



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Families,

This spring, your school district will administer a variety of state tests to students. State tests provide information on student knowledge and on their progress toward being career- and college-ready upon graduation. Schools and districts use test results for curriculum planning and school improvement initiatives that benefit all students.

Students in **grades 3-7** will take the **Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP)**. The M-STEP will be given online in most schools and will measure student knowledge of Michigan's high academic standards.

- Students in grades 3-7 take M-STEP tests for English language arts (ELA) and mathematics.
- Students in grade 5 also take M-STEP tests in science and social studies.

Students in **grade 8** will take two types of tests:

- **Pre-SAT (PSAT)**, which measures what they've learned in ELA and mathematics and helps them prepare for the SAT college entrance exam given to high school juniors.
- **M-STEP tests** in science and social studies.

Students in **grades 9 and 10** will take the **PSAT** to continue preparing them for the SAT college entrance exam given to high school juniors.

Students in **grade 11** will take the **Michigan Merit Exam (MME)**, which consists of three parts:

- Free SAT college entrance exam that also measures student knowledge on Michigan's ELA and mathematics standards
- M-STEP science and social studies tests
- WorkKeys work skills assessment.

We all want your child's state testing experience to be as relaxed and stress-free as possible. Your positive outlook and supportive manner going into these tests also will influence your child's experience. State testing time has been significantly reduced since 2015. In fact, students—on average—will spend no more than three hours on M-STEP

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tests in math and English language arts. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 who take tests in science and social studies will spend an additional two hours on testing. State tests *in total* take up less than 1% of total instructional time for the school year.

While we support parents in making choices for their children, there is no allowable way in state or federal law to “opt out” of state tests. Students who are not tested count against their schools' participation rate and create an incomplete picture of school performance. Schools rely on accurate test results to focus on students or programs that may need more academic support. That’s one reason that federal law requires a 95% participation rate target on state assessments to be used in a school’s accountability rating.

You can find information about Michigan’s State Assessment system on our website at [www.michigan.gov/oeaa](http://www.michigan.gov/oeaa). The handout [Michigan’s State Assessment System: WHAT IT IS, WHAT IT MEANS, AND WHAT IT OFFERS](#) is a good place to start. Additional information, including how you can help your child prepare for testing, is available on each assessment’s webpage the M-STEP web page at [www.mi.gov/mstep](http://www.mi.gov/mstep).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Rice". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M".

Michael F. Rice, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent