

# FACTS ABOUT MICHIGAN'S NEW "CUT SCORES"

## **What are the MEAP and MME Tests?**

Each year, public school students in grades 3-9 are required by the state of Michigan to take the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) test. Students are tested in Mathematics, Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies. Eleventh graders take the Michigan Merit Exam (MME). The MME assesses students in English Language Arts (reading and writing), Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. These tests assess students' learning to ensure they are on track to be college and career ready.

## **What does "proficient" mean?**

Students who meet or exceed standards on the MEAP and MME meet Michigan's definition of proficient.

## **What does "college and career readiness" mean?**

The term "college readiness" indicates a student is ready to succeed in first-semester, credit-bearing college courses. The term "career readiness" indicates a student is ready to succeed in introductory technical career training courses.

## **What are MEAP and MME "cut scores"?**

Cut scores (or cutoff scores) separate test takers into various categories, such as advanced, proficient, partially proficient and not proficient. MEAP and MME cut scores and categories are determined by the Michigan Department of Education and approved by the Michigan State Board of Education.

## **Why is Michigan changing the MEAP and MME cut scores?**

Michigan's previous cut scores for these state tests were set at a very basic level. Raising the cut scores will give Michigan parents and students a much better sense of whether students are adequately prepared for the next step in their education and a future career in a global economy. Michigan is one of only three states in the nation (along with New York and Tennessee) to move to this top tier level of test scoring.

## **How do the new scores compare to last year's scores?**

The new cut scores represent a significantly higher standard for student achievement and are intended to more accurately reflect whether students are on track and prepared for college and careers. On some tests, students previously could have answered as few as 40 percent of the questions correctly to be considered proficient. Under the new scoring system, students will have to correctly answer a much higher percentage of questions. While we anticipate an initial decline in the number of students reported as "proficient," we are confident this change will be temporary due to ongoing school improvement efforts and student support.

## **Should parents be concerned if their child's proficiency level drops?**

Parents may notice their child is not at the same proficiency level as previous years. A lower score does not mean that a child isn't gaining academic skills or is falling behind, but it is a reflection of higher standards. If a child does not score at or above the proficient level on any of the assessments, this is an indication that, on the day of the test, the child had not yet mastered the skills or knowledge expected for his or her grade level. Many students might require additional help and/or time to master these skills. Actually, by the time parents and the school receive the results from the state, many students will have closed the gap. Parents may wish to talk to their child's teacher(s) about the results and the resources that can help ensure his or her success.

**What is Milan Area Schools doing to help students become college and career ready?**

In addition to the MEAP and MME reports, several other measures are used in our district throughout the year to insure students are making academic progress. Attendance, classroom participation and class work also help determine whether students are ready to advance to the next grade. We are in the process of analyzing our curriculum to respond to this more challenging level of test scoring, and we will be looking at any professional development that is needed to enhance staff training related to these recent changes.

**What can parents do to help their child become college and career ready?**

One of the best ways to keep track of a child's school progress is speaking with his or her teacher and the school. Parents should work with their child on homework, read assignments with him or her, and be active in their school life. Parents of Middle and High School students can also access their student's grades using Powerschool.

**Where can more information about MEAP and MME be found?**

For more information and parent resources:

Michigan Department of Education

<http://1.usa.gov/statetests>

Milan Area Schools

<http://milanareaschools.org>