP Teams should use their age (as of December 1 in the school year of the assessment) to determine whether or not they should be assessed at the state level. (Again, this is for Phase 1 MI-Access ONLY.) For example, if a student does not have a grade-level designation, but he or she is 10, 11, 13, 14, 17 or 18 years old, then he or she MUST be assessed at the state level.

Which Phase 1 MI-Access assessment should be used (now that they are organized by grade instead of age)? The table on page 13 shows which Phase 1 MI-Access assessment booklets (Participation or Supported Independence) teachers should use for ungraded students.

<b>MEAP/MI-Access Grades Assessed</b> (If a student is in one of these grades, he or she <b>MUST</b> be assessed at the state level.)	<b>Phase 1 MI-Access Ages</b> (If a student is <b>NOT</b> assigned a grade level, but is one of these ages as of December 1 of the assessment school year, he or she <b>MUST</b> be assessed using the MI-Access grade assessment in the left-hand column.)
Grade 3 (Tentatively Scheduled for 2004/2005)	9 years old (Tentatively Scheduled for 2004/2005)
Grade 4	10 years old
Grade 5	11 years old
Grade 6 (Tentatively Scheduled for 2004/2005)	12 years old (Tentatively Scheduled for 2004/2005)
Grade 7	13 years old
Grade 8	14 years old
Grade 11	17 and 18 years old

Note: No Child Left Behind requires that students in these grade levels be assessed in the state assessment system.

For example, using the table as a guide:

- If a student is 10 and is NOT assigned a grade level, he or she will use the grade 4 MI-Access assessment booklet (either Participation or Supported Independence).
- If a student is 11 and is NOT assigned a grade level, he or she will use the grade 5 MI-Access assessment booklet.
- If a student is age 13 and is NOT assigned a grade level, he or she will use the grade 7 MI-Access assessment booklet once it is developed, and so forth.

There likely will be questions about this change during the transition. It has taken two-to-three years to explain how to use age instead of grade as a determining factor. But the MDE is convinced that making the change will help ensure that schools, districts, and the state all submit accurate participation rates and AYP calculations for NCLB. Since so much rides on these calculations, the Department wants to make sure that every student counts.

## NO MORE "GOALS AND OBJECTIVES" FOR PHASE 2 MI-ACCESS STUDENTS

Starting with the 2003/2004 school year, IEP Teams will no longer be able to use locally developed assessments or "progress toward annual goals and objectives" as an alternate means of assessing students who are eligible for Phase 2 MI-Access. Why? It will prevent your school, your district, and the state from meeting No Child Left Behind requirements.

As a result, when your IEP Team meets to determine, among other things, what state assessment your student should take next school year, the MDE Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services recommends that you use language similar to the paragraph below in the assessment portion of your plan. You must include such language for *each* MEAP content-area assessment the student does not take.

As an alternate to the general education assessment (MEAP) for the content area of [*insert the MEAP content area assessment*], the team recommends that the student take Phase 2 MI-Access. Until it is developed, the student will be administered the [*insert name of commercial standardized assessment(s)*] or the standardized assessment designated by the Michigan Department of Education.

At this time the state is still exploring the feasibility of purchasing an off-the-shelf standardized achievement assessment to use until the Phase 2 alternate assessments are completed. If that happens, including the language above in IEPs will prevent teams from having to reconvene.

# Missing Links Found for Curriculum Access – All Really Does Mean All

By: Michelle Goodwin, Former Director of Professional Services, Ionia ISD, now Principal, Potterville Middle School

*This article ran in the April 2002 issue of The Assist. Because it has such excellent insights into how MI-Access is related to the Content Standards and Benchmarks of the Michigan Curriculum Framework (MCF), the Office of Special Education/Early Intervention Services thought it was worth running again. Please share this article with others as you work to ensure that your assessment options are aligned with the MCF.*

Several weeks ago, at a workshop designed to bring teachers, principals, and assessment coordinators up to date on the Michigan Educational Assessment System (MEAS), I was challenged by a teacher to explain how MI-Access could possibly be related to the Content Standards and Benchmarks of the Michigan Curriculum Framework (MCF), particularly when the Performance Expectations (PEs) being assessed with MI-Access were not explicitly academic in nature. This notable question allowed me to share with my workshop participants the interrelationships between special education and general education—interrelationships that are so pertinent in the phrase that is the cornerstone of the MEAS, as well as IDEA, and so many mission statements for schools: “All students...”

“All” means “all.” It is this phrase that was taken to heart as groups of teachers and curriculum directors, under the direction of Peggy Dutcher from the Michigan Department of Education, worked numerous days over the past three years to define the link between the Content Standards and Benchmarks of the MCF and the PEs in *Addressing the Unique Educational Needs of Students with Disabilities* (AUEN), which provided a framework for developing MI-Access. It was an eye- and heart-opening experience for general education teachers, some of whom were seeing the AUEN for the first time.



Michelle Goodwin

It was equally exciting for special education teachers who were newly delving into the MCF.

The process went like this. Groups of six to seven teachers, mostly in special education, worked with one or more content area general education teachers, alternately reading each Content Standard from the MCF and each PE from AUEN. After discussing what each standard and each expectation meant, a number of 0, 1, or 2 was assigned to designate the link between the two documents. A designation of “0” meant there was no link between the PE and the Content Standard. A designation of “1” meant that there was a link between either the “process” or “content” of the standard and the requirements of the PE. And a designation of “2” indicated there was a direct link between the Content Standard (process and content) and the PE. This work was done for all content areas with the exception of World Languages.

A concrete example might help clarify the process. The first MCF content standard for History Perspective reads as follows: “All students will sequence chronologically the following areas of American history and key events within these areas in order to examine relationships and explain cause and effect.” AUEN PE 3 for Supported Independence states: “Students will

manage personal work assignments.” After reading the Benchmarks for the Content Standard and the Performance Requirements for the PE, the group working on social studies marked the link as a “1.” While the PE does not require students to be able to list historical eras in chronological order, students functioning as Supported Independence are required to understand and be able to place events or activities in correct time order. Ultimately, while the American history content of “what event happened when” is not met by this PE, the process of being able to sequence events is.

Anyone who has worked with scope and sequence or curriculum mapping understands how grueling the work can be. My hat is off to the teachers and curriculum directors from around the state, including the Upper Peninsula, who took the time to bring their knowledge and experience to the table for this linking process. Their work allowed me to begin my explanation by saying to the teacher at my workshop, “Oh, my gosh! You wouldn’t believe how many Content Standards and Benchmarks are accessed in special education.” Special education students do have access to the general curriculum. Currently the MDE is finalizing a linking document. When it is eventually distributed, all teachers will be better able to show student progress within the general curriculum. So, maybe, “ALL” really does mean “ALL.”

# What Is the Limited English Proficiency Alternative Assessment?

By MaryAlice Galloway, Supervisor, Central Support Unit, Office of Field Services,  
Michigan Department of Education

There have been several communications from the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to schools this year regarding the assessment of limited English proficient (LEP) students. In January 2003, Dr. Jeremy Hughes, Chief Academic Officer/Deputy Superintendent, sent two memorandums on the topic to local superintendents and public school academy directors. In the memos, he mentioned that the state would pilot an alternative assessment for LEP students.

After many days of discussions with representatives from the U.S. Department of Education, however, it became clear that a "pilot" LEP alternative assessment would not enable Michigan to meet strict federal guidelines. Therefore, in its place, the MDE offered a fully developed, statewide alternative assessment for LEP students in the subject areas of reading and mathematics.

The alternative assessment—which the MDE purchased off-the-shelf and modified to meet the state's content standards and benchmarks—was itself piloted in late February and administered statewide from February 28 through March 31. The assessment was given to all students who were coded LEPU (unable to participate) or LEPA (participated in alternate test) on MEAP answer documents for reading and/or mathematics this year.

A February 27 memorandum from Jeremy Hughes outlined these changes for 2003. In addition, it explained that the State Board resolution that stated that school districts "may, on an individual case-by-case basis, exclude limited

English proficient students from alternative tests" did NOT apply to MEAP-exempted LEPU and LEPA students. That is because, in order to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind, ALL students must be assessed in the state assessment system and their proficiency levels must be reported. The only way an LEPU or LEPA student would not be tested is if s/he were absent during the entire assessment window.

Another issue about which there has been much discussion is how to determine whether a student should take the state's LEP alternative assessment. At present, schools are required to assess the English language proficiency of all LEP students using local assessments. For now, these assessments can be used to help schools determine whether an LEP student should take the MEAP or use the state's alternative. In the future, however, the MDE, in collaboration with other state education agencies, will produce its own statewide English language development assessment for this purpose. Once that test is completed and piloted, it will be used in place of local assessments to measure LEP students' English language proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening. With this new "development" assessment (which is different than the "alternative" assessment), schools will be able to show the progress made annually by LEP students toward English language development and do so in a consistent way across the state.

As information about these various developments becomes available, it will be disseminated widely to keep school personnel up to date.

## GLOSSARY



### **Limited English Proficient (LEP):**

The Michigan definition is a student who has a primary or home language other than English who, because of limited proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding the English language, requires alternative programs or services to equally access the local education agency's total academic curriculum.

### **Assessment Accommodation:**

An adjustment in an assessment procedure, which is intended to minimize the impact of a student's disability on his/her performance on the assessment. Decisions regarding accommodations should be made on an individual, case-by-case basis, and should be based on the relative appropriateness to a disability and the impact the disability has on the student. The IEP Team, well in advance of the actual assessment, should make decisions about accommodations.

### **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP):**

AYP is a formula, introduced in No Child Left Behind and approved by the State Board of Education, that is used to identify successful Title 1 schools as well as schools in need of improvement. It is also used in the new state accreditation system, Education YES!, where it will affect the grades given to many schools. A school is in "school improvement status" if it fails to make AYP for two consecutive years.



# The Assist



## Important MI-Access Dates

**Ship MI-Access Assessment Materials  
to BETA/TASA  
by April 11, 2003**

**Submit Phase 2 MI-Access Data On-Line  
May 1 – May 23, 2003**

## Bookmark these web sites:

[www.ed.gov/free/](http://www.ed.gov/free/) (NCLB)  
[www.ncela.gwu.edu/miscpubs/gao/01226lep.htm](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/miscpubs/gao/01226lep.htm)  
(related to educating LEP students)  
[www.matr.org](http://www.matr.org) (assistive and adaptive aids)  
[www.nochildleftbehind.gov/](http://www.nochildleftbehind.gov/)  
[www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/)  
[www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde)



This newsletter related to the assessment of students with disabilities is distributed to local and intermediate superintendents, directors of special education, MI-Access Coordinators, MEAP Coordinators, SEAC, Special Education monitors, MDE staff, school principals, Parent Advisory Committees, and institutes of higher education. *The Assist* may also be downloaded from the Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services section of the MDE web site: [www.mi.gov/mde](http://www.mi.gov/mde).

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