

Goals of the Missouri School Improvement Program

The goals of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP 5) are to:

- Promote continuous improvement and innovation within each district on a statewide basis to advance the opportunity for success for each student.
- Establish the state's expectations for districts in driving actions for moving student achievement to Top 10 status with the ultimate goal of all students graduating ready for success in college and careers.
- Distinguish performance of schools and districts in valid, accurate, and meaningful ways so that districts in need of improvement can receive appropriate support and interventions to meet expectations and high-performing districts can be recognized as models of excellence.
- Empower all stakeholders through regular communication and transparent reporting of clear data on performance and results so that they can take action appropriate to their roles.

Accountability Standards

1. **Why are the resource and process standards being removed?**

The proposed MSIP 5 rule initially addressed only performance standards because the State Board currently uses only performance standards for accreditation purposes. During the August 2011 State Board meeting, the Board charged the Department with bringing the Board a rule to update process and resource standards by August 2012. The process of developing these standards will start with the recommendations previously developed by the committee convened in 2008-2009, and will include current research and best practices and will involve stakeholders. The revised proposed rule includes reference that *MSIP 5 – Process Standards and Indicators* will include evidence of adequate instruction in physical education and fine arts to be included in the standards used to determine accreditation.

2. **The proposed standards mention “annual reviews.” Does this mean on-site visits?**

No. This refers to an annual review of performance data which is currently done on a routine basis. As now, on-site reviews will be reserved for those districts requiring additional attention due to performance. Annual reviews will not necessarily mean annual classification (i.e., labeling a district as accredited, provisionally accredited, or unaccredited) but will allow for earlier intervention in struggling schools. The five-year review cycle that was put in place in 1990 is not providing the flexibility to best serve Missouri public schools. Decisions will be made using multiple years of data.

3. **What is the purpose of including measures reflecting student success after high school?**

These measures—called “pipeline” measures— will not be used on the district annual performance report. The Department will continue to publish these measures so that the information can be used locally to motivate all students to pursue some sort of postsecondary training or education after high school. Pipeline measures can change the conversation from simply getting a high school diploma to pursuing higher goals beyond a high school education.

4. The standards and indicators speak to a “state standard.” Who will be involved in the setting of the standards?

During the August 2011 State Board meeting, the Board charged the Department to work with stakeholders and technical experts to develop state standards and a scoring guide for calculating proficiency on the revised MSIP 5 standards. While practitioners have not previously been involved in the development of the scoring guide, we believe this is an important step in the process.

5. In what way do non-MAP measured areas impact accreditation?

Since the beginning of the Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP) in 1990, accreditation has been based on multiple measures, including test scores, attendance, graduation rates, and others. This is one of the strengths of our system and one which makes our state model distinct nationally.

6. If you implement higher standards, is it reasonable to expect that fewer than 360 of 522 districts will be designated as “performing with distinction” as in the present cycle?

As with previous versions of MSIP, the criteria for earning recognition for distinction in performance in MSIP 5 will change. We cannot determine the number of districts receiving this recognition ahead of time – for the proposed standards or the current ones.

7. How will schools be reviewed until MSIP 5 goes online?

The Fourth Cycle of the Missouri School Improvement Program will remain in place.

8. When will the MSIP 5 take effect?

The MSIP 5 rule will be effective two years from the date of adoption of the rule by the State Board of Education.

9. How will the adequacy of MSIP 5 standards be determined?

The effectiveness of the standards will be reviewed annually in terms of student performance data, current research-based practices, legislation and stakeholder feedback. The ultimate goal is to drive improvement. Once the MSIP 5 standards are formally approved, a change to the standards will involve a formal rule change by the State Board of Education.

Assessments

10. What does the Missouri Assessment Program assess?

The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) assesses students’ progress toward mastery of the Show-Me Standards, which are the educational standards in Missouri.

11. For the content areas and grade levels that are not tested through the MAP, will districts be required to administer an “off-the-shelf” assessment?

No. How districts assess outside of the Missouri Assessment Program is a local decision.

12. In regards to the Standard referring to district provision of adequate postsecondary preparation for all students, may we use scores from any of the four assessments listed (ACT, SAT, COMPASS or ASVAB)?

Yes, the intent is to broaden the measures used to meet the standard through assessments

that best meet the needs of individual students. The newly proposed MSIP 5 language provides even more than the four ways for school districts to meet this college- and career-ready standard. Approved assessments and the calculations will be included in the scoring guide.

13. Why is there a need for an increase in standards at this time?

The challenge to excel is ongoing. The Show-Me Standards have been updated and internationally benchmarked to ensure that all students will be competitive in our global environment. We know we can do better, and the future of our children and our state depends on it.

College and Career Readiness

14. Can you please give a definition of what career-ready means?

The National Governors Association (NGA) defines College and Career Readiness as “an individual who is ready to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing, academic college courses and in workforce training programs. College refers to two- and four-year postsecondary schools. Workforce training programs pertain to careers that offer competitive, livable salaries above the poverty line; offer opportunities for career advancement; and are in a growing or sustainable industry.” The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) further specifies that a career-ready student possesses core academic skills and the ability to apply them to concrete situations in order to function in the workplace and in routine daily activities; employability skills (such as critical thinking and responsibility) that are essential in any career area; and technical, job-specific skills related to a specific career pathway.

15. MSIP 5 seems to place an emphasis on college-readiness. What about career-readiness?

Missouri schools have flexibility in how they provide and teach competencies; this will continue to be emphasized in MSIP 5. When we look at career and technical education and the requirements for students going into careers, many of the competencies in geometry and in Algebra II are required for many of those entry-level careers. For example, ‘proportions’ is one of the competencies in Algebra II, and solving problems with those takes place in any construction trade. Electricity is another example; the student needs to know the relationship between the gage of the wire, the length of the run of the wire, and the power needed at the end. Trigonometric relationships are used to determine lengths and angle measures in any drafting or architectural drawing. There are concepts of successive approximation used in estimating supplies for a variety of areas – wiring, amount of wood needed, and so on. So in these practical, real life applications, the basic mathematics involved in solving those problems is beyond Algebra I.

16. The documents published with the MSIP 5 standards include a draft of sample assessments. What is the status of these assessments?

This draft document is provided in an effort to be transparent about the intent of the standards and what this could look like as public schools work to increase academic rigor and the number of students graduating college and career ready.

In Fourth Cycle MSIP, we currently administer 14 assessments for grade levels 3-8 across three subjects: communication arts, mathematics, and science. At the high school level, there are currently eight (four required) End-of-Course (EOC) final exams in

communication arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Altogether, Missouri currently has a total of 22 (18 required) MAP assessments across 10 grades and four content areas.

The draft document includes a transition in the communication arts and math grade-level assessments to the new assessments being designed by the states through the SMARTER Balanced Consortium. These are not “additions” but *transitions* to a new assessment.

The draft plan provided with the MSIP 5 documents reflects the State Board of Education’s interest in moving to increased content assessments in each of the four content areas: communication arts (2), mathematics (2), social studies (2) and science (3). The SMARTER Balanced Consortium also will be developing comprehensive end-of-high school exams in communication arts and mathematics.

It is important to note that many of these assessments will not be available for several years. They will need to be developed, field tested, and vetted through our Technical Advisory Committee of experts before they can be implemented. Stakeholders will be invited to participate in developing the scoring guide and other supporting tools, once the standards are approved.

17. Will the new assessments result in significant curriculum changes at the high school level?

As Missouri transitions to the revised Show-Me Standards, the grade level expectations will need to be re-aligned. To facilitate this transition, the Department is planning to work with educators in developing a “model” curriculum for districts to use or adapt as the local district determines appropriate. Local districts will determine how to present material and how to ensure that students master the required competencies.

18. Will MSIP 5 establish a state-mandated curriculum?

No.

19. Would students be required to take specific mathematics and science courses?

Although our current state graduation requirements include three math credits, and three science credits, there is no guidance for the content of those courses beyond Algebra I and Biology. What we are finding is that many students take Algebra I, but the other two credits they take in mathematics may not even be as challenging as Algebra I.

When we discuss improving student performance in our state, we need to emphasize that the *content* of high school courses should be defined so that all students have a challenging course of study in both science and mathematics.

Both the new standards for communication arts and mathematics and the standards for most content areas in career and technical education require levels of mathematics and science that are higher than basic courses.

The specific courses have not actually been designated as requirements at this time. What will be required is demonstrated mastery of the *competencies* outlined in the standards. The new standards for science are not yet available.

20. Will the end-of-high school assessments become graduation requirements?

The State Board has not tied graduation in Missouri to proficiency on an exam. MSIP focuses on district accountability.

College Remediation

21. What is the purpose of publishing college remediation rates?

Remediation rates are increasing in our state. This item will not be included on the annual performance report and does not impact a district's accreditation. Rather, the information is used to encourage efforts to develop strategies to ensure that students graduate college and career ready. This will involve the collaboration of many parties, including future work in determining a consistent way to define and report remediation rates.

Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP)

22. Do you have data showing a correlation between CSIP implementation and district performance?

One of the central purposes of a Comprehensive School Improvement Plan (CSIP) is to assist districts in monitoring how their practices impact student performance. Deep implementation of a specified plan has proven to show a positive correlation with improved student performance.

23. Will the Board-approved CSIP process now be dictated by MSIP 5 and guidance provided by the Department?

This is not a change. This is the same language that is included in previous MSIP rules, except the language in the proposal no longer requires high-performing districts to "submit" the plan to the Department.

Early Childhood Assessment System

24. In districts providing early childhood programs, please clarify: Is it voluntary testing for all grades Pre-K through grade 3? Could districts choose to assess some levels and not another? Would districts double test third grade (Missouri early childhood assessment + MAP)? Will the Missouri early childhood assessment become a required assessment in the future (i.e. 2012-2014)?

Early childhood programs are voluntary, and the assessments will; therefore, also be voluntary.

25. What plan is in the works for developing the early learning assessment for PK-3? And, when will it be piloted or launched?

The Department will work with stakeholders to develop a "model" kindergarten readiness assessment that districts can adopt or adapt as determined locally. The plan is to pilot an assessment next year.