

## What is DRC BEACON?

### DRC BEACON is a system that:

- Offers a benchmark assessment in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) for grades 3-8 multiple times a year.
- Is administered on the user-friendly DRC INSIGHT platform.
- Uses the same test engine and computer-adaptive algorithm that is used for M-STEP.
- Generates immediate reports of student results.
- Collects student data throughout the year to predict score ranges on the M-STEP.
- Allows educators the opportunity to collect growth data and check for learning throughout the year, to make informed decisions to promote academic growth.

### Does Michigan state law require districts to adopt an interim assessment?

No, interim assessments are optional, statefunded benchmark assessments selected by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The Michigan State School Aid Act requires MDE to contract with vendors and to

offer an interim assessment in grades 3-8 in Mathematics and ELA. MDE has selected three assessment solutions that districts can choose from for the 2018-2019 school year. DRC BEACON has been selected as one of the three. MDE fully covers the cost of DRC BEACON.

### What does setting up DRC BEACON require?

- Michigan school districts simply register as users and the state will pay for full access.
- DRC INSIGHT for BEACON will enable existing DRC clients to utilize the same DRC INSIGHT functionality that is used in their state programs and with a single landing page.
- Student uploads and test set up are all managed in the same DRC Portal used for M-STEP.
- DRC has worked to make the experience for users as similar as possible, consistent with the users' current experience with DRC INSIGHT.
- DRC will continue to introduce enhancements and new capabilities that will make administering interim / benchmark tests even easier than the M-STEP.

## What is the Student Experience like with DRC BEACON?

### How long does it take to complete the test?

Typically, students can do it in one class period. It is not timed, with 45 questions per content area per grade level.

### Can the test be paused?

Yes.

### Can DRC BEACON be taken in multiple sessions?

Yes.

### How many times can DRC BEACON be administered?

There is no set limit; three times per year is suggested.

### Can accommodations be used during the DRC BEACON assessments?

The adaptive nature of the assessment makes it appropriate for students with a wide range of skills and needs. All tests are untimed and the same M-STEP accommodations are available.

### Do all students in the same grade take the same test?

No. DRC BEACON assessments are designed to target a student's academic performance in Mathematics and ELA. These tests are tailored to an individual's current achievement level.

### What is a Computer-Adaptive Test (CAT)?

When taking a CAT test, the difficulty of each question is based on how well a student answers all the previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. A CAT can give better information about students who are high/low performers. The CAT remembers the level where the student left at the end of the first test administration, so when the test is taken again, it starts at the appropriate difficulty level. It adapts two grade levels above/below a given grade level to provide more granular information than the M-STEP results.

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## What is the Educator Experience like with DRC BEACON?

### Where do the items for the DRC BEACON Interim Assessment come from, and how well are they aligned to Michigan standards?

DRC Beacon items come from the DRC College- and Career-Ready (CCR) item bank, and are built around the Michigan M-STEP standards. The bank of items and forms are aligned to CCR standards – including the standards in the Michigan State Standards for Mathematics and ELA – so the results are predictive of student performance on the M-STEP and the SAT. The bank was developed with effort and forethought in how states and districts might use high quality items in various large-scale assessment situations, but primarily as part of an accountability assessment.

### Have Michigan educators been involved?

Yes, Michigan educators were involved in writing the items. The reporting categories are Mathematics – Algebra, Number & Quantity, Measurement & Data and Geometry – and ELA – Reading, Writing Skills, and Listening.

### Is this a secure test?

Yes.

### How will DRC BEACON be administered from a virtual school?

Check with your state or sponsoring district about requirements for virtual school administration.

### Are all reports PDFs?

No. There is a static PDF classroom roster that is available immediately. Other reports, available shortly after, are interactive. These allow drilldown into the data from dashboards. All dashboards may also be printed as PDFs.

### Do Michigan educators pick the items themselves from a bank so that they align to Michigan standards?

The test blueprint is already fully aligned to Michigan state standards.

### Is this a norm-referenced test (NRT) or a criterion-referenced test (CRT)?

DRC BEACON is a CRT assessment, gauging student progress toward given expectations of performance.

### How quickly are student results available?

DRC BEACON provides student results immediately following the completion of an assessment as the items are computer scored.

### Does DRC BEACON predict student M-STEP success?

DRC BEACON will predict to M-STEP and will soon be able to provide information predictive to the SAT. It also predicts to TerraNova.

### What are the advantages of using DRC BEACON?

- Quality DRC content is M-STEP aligned, with quick results
- Grades K-8, computer-adaptive above/below grade
- Growth measure, predicts to M-STEP and to SAT
- High quality items like M-STEP; educator involved design
- System familiarity for educators and students; same accommodations features as M-STEP

**For more information visit [drcbeacon.com](http://drcbeacon.com)**

**855-270-3698**

**[beacon@datarecognitioncorp.com](mailto:beacon@datarecognitioncorp.com)**