

Testing opt-out/Refusal guide for Michigan

Form completed by UOO Administrator (CS)

Contact information cerestas@yahoo.com

List of Assessments

Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) is a standards-based test that measures how well Michigan students in 3rd grade through 9th grade are achieving the state's grade-level expectations. The MEAP, which is administered in the fall, tests students in third grade through eighth grade in reading, writing, English language arts and math. Students in 5th grade and 8th grade also take a science test, while students in 6th grade and 9th grade take a social studies test.

MI-Access 3 for grades 3 -8 and 1 is an alternative version of the MEAP for students with particular disabilities.

Michigan Merit Exam (MME) is a state standards-based test combined with the ACT college entrance exam and an ACT WorkKeys assessment. It includes tests in the subjects of reading, writing, math, science and social studies. The ACT test measures students' knowledge in math, science, reading, writing and English to determine if they are prepared for college. The ACT WorkKeys assessment determines if students are job-ready by testing their reading for information skills and applied mathematics skills.

MI Interim Assessment Program will be on-line pre/post assessments and may be used as one possible measure of student growth. Assessments will be rolled-out beginning Fall 2013. Michigan Interim Assessments will include:

- K-2 Reading, Writing, and Mathematics
- Grades 3 – 8 Science and Social Studies
- High School Course Content in Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science)
- High School Course Content in Social Studies (US History & Geography, World History & Geography, Economics, and Civics)

Special considerations for the above assessments

MEAP and MME test scores are not a requirement for promotion or graduation. However, if students score high enough on the MME, they can qualify for a college scholarship through the Michigan Merit Award.

[MI Interim Assessment Program](#) is the development plan for Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) to develop optional grade 9 and 10 interim assessments in Reading, Writing and Math. Additionally, Michigan will be developing high school course-based

Mathematics interim assessments and 12th grade English Language Arts. Both SBAC and Michigan interim assessments will be optional.

The K – 2 interim assessments will be developed based upon the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Science content grades 3 – 7 Michigan interim assessments will be based on the current Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCEs). Social Studies content grades 3 – 8 will also be based on the current Michigan GLCEs. It is the intention for the Smarter Balanced Assessments replaces the MME in the spring 2015. However, the legislative requirement to provide a college-readiness assessment is still in place. Validation of the Smarter Balanced assessment results as appropriate for measuring college-readiness will commence following the first operational administration in spring 2015.

Procedures for opt-out/refusal

1. Submit an opt out letter to the school site administrator, which includes your rights as the parent or legal guardian of the student (see **Get Tough Guide** on UOO website).
2. Provide your own written statement that you are aware you are not required to keep your child home during the testing window.
3. Secure alternative in school academic assignments/activities for your child during the testing window.
4. Know the legal requirements for high school graduation, but advocate for alternative assessments to be used to determine student proficiency in the required subjects such as a portfolio review for elementary and middle school students, all of which are voluntary and will provide the parent with the student's actual completed work demonstrating proficiency.
4. Be adamant in your resolve to exempt your child from testing, which can include any or all the following:
 - Seeking legal assistance
 - Seeking police protection if your child meets with verbal or physical force in an attempt to have him/her report to a testing area
 - Organizing and attending regular meetings with opt out support groups or consult online groups
 - Contacting any of the United Opt Out administrators for additional support or information

Urgency for opt-out/refusal

A law signed by former Gov. **Jennifer Granholm** created a school reform office to supervise the lowest-performing 5 percent of public schools. Her successor, Snyder, created the **Education Achievement Authority**, a state-run school district in place in 15

Detroit schools included in that bottom 5 percent. Snyder argues the EAA is working and wants to expand it elsewhere. A [bill approved by the House](#) in March would codify the district into law and allow the EAA to take the reins at up to 50 schools. This facilitates the privatization effort in Michigan.

With the use of standardized testing and the creation of a failure culture, legislators can open more doors for public school take-overs making the way for sub-standard education for select subgroups and making the way for corporate profiteering. The Senate is skeptical with House changes that would let intermediate school districts step in to run schools instead. Democrats argue the legislation would usurp local control by implementing an experimental and unproven educational model that's been in place for one school year.

Sample language to include in opt-out/refusal

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that our child will not be participating in state standardized testing during the current school year. Furthermore, we ask that no record of this testing be part of our child's permanent file, as we do not wish our child to participate in standardized achievement testing for promotion, graduation, or school/state report cards.

We believe the following of forced, high stakes testing:

- Is not scientifically-based and fails to follow the U.S. Government's own data on learning
- Fosters test driven education that is not meeting the individual/intellectual needs of students
- Presents a racial and economic bias detrimental to second language students, impoverished students, and students of color
- Violates fiscal fairness in funding schools
- Supports complicity of corporate interests rather than democracy based on public concerns
- Fosters coercion over cooperation with regards to federal funding for public education
- Promotes a culture of lying, cheating, and exploitation within the school community
- Has used the achievement gap to foster a “de facto” segregation that has resulted in separate and unequal education for minorities

We understand that federal law provides the parent or guardian the right of choice regarding standardized testing when such testing violates beliefs. In contrast to our beliefs, which are firmly rooted in a moral code that embraces equity and fairness, we believe such testing is not in the best interests of our child since it fosters competition instead of cooperation, contributes to separate and unequal education for minorities, and

believes our child's intellectual, creative, and problem-solving abilities, while presenting a fictitious picture as to the impact of the pedagogy provided by our child's individual educators.

Ultimately, our state is required to provide our child with an education in a least restrictive environment that does not force us to go against our core beliefs. My child should proceed to learn and develop at an individual pace following education standards that are imparted under the guidance of education professionals, not market-based reformers, who are able to provide quality pedagogy without fear of reprisal if students - who mature at vastly different levels and come from diverse backgrounds that may or may not be supportive of intellectual pursuit - do not hit the bulls' eye of a constantly moving achievement target.

Therefore, we request that the school provide appropriate learning activities during the testing window and utilize an alternative assessment portfolio or concordant college testing score to fulfill promotion and or graduation requirements, as our child opts out of standardized testing.

Sincerely,

Child's Name _____

ID# _____

Resources and organizations

Stop Common Core in Michigan

<http://stopcommoncoreinmichigan.com/2013/06/arationalexaplinationagainst-cc-funding/>

BAMN <http://www.bamn.com/tag/michigan>

Rich Gibson <http://richgibson.com/meap.html> <http://richgibson.com/optoutmeap.html>

State specific watch-list

Teach for America (Wendy Kopp)

The New Teacher Project (John D. Arnold)

StudentsFirst (Michelle Rhee)

Foundation for Excellence in Education (Jeb Bush)

Additional or miscellaneous information

“NGA Center/CCSSO shall be acknowledged as the sole owners and developers of the Common Core State Standards, and no claims to the contrary shall be made. The NGA and the CCSSO are private member organizations. Should Michigan’s PUBLIC school standards be PRIVATELY owned and controlled? Without sole ownership, Michigan educators and lawmakers are severely handicapped in their ability to significantly modify or amend the standards to fit Michigan’s unique student body. By agreement, states that adopted the Common Core can only add up to 15% of additional material. At the same time, the NGA/CCSSO can change the standard as necessary; Michigan must go along with their changes and bear any costs related to the change.”

Michigan, legislators are still in talks for whether or not they would like to move forward with the guidelines in their classrooms this coming school year. Even though Governor Rick Snyder of the Great Lakes State signed a budget that took funding away from Common Core implementation, the decision has not been finalized.