



Educator Update - January, 2018

Keeping Huron County Educators Informed



This Educator Update includes:

1. [HISD Website Quick Tips](#) - All Schools calendar, Mobile Access, and Certification Resources
2. [Preparing your students for M-STEP with MDE Tutorials](#)
3. [ELA M-STEP changes for Spring 2018](#)
4. [Key Insights on Studying, Remembering, and Learning](#)
5. [Note-Taking 101](#)

Ctrl + Click to jump to any article

1. **HISD Website Quick Tips** – Look under General Education for resources about assessment.

The screenshot shows the HISD website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation tabs for Home, Area Schools, About HISD, Area Directory, and Contact Us. A main banner image shows the Huron Learning Center building. Below the banner, there is contact information for the Huron Intermediate School District and a mission statement. On the right side, there is a sidebar menu with categories like Administrative Services, Career and Technical Education, and General Education. A 'Quick Links' section lists various resources such as the All Schools Calendar and Safety Drills. Two callout boxes are present: one pointing to the 'General Education' link in the sidebar with the text 'Click General Education to find many resources for teachers.', and another pointing to the 'All Schools Calendar' link with the text 'This is where to download a copy of a master calendar showing the schedules of all LOCAL schools, HLC and HATC. If you see an error, please let us know!'.

HISD *Huron Intermediate School District* SEARCH
Advanced Search Site Map

[Home](#) [Area Schools](#) [About HISD](#) [Area Directory](#) [Contact Us](#)

- Administrative Services
- Career and Technical Education
- Community Education
- General Education**
 - Assessment
 - Certification/Highly Qualified Guidelines
 - Common Core State Standards
 - Curriculum
 - Dynamic Learning Maps Common Core Essential Elements
 - Early Childhood Programs and Services
 - Educator Evaluation
 - English Language Arts
 - Foster Grandparent Program

General Education

The HISD offers information on a variety of general education topics. For additional information, contact the [General Education Staff](#).

- [Assessment](#)
- [Certification/Highly Qualified Guide](#)
- [Michigan State Standards for ELA a](#)
- [Curriculum](#)
- [Dynamic Learning Maps Common Core Essential Elements](#)
- [Early Childhood Programs and Services](#)
- [Educator Evaluation](#)
- [English Language Arts](#)
- [Foster Grandparent Program](#)

On the General Education page, you will find a link to several great ASSESSMENT resources.

HISD *Huron Intermediate School District* SEARCH
Advanced Search Site Map

[Home](#) [Area Schools](#) [About HISD](#) [Area Directory](#) [Contact Us](#)

- Administrative Services
- Career and Technical Education
- Community Education
- General Education**
 - Assessment**
 - Documents
 - Certification/Highly Qualified Guidelines
 - Common Core State Standards

Assessment

[Benchmarks and Target](#) - Posted September 2016, valid for 2017-18

[Michigan Student Assessment](#)


[Formative Assessment Strategies: Target-Method-Match](#)

[M-Step Updates 3/4/2016](#)

Excellent printable resource – find simple strategies, supported by research, and aligned to your goals.

Accessing www.huronisd.org on your mobile device? It's not very mobile friendly YET, but we are working to change that! In the meantime, click "VIEW FULL SITE" to access all of our website.

[VIEW FULL SITE](#)



Huron Intermediate School District

- ▶ Schools
- ▶ Divisions
- ▶ About Us
- ▶ Contact

2. Preparing your students for the M-STEP - Recommended Sequence from MDE

The OEAA recommends that classroom teachers introduce online testing to their students by playing the [Student Tutorial Video](#) in class to show students how the online testing system and tools work. Once the Student Tutorial Video is shown and discussed in the classroom, teachers then show the [Online Tools Training \(OTTs\)](#) for calculator use, graphing, and accommodations to the entire class (doesn't have to be on the same day). After students have watched the Student Tutorial Video projected by the teacher, followed by watching the teacher navigate through the OTTs via a projector or other classroom viewing resource, each student should be provided hands-on practice with the online [Sample Item Sets](#) contained within the OTTs, ideally using the device they will use during testing. The OEAA welcomes your feedback on the online resources. These tutorials are designed to be used with all student prior to the spring M-STEP test to ensure that students understand how to navigate the test site and access the testing tools.

3. M-STEP Changes in ELA for Spring 2018

This spring there will be changes to the M-STEP in response to legislative mandates to reduce testing time.

Claim 1, READING, and Claim 3, LISTENING, no changes at any grade level

- All multiple choice questions
- Students will read 3-4 reading passages and answer 14-16 items (questions)
- Students will have 2-3 listening Passages, and answer 8-9 items (questions)
- Claim 4, RESEARCH, will include 8-9 items (questions)

Claim 2, WRITING, changes at all grades, 3-8. Writing is where most of the changes occur.

- No performance task for any grades (last year grades 5 and 8 had a performance task)
- No short constructed response questions at any grade (last year grades 3, 4, 6, and 7 had them)
- Students at ALL grades will complete 11-12 items (questions), all selected response, **plus** one NEW Text Dependent Analysis (essay)
- The essay is embedded into the Computer Adapted Test, but is not auto-scored
- The focus of the essay will be Target 4 of Claim 2, Compose Full Informational Text:

Grade 3 Write full informational texts on a topic using a complete writing process attending to purpose and audience: organize ideas by stating a focus (main idea); include text structures and appropriate transitional strategies for coherence; include elaboration and supporting evidence from sources and an appropriate conclusion.

Grade 8 Write full explanatory texts using a complete writing process attending to purpose and audience: organize ideas by stating a thesis/controlling idea and maintaining a focus/tone; develop a topic including elaboration and citing relevant supporting evidence from sources, with appropriate transitional strategies for coherence; and develop a conclusion that is appropriate to purpose and audience and follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

To see Target 4 of Claim 2 for all grades, reference http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_70117-364986--,00.html

The TDA (Text Dependent Analysis) Passage students will read may be literary or informational and will be taken from various genres as prescribed by the standards. The Writing Prompt will have three sentences: a set up sentence about a theme or character from the passage, an action statement explaining what the student must do, and a reminder to use evidence from text to support the response. There are four different writing prompts per grade level. Examples are available at http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_70117-455340--,00.html. Contact Suzanne Hindman at MDE with questions about the ELA M-STEP. hindmans@michigan.gov

4. Key Insights on Studying, Remembering, and Learning

In an appendix to his 2013 book, **How We Learn**, Benedict Carey answers eleven essential questions that sum up the main insights he presents in the book:

- How important is routine, like having a dedicated study area? Not at all, says Carey. “The more environments in which you rehearse, the sharper and more lasting the memory of that material becomes... That is, knowledge becomes increasingly independent of surroundings the more changes you make.” Most people learn better by studying in different locations, using different methods, at different times of the day, constantly changing the way they store material in memory.
- Is there an optimal amount of time to study or practice? “More important than how long you study is how you distribute the study time you have,” says Carey. Ideally, break up study time into chunks over two or three days, each time reengaging with the material, retrieving it, and re-storing it in memory – “an active mental step that reliably improves memory.”
- How much does it help to review notes from a class or lesson? Very little, he says. Looking over highlighted material is one of the least effective ways to study; the same goes for verbatim copying. That’s because both are fairly passive and don’t engage the brain in the kind of work that will make learning sink in. What’s more, passive review can cause what cognitive scientists call the “fluency illusion” – unwarranted confidence that you’ll remember it for good.
- Is cramming a bad idea? Now always. It’s okay if you’re behind and have no choice. But the downside is that you won’t remember much after the test or performance. That’s because the brain sharpens memories only after a little forgetting has taken place.
- So what does work? “Self-testing is one of the strongest study techniques there is,” says Carey. “Old-fashioned flashcards work fine; so does a friend, work colleague, or classmate putting you through the paces.” So does reciting a passage from memory, or explaining a concept to yourself or a friend. Testing yourself (or being tested) does two things: it forces you to retrieve information from memory, and it gives you immediate feedback if you couldn’t remember it so you know what you don’t know and need to work on some more.
- What’s the most common reason for bombing a test after what felt like careful preparation? It’s the fluency illusion – the erroneous belief “that you ‘knew’ something well just because it seemed so self-evident at the time you studied it,” says Carey. Several passive, ineffective study methods feed this illusion:
 - Highlighting or rewriting notes;
 - Working from a teacher’s outline;
 - Re-studying after you’ve just studied.

Far better to test yourself, space out the study, and find out what you actually don’t know.

- Is it best to practice one skill at a time until it becomes automatic, or to work on many things all at once? Working on just one thing (free throws, a musical scale, the quadratic equation) improves skill. “But over time, such focused practice actually limits our development of each skill,” says Carey. “Mixing or ‘interleaving’ multiple skills in a practice session, by contrast, sharpens our grasp of all of them.” Mixed practice helps review material from several areas, sharpens differentiating among them, and trains the brain to match the problem types with appropriate strategies. This is especially helpful in a subject like mathematics.

- How does sleep affect learning? The deep sleep that occurs in the first half of the night is most important for consolidating and retaining hard facts – names, dates, formulas, concepts. So if you need to remember that kind of information, Carey recommends going to bed at your regular time to maximize deep sleep. But the kind of sleep we have in the early morning hours helps consolidate motor skills and creative thinking. If you need to perform creatively, whether it's in math, science, writing, or music, you might stay up later and sleep in to maximize the effects of the second kind of sleep.
- How about improving performance on longer-term creative projects? The proven method for a big, complicated project like a term paper is getting started as early as possible, chunking the work, and spreading it out over time. Doing this “activates the project in your mind,” says Carey, “and you’ll begin to see and hear all sorts of things in your daily life that are relevant. You’ll also be more tuned into what you think about those random, incoming clues.”
- Are distractions from smartphones and social media a bad thing? Not unless you’re trying to give continuous focus to a lecture or some other sequential, connected learning experience. When you’re struggling to solve a problem, “a short study break – five, ten, twenty minutes to check in on Facebook, respond to a few e-mails, check sports scores – is the most effective technique learning scientists know of...” says Carey. “Distracting yourself from the task at hand allows you to let go of mistaken assumptions, reexamine the clues in a new way, and come back fresh.” Your brain will keep working on the problem offline, without your fixated, unproductive focus, and you’ll often have fresh insights when you return to it.
- Can “freeing up the inner slacker” really be called a legitimate learning strategy? If by this we mean “appreciating learning as a restless, piecemeal, subconscious, and somewhat sneaky process that occurs all the time – not just when you’re sitting at a desk, face pressed into a book – then it’s the best strategy there is,” says Carey.

"How We Learn" by Benedict Carey (Random House, 2013, p. 223-228)

5. Note-Taking 101

In this article in *Edutopia*, John Rich (Delaware State University) says that when students take notes and study them in specific ways, they think about class content at a more conceptual, metacognitive level and retention improves. He suggests six strategies for taking notes and making the best use of them after class:

- Organize the blank page. Students should draw a vertical line about a third of the way across each sheet and take notes in the wider column, leaving the narrower one blank. After class, they use the left-hand column to create questions to quiz themselves on the class notes. Questions shouldn't be merely factual but apply the content or link it to other resources.
- Pen beats laptop. Research has shown that taking notes in longhand involves deeper processing than computer note-taking. “Typing on a device tends to be mere transcription,” says Rich, “while longhand involves summarizing and interpreting.”
- Use abbreviations for speed. Shortcuts for frequently used words – b/c for because and chem for chemistry – save writing time and allow students to capture more of the content as it's delivered.
- Make use of the margins. If students have comments or questions during instruction, they should jot them on the edges of their note-taking pages so they can save working memory for what's being said in class, and then come back to their queries later.

- Link class content to the textbook and outside reading. The more connections students make between what's presented and discussed in class and material they're reading outside class, the better their recall and understanding will be.
- Put in the time. There's a big payoff in reviewing notes after class and answering the questions in the left-hand column.

In an aside, Rich describes a study by William Balch in which students in two sections of the same college course were given different messages about an upcoming exam. One section was told that the exam would be all multiple-choice, the other that it would consist of short-answer and essay questions. In the end, both sections were given a multiple-choice exam, but students who thought they were going to have to write out their answers outperformed those who prepared for a multiple-choice test. Students preparing for a multiple-choice test worked on memorizing facts and terms, while those preparing for written answers studied to understand and process content at a higher, more conceptual level. Intriguingly, those who studied for a higher purpose were able to do better on a less cognitively demanding test.

"6 Strategies for Taking High-Quality Notes" by John Rich in *Edutopia*, October 2, 2017, <https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-strategies-taking-high-quality-notes>; Rich can be reached at jrich@desu.edu.

This electronic newsletter is sent to all educators within the Huron ISD several times each year. If you have suggestions for future content or feedback, please contact us using the information below.

Check out our website at www.huronisd.org

Submit suggestions and feedback to curriekm@huronisd.org