

MCA READING BENCHMARK REPORT "HOW TO" QUICK GUIDE

During the 2020–21 school year, educators and students experienced significant and profound changes in teaching and learning, as well as social and emotional well-being. It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting assessment results.

The MCA benchmark report is a guidance tool educators can use to learn about school- or district-level performance on each benchmark from the Minnesota Academic Standards. The Minnesota Academic Standards identify the knowledge and skills that all students strive to achieve in a content area; these standards are divided into one or more benchmarks which provide details about what students are taught in that content area.

Benchmark performance is calculated by comparing students' **observed performance** on test content aligned to a benchmark to the **expected performance** of the "Meets" achievement level cut score for a benchmark at the school or district.

For the technical details of the benchmark report calculations, refer to *Appendix A: Benchmark Report Calculations Resource in the [Technical Manual for Minnesota's MCA and MTAS Assessments](#)* (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports).

Report Considerations

Benchmark reports are created by grade and subject for Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCA.

The Reading MCA is an adaptive assessment at the "testlet" level, meaning questions are chosen based on the student's responses to a group of questions for a passage or passages.

- The reading benchmark reports show benchmarks organized under one of the three skill domains assessed on the MCA.
- All tests meet the "blueprints" or requirements in the test specifications, which describe how the standards are assessed on the test and in what proportions. However, not all students see items for each benchmark, and other students may see more than one item for the same benchmark.

Due to COVID-19, there was very limited testing in 2020 and no benchmark reports were produced for 2020. Benchmark reports from 2019 are available.



For more information about benchmark reports, refer to the [Benchmark Report Interpretive Guide](#) or [Understanding the Benchmark Report Video](#), available on PearsonAccess Next (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Additional Reporting Resources).

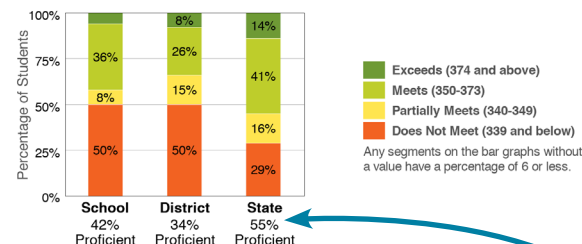
Sections of the Benchmark Report

GRADE 3 READING PERFORMANCE

Number of grade 3 students in Reading with valid scores for your school: 9,999

The graph shows the percentage of students in each achievement level for your school, district and the state for the grade 3 Reading MCA-III. The percent proficient under each bar in the graph is the percentage of students in the "Meets" and "Exceeds" achievement levels.

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1. Overall performance, including:

The **number of students** with a valid, reportable score at the organization level for the grade and subject combination of the report.

An **achievement level bar graph** at the school, district, and state level, with the percentage of students at each achievement level.

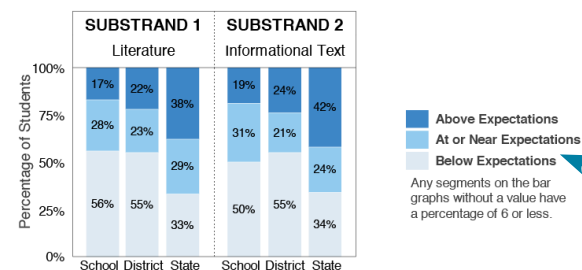
The **percent proficient**, shown under each bar graph, is the combined percent of students at the "Meets" and "Exceeds" achievement levels.

GRADE 3 READING PERFORMANCE BY SUBSTRAND

For the grade 3 Reading MCA-III, the strand performance levels are reported as: Below Expectations, At or Near Expectations, or Above Expectations. The strand performance level is determined by comparing the school performance to the state expectation at the "Meets" achievement level.

The graphs below show the percentage of students in each performance level for each strand calculated by aggregating the individual student strand performance levels at your school, at your district, and at the state level.

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2. Substrand performance, including:

Content area **strand names** and **performance level percentages** at the school, district, and state level.

Performance level categories include:

Below Expectations, At or Near Expectations, and Above Expectations.

Expectation is defined as the school's performance on each strand compared to the "Meets" performance level cut score.

GRADE 3 READING PERFORMANCE BY BENCHMARK

School performance on each benchmark is compared at the "Meets" achievement level cut score. Performance on each benchmark is calculated by comparing school performance on a benchmark to the expected performance on a benchmark that would be achieved at the "Meets" achievement level cut score.

- School performance on this benchmark is **less than** the "Meets" achievement level.
- School performance on this benchmark is **similar to** the "Meets" achievement level.
- School performance on this benchmark is **greater than** the "Meets" achievement level.
- * less than 20 student responses on a benchmark

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS

Compared to "Meets" Achievement Level	Benchmark
	3.1.1.1 Literature Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
	3.1.2.2 Literature Recount stories, legends, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
	3.1.3.3 Literature Describe characters (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
	3.2.1.1 Informational Text Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
	3.2.2.2 Informational Text Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
	3.2.3.3 Informational Text Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.

3. Benchmark performance description

4. **Three performance symbols** specific to the benchmark report are used to represent school or district performance on each benchmark, including **less than**, **similar to**, or **greater than** the "Meets" achievement level.

A fourth symbol, an asterisk (*), indicates results were not available as there were less than 20 student responses for that benchmark.

5. The **skill domain** the substrands and benchmarks are organized under.

6. **Benchmark performance and benchmark code reference.**

For reading, the four-digit code (i.e., 3.1.3.3) lists, in order, the grade (3), substrand (1), standard (3), and benchmark (3).

7. **Substrand title and benchmark descriptions.**

Using the Benchmark Report in Your Classroom, School, or District

The MCA Benchmark Reports are an additional resource educators can use to evaluate and compare performance on benchmarks at the school, district, and state levels on the current year's test. Teachers and district staff can use benchmark report data as a starting point for discussions about strengths and gaps in curriculum.

Guiding questions when reviewing and discussing benchmark reports:

- Are the students that completed the assessment representative of the total student population at your school or district?
- If instruction shifted to remote learning, what did virtual learning look like in your school? For example, were certain benchmarks taught asynchronously while others were taught synchronously?
- Due to the pandemic, were certain benchmarks emphasized this year or delayed?
- What do you notice about the benchmark data? What surprises you?
- How does the data compare with what you saw in the classroom?
- What additional information do you have about student mastery of the benchmarks?
- What may be some reasons for the benchmarks that have symbols indicating performance above the "Meets" achievement levels?
- What may be some underlying causes for benchmarks below the "Meets" achievement level?
- Are there additional emerging themes in all the information?
- What are your next steps after reviewing your benchmark data?

Additional Benchmark Resources

View the **Achievement Level Descriptors** for Reading, Mathematics, and Science on the Testing 1,2,3 website. (Testing 1,2,3 site > Plan and Teach > Success Criteria)

View the **MCA test specifications** (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Test Specifications)

View the MDE **Testing 1,2,3** educator website (<https://testing123.education.mn.gov>)

View the **Minnesota Academic Standards** (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K-12))

View **released MCA test questions** from past MCA tests, as well as data about each item. (Testing 1,2,3 site > Assess > Released MCA Questions)

Cautions When Interpreting the Benchmark Report

- For Reading MCA, the number of items for each benchmark will vary because the test is adaptive at the "testlet" level.
- Benchmarks not assessed on the MCA or only within the classroom, or benchmarks not applicable to a substrand, are noted on the report.
- The data displayed on the report are based on the student responses to the test questions (items) from a particular benchmark that were administered to students in a school or district.
- Benchmark performance indicators and symbols **do not** correspond to overall achievement levels for Reading MCA (i.e., Does Not Meet, Partially Meets, Meets, or Exceeds the Standards), and the color/shape of each symbol does not reflect benchmark difficulty.

Frame any interpretation within the context of the school or district environment. External information about the curriculum, instructional practices, and data from other classroom assessments is critical to making appropriate inferences from the data in this report.