

Dear Parent or Guardian

As a parent, your involvement is crucial in supporting your child's academic success, especially when preparing for state assessments like the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP). This letter provides strategies and digital resources to assist your child in grades 3 through 8 across English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, aligning with Michigan Academic Standards.

Understanding Michigan Academic Standards

Michigan's academic standards outline the learning expectations for students at each grade level, serving as a framework for curriculum development and assessment. These standards ensure that students acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to be career- and college-ready upon graduation.

General Strategies for Parental Support

- **Establish a Consistent Study Routine:** Set aside specific times each day dedicated to studying, helping your child develop discipline and time management skills.
- **Create a Conducive Learning Environment:** Designate a quiet, well-lit area free from distractions to facilitate focused study sessions.
- **Utilize Practice Tests:** Familiarize your child with the test format and question types by using online practice tests provided by the Michigan Department of Education.
- **Encourage Active Learning:** Engage your child in discussions about their subjects, encouraging them to explain concepts in their own words to reinforce understanding.

- Promote Healthy Habits: Ensure your child gets adequate sleep, nutrition, and physical activity, all of which contribute to optimal cognitive function and stress reduction.

Subject-Specific Strategies and Resources

English Language Arts (ELA) Grade 3rd-7th / 8th PSAT:

- Reading Comprehension: Encourage daily reading of diverse materials. Discuss the main ideas, themes, and vocabulary to enhance comprehension skills.
- Writing Skills: Practice writing essays, summaries, and narratives to improve clarity and coherence. Provide constructive feedback on structure and content.
- Digital Resources:
 - ReadWorks: Offers a vast collection of reading passages with questions to build comprehension skills. <https://www.readworks.org/>
 - CommonLit: Provides free literary and informational texts with accompanying questions and activities. <https://www.commonlit.org/>

Mathematics Grades 3rd-7th / 8th Grade PSAT:

- Conceptual Understanding: Focus on understanding the ‘why’ behind mathematical concepts, not just the procedures. Use visual aids and real-life examples to illustrate abstract ideas.
- Problem-Solving Practice: Regularly solve various problem types to build flexibility in thinking and application.
- Digital Resources:
 - Khan Academy: Offers comprehensive lessons and practice exercises aligned with Michigan’s math standards. <https://www.khanacademy.org/>
 - IXL: Provides interactive questions and personalized recommendations to support skill mastery. <https://www.ixl.com/>

Science Grade 5th/8th:

- Hands-On Experiments: Conduct simple experiments at home to make scientific concepts tangible and engaging.
- Discussion of Scientific Phenomena: Relate science topics to everyday life to spark curiosity and relevance.
- Digital Resources:
- Mystery Science: Offers open-and-go lessons that inspire students to love science.
- NASA's STEM Engagement: Provides resources and activities related to space and science exploration. <https://www.nasa.gov/learning-resources>

Social Studies Grades 5th/8th:

- Current Events: Discuss news articles and events to connect historical concepts to the present day.
- Timelines and Maps: Use visual tools to help your child understand historical sequences and geographical contexts.
- Digital Resources:
- iCivics: Offers interactive games and lessons on government and civic duties. <https://ed.icivics.org/>
- National Geographic Kids: Provides articles, videos, and quizzes on various social studies topics. [National Geographic Kids](#)

Utilizing M-STEP Resources

The Michigan Department of Education provides online practice opportunities for M-STEP assessments. These sample item sets allow students to experience the format and types of questions they will encounter, building familiarity and confidence. [Online Practice for M-STEP ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies](#)

Communicating with Educators

Maintain regular contact with your child's teachers to monitor progress and address any concerns. Educators can provide insights into specific areas where your child may need additional support and recommend targeted resources.

Your active involvement in your child's education significantly enhances their academic achievement and confidence. By implementing these strategies and utilizing the recommended resources, you can effectively support your child in mastering the Michigan Academic Standards and succeeding in their assessments.

Sincerely,

Pamela Farris, Ed.S

Regional Vice President

IMPORTANT DATES

APRIL 2025

Start Date	Assessment/Task	End Date
Ongoing	WIDA ACCESS for ELLs/WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test Window	Friday, April 04, 2025
Thursday, April 03, 2025	M-STEP Additional Material Order Window – All Grades, All Content Areas	Tuesday, April 29, 2025
Thursday, April 03, 2025	MI-Access Additional Material Order Window	Tuesday, May 20, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	PSAT 8/9 and PSAT 10 Test Administration Window	Friday, April 25, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	SAT Test Administration Window	Friday, April 25, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	Early Literacy and Mathematic Benchmark Assessments Test Administration Window	Friday, May 30, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	M-STEP Paper/Pencil Test Administration Window	Friday, May 02, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	M-STEP Online Test Administration Window	Friday, May 16, 2025
Monday, April 07, 2025	MI-Access Test Administration Window	Friday, May 23, 2025
Thursday, April 10, 2025	ACT WorkKeys Initial Test Day – Test Window 2	Thursday, April 10, 2025
Thursday, April 10, 2025	ACT WorkKeys Accommodated Testing Window – Window 2	Wednesday, April 23, 2025
Friday, April 11, 2025	ACT WorkKeys Return of Materials Deadline – Test Window 2	Friday, April 11, 2025