



Spring 2015 M-STEP Calculator policy

ONLINE AND PAPER/PENCIL TESTERS

- Students in grades 3, 4, and 5 are NOT allowed to use a calculator on ANY item in the mathematics assessment as the use of calculators at these grade levels changes the construct of the item and what it is intended to measure. All students must abide by this no-calculator allowed policy, even students whose IEP or 504 Plan specifies otherwise. The use of a calculator at grades 3, 4, or 5 is considered a non-standard accommodation. Non-standard accommodations render the assessment invalid.

ONLINE TESTERS

- Students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 11 will use the calculator embedded within the online delivery engine. The mathematics Online Test Session is administered as one part. The test begins with items that **do not** permit use of a calculator, so the calculator will not be available in the toolbar for those items. Once students begin the calculator permitted section, they will not be able to access the items in the non-calculator section, and will have the embedded calculator available for student use.
- Types of embedded online calculators:
 - Grade 6 – basic
 - Grades 7 and 8 – scientific
 - Grade 11 – scientific and graphing tool

Resources:

- OSA has prepared resources for online testers to help prepare them for online testing. One of the resources is an online calculator practice tool. It is recommended that online testers visit the practice environment to see sample items, and familiarize themselves with the online calculator tool. To practice using the M-STEP online calculators, go to <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/> using the Google Chrome browser.

PAPER/PENCIL TESTERS

- Students in grades 6, 7, 8, and 11 use a hand-held calculator. The test booklets are divided into three sessions. Session 1 of the paper/pencil mathematics assessment is considered non-calculator, and students must not have a calculator within reach. Sessions 2 and 3 of the paper/pencil mathematics assessment allow the use of a calculator. Once students start Session 2, they are not allowed to return to the non-calculator items in Session 1. Since external hand-held graphing calculators are programmable, there is a potential of a security breach. All programmable calculators must be set to TEST mode during the testing session.
- Types of hand-held calculators:
 - Grade 6 – basic
 - Grades 7 and 8 – scientific
 - Grade 11 – graphing calculator

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- 1) **Accountability:** It's important to note that this assessment is a transition from prior mathematics summative assessments. As such, the spring 2015 assessment cycle is **low stakes**; districts and

schools will receive results on student performance, but high-stakes accountability decisions will not be made for this assessment cycle.

- 2) Alignment: The operational items on all of the assessments have been field-tested and are aligned to Michigan's standards.
- 3) Fairness: The issue of fairness between online testers and paper/pencil testers with regard to calculator usage has been raised. OSA decided not to burden schools by requiring them to purchase calculators specifically for this assessment as a possible one-time use. Some schools may not have the grade-specific calculators for their paper/pencil testers to use. OSA has reviewed every mathematics item to determine if the use of an above-grade-level calculator gives those students an advantage. Students will not be advantaged or disadvantaged based on using an above-grade calculator on the mathematics assessment.
- 4) Managing Online testers and external hand-held calculators: The OSA prohibits online testers from using external hand-held calculators instead of the embedded online calculator. The only online testers who may use an external calculator are those students whose IEP or 504 Plan specifies the use of a special adaptive calculator.