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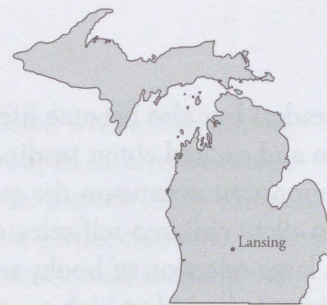
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English Language Arts M-STEP

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The M-STEP in ELA is a comprehensive English language arts assessment that measures Michigan Standards in ELA at grades 3–8 and 11. In 2010, the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards as the Michigan Standards for ELA and Mathematics. It was necessary to develop a new assessment that fully aligns with the Michigan Standards.

People have asked, “What is the biggest change?” Because this is a systemic change, there are many differences. One notable change is that the M-STEP is an online assessment. Roughly 80% of Michigan schools have opted for the online version over the paper/pencil version. Another difference from the former MEAP is that the M-STEP is a comprehensive ELA assessment, testing all ELA standards in one format (rather than separate tests for the different domains...reading, writing, etc.). The testing window has also changed. With the testing window being moved to the spring from the fall, students will be tested using their current grade level standards.

The ELA M-STEP has several components:

- Online or Paper/Pencil
- Classroom Activity (CA)
- Performance Task (PT)

The **Online** (or Paper/Pencil) component consists of selected response items and constructed response items. Selected response items come in a variety of forms: multiple choice, multi-select, and technology enhanced. Multi-select items are selected response questions that prompt students to select all answer choices that are correct, meaning that students may select more than one correct answer choice for these questions. Technology enhanced items include a broad range of item types unique to online delivery, such as select text, drag and drop, and hotspot. Constructed response

items in the online portion of the assessment elicit a short response (1-3 paragraphs, depending on the prompt and grade level). For schools taking the paper/pencil version of the M-STEP, students will encounter similar items, modified to suit a fixed-form delivery. Schools are encouraged to use the test items posted online in the **Spring 2015 Preview**. This is an excellent opportunity for teachers and students to practice using the technology incorporated with the online M-STEP. (NOTE: the Spring 2015 Preview must be accessed using Google Chrome).

The **Classroom Activity** (CA) is a scripted lesson, delivered in a classroom setting 1-3 days before taking the Performance Task. It is designed to give students a working familiarity of the context of the Performance Task (PT). You can think of the CA and PT as a coordinated set. For example, the Grade 5 sample CA is titled “Working Together” and discusses people working together as well as people and animals working together. The subsequent grade 5, sample PT is titled “Service Animals.” The CA is broader than the PT. This is necessary because the operational form of one Classroom Activity may be connected to several Performance Tasks.

The **Performance Task** (PT) is a combination of the following:

- 2-5 pieces of source material (reading passages)
- 1-2 selected response items
- 2-3 short constructed response items
- 1 full-write essay (sometimes referred to as a long constructed response or extended response)

Performance Tasks are designed around the various modes of writing and are aligned to grade level

standards: narrative in grade 3-8, informational and opinion in grades 3-5, and explanatory and argumentative in grades 6-8 and 11. Although the narrative mode is part of the grade 11 writing standards, it will not be part of the grade 11 PT.

A common question I have been asked about the assessment is, "How many full-length essays will my students have to write?" Each student will write one full-length essay. The PT source material, short constructed response, and selected response item culminate in one full-length essay. For example, a third grade student could receive a narrative, informational, or opinion Performance Task. Schools and teachers will not know to which mode the students will be asked to respond until the testing session begins.

Note: Due to concerns around testing time, the Classroom Activity and Performance Task components of the 11th grade M-STEP are optional for high schools. While there are some benefits to administering these components, they will not be required. There will be

no accountability penalty in terms of participation or scoring for high schools that choose to not administer the classroom activities and performance tasks. This does not apply to the classroom activities and performance tasks in grades 3 through 8 — those are required.

Teachers and administrators are encouraged to visit the M-STEP website (www.michigan.gov/mstep). On the website you will find links to all M-STEP samples in addition to a link for the Spring 2015 Preview. Everyone is encouraged to sign up for the Spotlight on Student Assessment and Accountability. This is an electronic document delivered weekly containing a wealth of information from the Division of Accountability Services. Sign up for Spotlight at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIMDE/subscriber/new>. Under Student Assessment, select Spotlight.

There is a lot of new information. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about the M-STEP (BAA@michigan.gov).

