



Wendy Zdeb-Roper
Executive Director

David Powers
President

Building Principals recognize the important role assessment plays in helping to inform and improve classroom practice, curriculum and student achievement. Over the last several months we have closely studied and compared the available options and have sought extensive feedback from Principals across the state. As the practitioners perhaps held most accountable for instructional leadership, Principals are passionate about this topic.

We also recognize that the selection of the state assessment is not something that can be taken lightly or without serious consideration to the ripple effect it will have the ESEA Waiver, the impact on school accountability and on educator evaluation.

As you consider the various assessment options we would like to share the elements we feel are "must haves" and explain why we believe ACT Aspire and the ACT are the best choice for Michigan:

- 1) Schools need a Common Core-aligned, annual summative assessment in grades 3-11 that measures the **core content areas** to track student performance. Our current testing pattern provides annual growth measures only in English Language Arts and math in grades 3-8, making it difficult at the secondary level to track annual student growth.
- 2) Schools need an assessment system that includes an annual summative assessment that is supported with options for daily classroom level formatives and standards based interims at the semester or trimester to help teachers to adjust instruction and support students in an on-going manner. We can't wait until the spring of each school year to find out if students have learned the material.
- 3) The goal at the end of high school is to graduate students who are career and college ready. Schools need annual assessments that are aligned to that end goal so we can track student progress along the way and make sure they are on target to career and college ready. That doesn't mean predicting an ACT score for a 3rd grader, but it does mean measuring whether that 3rd grader is ready for 4th grade and so on...allowing schools to intervene so that by 11th grade, students are able meet the college readiness benchmarks.

The Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals advances learning through educational leadership.

1001 Centennial Way, Suite 100, Lansing, MI 48917 | 517.327.5315 | www.mymassp.com

- 4) Alignment to the end goal also provides an intrinsic motivation for students to take the assessments seriously and to do their best. As any High School Principal in the state will attest to – students arrive for Day 1 of Michigan Merit Exam testing (ACT Day) with an entirely different attitude than they do for Days 2 and 3. In many schools, completion of all three days of testing is a graduation requirement just to ensure that the school will reach the required participation rate. The buy-in factor also shows in our scores as ACT scores continue to go up and the overall MME score has gone down. This is not just true with 11th graders. The question of student buy-in is why over 286,000 students in districts around the state took ACT's Explore and Plan assessments in grades 7-10. There is tremendous buy-in the EPAS system as students and parents want to see the predicted ACT score and to have a clear direction on each students strengths and weaknesses.
- 5) This leads to the importance of quality reporting. Teachers and Principals must receive timely feedback from the state assessment and the reports need to provide meaningful and actionable information. You have had a chance to see a sample of the reports that are available from ACT Aspire. For comparison sake, I brought a copy of a MEAP report. As you can see in this report, students and schools are provided with “strand level” data that does not give useful feedback to the teacher or to the student. This is relevant to our conversation today because with Smarter Balanced Michigan will still be responsible for contracting independently for its own scoring and reporting, just as we currently do for MEAP. Remember also that Smarter Balanced only assesses ELA and math. The current plan is to continue developing state level science and social studies MEAP tests to be administered at 5th, 8th, and 11th grade. So these strand level MEAP reports are likely to be the reality for schools moving forward if we stay on our current course.
- 6) Finally, this brings us to the issue of the time spent testing students. As Principals, we have real concerns about any loss of instructional time due to an increase in standardized testing. At a recent forum, MDE was asked about its plan for testing of 11th graders. It was explained that students would take the ACT, Work Keys, SBAC ELA/Math, MEAP Science and MEAP social studies...in total a conservative estimate is 15 hours of testing. Also keep in mind these assessments are created by three different vendors making it difficult for schools to prepare students accordingly.
- 7) It is because of these reasons that 80% of MASSP members indicated in a recent survey that they prefer ACT Aspire as the state's next assessment.

MASSP has met with the Department of Education about our concerns regarding their plans for student assessment. I believe that MDE is well intentioned and trying to develop an assessment system that meets schools needs – they started down the path of preparing for Smarter Balanced when there were only two assessment options. However, the marketplace has expanded and additional assessment systems are available. We know from states like Kentucky, Alabama and Missouri, who also have recently amended and had have their ESEA waivers

approved to use ACT and ACT Aspire as part of their assessment system, that Smarter Balanced is no longer our only option.

We owe it to Michigan students to consider all options available at this time. We believe we should move forward with a proven testing company with over 50 years of experience and a long-term relationship with Michigan.

Thank you for your interest in this important issue.

We welcome your questions at this time.

ACT[®] **Aspire**

ACT Aspire and the ACT exam are aligned to the Common Core, assess more content in less time, provide better reports, and guarantee all students a college entrance exam.



Common Core Aligned Assessments: Myths v. Facts

Myth: ACT Aspire is not aligned to the Common Core and will not work with Michigan's ESEA waiver.

Fact: ACT has contracted to have a third party validation study regarding alignment to the Common Core State Standards. The study is due to be released this month. Early indications are positive regarding alignment and ACT already has a cross walk with the CCSS and the ACT College Readiness Standards on their website. In addition, ACT has made a number of minor adjustments to ensure alignment to the Common Core. As states begin to question their initial decisions to join the large assessment consortiums, ACT's Aspire has become a viable option. States such as Alabama and Kentucky are using a combination of ACT assessments to meet USDOE ESEA testing requirements.

Myth: Any of the new testing options will be able to replace the MEAP and MME.

Fact: Michigan assesses students on reading, writing, math, science, and social studies. Smarter Balanced and PARCC only assess language arts and math, so they cannot possibly fully replace the MEAP and MME. That means Michigan schools would have to continue supplementing with MEAP tests. ACT Aspire tests reading, writing, math, science and also includes social science reading and writing activities, so it could replace the MEAP entirely.

Myth: A good assessment has to test every content standard students are expected to learn.

Fact: Just like a survey can be accurate even if it doesn't poll every citizen, you can get an accurate picture of a student's ability by testing a sample of standards. Measuring every standard takes a long time, is of very limited value, and means more classroom time spent on testing and less on teaching.

Myth: You must pre- and post-test students to get an accurate measure of growth.

Fact: You can get an accurate measure of growth with only one test per year administered in the spring. In fact, this type of system cuts down on high stakes testing and allows local schools and individual teachers to use faster, less stressful interim tests during the year to monitor student progress.

Myth: Only a computer adaptive test can provide a fast, accurate, and useful measurement of student ability.

Fact: Any computer-based test can provide students, parents, and teachers with faster information than a standard paper-pencil test. But the accuracy and usefulness of the test depends on the quality of the test itself and of the reporting, not whether it is computer-based.

Myth: Results from computer-adaptive assessments can be easily compared to paper/pencil test results.

Fact: While it is simple and easy to compare the computer-based test results you get from assessments like ACT and PARCC to their paper/pencil counterparts, you cannot simply compare the results of students who take a computer-adaptive test like SBAC with those taking a paper-pencil version. That means that school accountability scores will have to be determined using complex statistical models that aren't vetted.

Footnotes from Infographic

1. John Carroll, Senior Account Manager, Client Relations, ACT. Presentation on ACT Aspire, Nov 12, 2013. and Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. Frequently Asked Questions. <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/resources-events/faqs/>
2. <http://www.discoveractaspire.org/pages/test-features>
3. "ACT for All: The Effect of Mandatory College Entrance Exams on Postsecondary Attainment and Choice." University of Michigan. http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jmhyman/Hyman_ACT_for_All.pdf
4. "A Primer on Common Core Assessments." Education First. http://www.education-first.com/files/A_Primer_on_Common_Core-Aligned_Assessments_Education_First.pdf
5. MASSP Member survey. http://mymassp.com/content/act_aspireepas_survey_results
6. "A Primer on Common Core Assessments." Education First. http://www.education-first.com/files/A_Primer_on_Common_Core-Aligned_Assessments_Education_First.pdf
7. ACT has produced a 304 page report detailing their alignment with the Common Core State Standards. They have also commissioned a third party review of their CCSS alignment. <http://www.act.org/commoncore/pdf/CommonCoreAlignment.pdf>



Michigan Department of Education
 District Name: SAMPLE DISTRICT
 District Code: 9999

INDIVIDUAL STUDENT REPORT

A

Social Studies

Grade 06

Fall 2011

Teacher Name:

Classroom:

School Name: SAMPLE SCHOOLNAME

School Code: 9999



Student Name: LastNameXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, FirstNameXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 District Student ID: 12345678901234567890 Date of Birth: 01/01/1900 State UNC: 1234567890
 Gender: F Ethnicity: White
 English Language Learner: N Formerly LEP: N Special: N
 Accommodations: None

B

Summary of Social Studies Results

Subject	Score	2012 Assessment Performance Level
Social Studies	596	3-Partially Proficient

GLCE Code	DOMAIN Abbreviated GLCE Descriptor	Earned / Possible Points	GLCE Code	DOMAIN Abbreviated GLCE Descriptor	Earned / Possible Points
	HISTORY	8/19		CIVICS/GOVERNMENT	2/10
3H3.0.05	Use text how Am. ind. & settlers adapted to environ	0/1	4C2.0.02	Identify contexts when specific rights are involved	0/1
3H3.0.06	Describe interactions: Amer. Indians and Europeans	0/1	3C3.0.01	Distinguish roles of state and local government	0/1
3H3.0.09	Describe how Michigan attained statehood	0/1	4C3.0.01	Give examples how Constitution limits fed. powers	0/1
3H3.0.10	Create a timeline to sequence early Michigan history	1/1	4C3.0.02	Give examples of federal and state powers	1/1
4H3.0.03	How does location of nat. resources affect MI after 1837	0/1	4C3.0.04	Describe the three branches of US federal government	0/1
4H3.0.08	Describe past/present threats to MI nat. resources	0/1	4C3.0.07	Explain fed. tax use to serve purposes of government	0/1
5H1.1.01	Use maps to locate peoples in various US regions	1/1	3C5.0.01	Identify rights and responsibilities of citizenship	0/1
5H1.1.02	Compare Amer. Indians in Southwest/Pacific Northwest	1/1	4C5.0.01	Explain responsibilities of citizenship	0/1
5H1.2.02	Use case studies: compare goals of European explorers	0/1		ECONOMICS	4/7
5H1.3.01	Use maps to locate the major regions of Africa	0/1	3E1.0.01	How scarcity, opportunity cost and choice affect MI	1/1
5H1.4.02	Compare Europe/Amer. India/Africa: N. America post 1492	1/1	3E1.0.04	Describe how entrepreneurs produce goods/services	1/1
5H2.3.02	Describe Columbian Exchange impact on three worlds	0/1	4E1.0.02	Describe some characteristics of a market economy	0/1
5H3.1.04	Describe daily life of NE/Midwest/Southern colonists	1/1	4E1.0.04	Explain how price affects decisions about purchasing	1/1
5H3.1.06	Describe impact of First/Second Continental Congress	1/1	4E1.0.06	Explain how competition affects higher/lower prices	1/1
5H3.1.08	How Declaration/Independence explained need to separate	0/1	4E1.0.08	Explain why public goods are not privately owned	0/1
5H3.3.05	Identify individuals leading American Revolution	0/1	3E2.0.01	How specialization affects MI interdependence	0/1
5H3.3.07	Why Farmers wanted to limit the power of government	0/1		KNOW, PROC. SKILLS	1/2
5H3.3.08	Describe rights found in 1542nd/3rd/4th Amendments	1/1	5P3.1.02	Analyze current public issue related to Constitution	0/1
	GEOGRAPHY	2/7	5P3.1.03	How values affect differences: constitutional issues	1/1
3G1.0.02	Use thematic maps: describe Michigan characteristics	0/1			
4G1.0.05	Use maps: describe US elevation, climate, population	0/1			
4G2.0.01	Describe ways US can be divided into regions	0/1			
4G2.0.02	Compare Michigan region to another US region	0/1			
4G4.0.02	Describe: Immigration affects US cultural development	1/1			
4G5.0.02	Describe uses of Michigan natural resources	1/1			
4G5.0.01	Assess effects of human activity on US environment	0/1			
	CIVICS/GOVERNMENT	2/10			
3C1.0.01	Give example: how state government fulfills its purpose	1/1			

