Have you ever wondered why students are given so many types of tests in school? You’re not alone. Just like each subject provides students with different content and information, each type of assessment measures student learning in different ways for different purposes.

For example:

**Formative Assessment** is a process used by classroom teachers and students on a regular basis to confirm, adjust, and support teaching and learning.

**Interim or Benchmark Assessments** are given to students multiple times throughout the school year to monitor student learning toward meeting learning goals over time.

**Summative Assessments** are given at the end of a learning cycle to certify that learning has occurred. End-of-chapter tests are one example of summative tests given at a local level. State and federal law require all students be tested in specific grades and subjects once a year to measure student progress in learning state content standards or other career- or college-ready goals. Our elementary and middle school assessment is called the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-STEP. The Michigan Merit Exam, or MME, is the state high school exam. Some students with disabilities take an alternative state assessment called MI-Access; English language learners are given an assessment called WIDA. Schools also have the option to use Michigan’s Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessment in grades K-2.

**Reporting Assessment Results**
A Parent Report of your child’s assessment results is available from his or her school each fall. Statewide assessment results are reported at [www.mischooldata.org](http://www.mischooldata.org) through the state’s new Parent Dashboard for School Transparency. In addition to test scores, the [Dashboard](http://www.mischooldata.org) is filled with important school-level information that parents and others say they want to know about Michigan public schools, including charter schools (www.mischooldata.org/parentdashboard).

Families and others can use the dashboard to get a more complete picture of how their child’s school is serving students. They also can use the Dashboard to compare a school’s performance with the average performance of other similar Michigan schools. Your ideas can make the Parent Dashboard even better! Send feedback to MDE-ParentDashboard@michigan.gov.

**Where to Find Assessment Resources**
To provide parents with important information on student testing, state assessments, and how you can help your child prepare, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has developed several print and video communication tools (see back page for descriptions).

You can find parent resources on the following pages:

- M-STEP web page ([www.michigan.gov/mstep](http://www.michigan.gov/mstep))
- MME web page ([www.michigan.gov/mme](http://www.michigan.gov/mme))
- Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark web page ([www.michigan.gov/earlylitandmath](http://www.michigan.gov/earlylitandmath))
**Assessment Print Materials**

**Student Testing**

**What Parents Can Do to Help Students Prepare**

As a parent and your child's first teacher, you can help your child understand and prepare for the assessments they will take in school. Here are some points that will help your child perform their best:

- **Practice Tests**
  - Take your child through practice tests that are provided by the Michigan Department of Education, which can be found at www.michigan.gov/mstep in the parent/student section.

- **Stress Management**
  - Encourage your child to get enough rest the night before and eat a healthy breakfast the day of the test.

- **Testing Facts to Share with Your Child**
  - Testing is a process designed to measure what your child has learned, not what they know.
  - Don’t worry if your child gets a few questions wrong. The test is designed to cover a wide range of topics.
  - Your child’s best chance to do well is with a good night’s sleep and a healthy breakfast.

- **State Assessments**
  - It is important to understand that state assessments are not a reflection of your child’s intelligence or abilities.

- **Success**
  - Remember—Attending school matters:

- **Parents’ Guide to Success**
  - Michigan’s rigorous standards are aligned to the nation’s most rigorous and demanding standards, promoting college and career readiness.

- **Michigan’s Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP)**
  - M-STEP is given primarily online each spring and is designed to gauge student knowledge and achievement. Missing school means your child may miss important instruction and have less time to practice and prepare for the test.

- **State Assessments Provide**
  - An important snapshot of student achievement at a state, district and building level.
  - Valuable information to parents on their child’s progress.
  - Help in data-driven decision-making throughout the school year.

**M-STEP**

- **What Parents Can Do**
  - Reduce your child’s anxiety by reminding them that it is just one measure of learning.
  - Let them know that assessing their academic strengths and weaknesses is an important part of their education.
  - Encourage them to take their test seriously and do their best.

- **Computer Adaptive Testing (CAT)**
  - **ELA** and mathematics assessments, which provide a more individualized test experience for students and more efficient test administration.

- **Testing Facts to Share with Your Child**
  - Your child is not alone:
    - Elementary and middle school M-STEP sample test items can be found at: www.michigan.gov/mstep.
    - High school students can access pre-test content at: https://mstep.highered.ginous.com/.
  - Not only will your child’s teachers be answering, it will help familiarize your child with the test format.
  - The purpose of a state assessment is to measure what students know and how well they are meeting what they have been taught.

**State assessment overview, features, student test time, testing dates ... and more.**

**PARENT GUIDE TO STATE ASSESSMENTS IN MICHIGAN**

- The M-STEP English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments are developed by educators from many states, including Michigan.
- M-STEP science and social studies assessments are developed entirely by Michigan educators.
- M-STEP is the nation’s most widely used college admission test framework for high school students.

**Elementary and Middle School Students**

- Each spring, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grade students in the following grades and subjects:
  - English language arts (ELA)
  - Mathematics
  - Science (Grades 4 and 7)
  - Social studies (Grades 5 and 8)

**High School Students**

- Michigan’s English language arts (ELA) and mathematics assessments, which provide a more individualized test experience for students and more efficient test administration.

**Overview of accountability for students, districts, and states**

- School districts and states use information from state assessments to determine how well their students are meeting the standards set for their grade level.

**Assessment Online Practice Tools for Students**

- M-STEP: What students can expect when taking the test

- National PTA Guide on Michigan Assessments

- Online practice for M-STEP

- English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

These and other tools are available on the M-STEP web page (www.michigan.gov/mstep) or the MME web page (www.michigan.gov/mme).