



## NEWS RELEASE

May 11, 2005

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### **FTL launches Online MEAP Testing Pilot Program**

BIG RAPIDS – Approximately 1,000 to 2,000 Michigan sixth graders will use computers to take their MEAP tests this fall as part of a feasibility study of using online assessment.

The MEAP Online Testing Study will examine the advantages and comparability between administration of paper and pencil and computer delivery. The study, which will also look at user satisfaction and measurement accuracy, will determine if online MEAP testing offers enough advantages to students to pursue future use of this method.

The study is being conducted under the auspices of Freedom to Learn, which is administered by Ferris State University in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education. As many as 25 of the schools that were provided with laptop computers as part of the FTL initiative are expected to volunteer to participate. Students will be tested by computer during the Oct. 3-21 testing period using exactly the same questions as the paper and pencil versions of the MEAP English Language Arts and Social Studies tests.

Provisional scores on the online assessment will be provided within 48 hours of test administration. Scores on essay and constructed response items will be scored using the Pearson Knowledge Technologies automated essay scoring engine. Since the study will determine the comparability of the two different methods of administering the test, any differences found in scores will be adjusted to match the paper test administration.

“I believe the major advantage to online testing is that teachers will get the test results within 48 hours rather than waiting for months,” said Michelle Johnston, dean of Ferris’ College of Education and Human Services. “Even though these results will be only the raw scores, they will enable teachers to adjust their instructional practices to improve student performance over the rest of the year. That is our hope,” said Dr. Johnston. She also noted that the ability to give the tests on the FTL laptop units would free up other computers in the schools.

“The accuracy of the results using online administration will be improved because of less chance for response booklets to be lost or cause other errors,” said Leslie Wilson, FTL director of professional and curriculum development. “Student testing time should be reduced with less paper shuffling and we expect substantial savings in resources.” She added that long range plans allow for paper and pencil versions for districts that do not meet the technology requirements for the foreseeable future.

Further information is available by contacting Johnston at 231-591-3648 or [Michelle\\_Johnston@ferris.edu](mailto:Michelle_Johnston@ferris.edu).

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