AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—JAN. 11, 2023

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
• Preparing for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS • Alternate Assessment Decision-Making and Documentation • Entering Preferred Names for MCA and MTAS • Training Management System (TMS) Dating Issue • Upcoming Opportunities	**Jan. 9–March 24:** *Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS.*

Preparing for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

WIDA AMS Test Setup

Districts can now complete tasks in WIDA AMS in preparation for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing. Tasks include viewing students in the system and ensuring they appear in the appropriate test sessions; students who were indicated as EL in MARSS (prior to the December deadline) were automatically placed into generic test sessions based on grade cluster and domain.

Detailed instructions are available in the *WIDA AMS User Guide* posted on WIDA AMS (No log in required. In the second paragraph under the first heading, select "WIDA AMS Library (login not required)." On the Training Materials page, click the Show Documents button to display all documents. From the list of documents, locate *the WIDA AMS User Guide*). Contact DRC Customer Support with questions at WIDA@DataRecognitionCorp.com or 855-787-9615.

If there are EL students who are missing in WIDA AMS, check the Sent Precode in Test WES (under the File Transfer heading in the menu on the left). If the student is not included in the file, it means they were not indicated as EL in MARSS by the December deadline. Work with your MARSS Coordinator to make sure the student is indicated correctly in MARSS. These students must also be manually added in WIDA AMS, and any paper materials (such as, writing response booklet) will need to be ordered in WIDA AMS during the additional orders window and hand-bubbled since they will not have a pre-populated student label. When adding students, ensure all student information entered matches student enrollment data submitted to MDE.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Materials Delivery

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS paper materials will arrive in districts on Jan. 20. It is important that districts have staff available to receive the materials. DACs must ensure there is a plan for receiving the shipments and keeping the test materials secure upon delivery following the district's procedure.

Student Resources for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

Districts should develop a plan to determine which student resources are most applicable to prepare their students for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS test administration. More specific information is on the Student Resources page.

Selecting Test Administrators and Training Requirements for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

The requirements for who can be a Test Administrator are outlined in Chapter 7 of the *Procedures Manual*. This may be especially important for grades 1–12 online ACCESS in order to ensure that EL instruction can continue to be provided. The administration of the grades 1–12 online ACCESS is similar to the administration of the online MCA and is not required to be administered by EL staff.

The DAC is responsible for ensuring that all individuals who may be associated with any aspect of test administration or test content receive training on test administration and test security policies and procedures **each year** prior to testing. This includes the *Test Security Training*, assessment-specific trainings, and district policies and procedures for test administration specific to that district.

All ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators must complete required MDE trainings in the Training Management System (TMS) each school year. They must also complete the applicable online WIDA Training Courses and certification quizzes prior to administration of any assessment. Refer to pages 158–168 of the *Procedures Manual* for more detailed information.

Special Education Deferred (SPD)

English learners with disabilities should participate in as many domains of the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS as possible. If it is impossible to administer one or two domains of the assessment due to the student's disability (for example, the Listening domain for a deaf student), the Special Education Deferred (SPD) test code is used to document the situation. SPD can be indicated during the testing window or during Posttest Editing.

SPD cannot be used to exempt a student from taking a test. If the student's disability is such that they cannot participate in any domains of ACCESS with accommodations, the EL staff and IEP or 504 plan team should consider the Alternate ACCESS. If the EL staff and the IEP or 504 plan team determine that the SPD code is appropriate for more than two domains, contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us for guidance.

Alternate Assessment Decision-Making and Documentation

Alternate assessments (MTAS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) are only for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and students must have an IEP in order to be eligible to participate. The IEP team is responsible for annually determining and documenting which test a student will take, and to ensure that any student who takes an alternate assessment meets all the eligibility requirements.

- **Alternate ACCESS**: For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, it is recommended that the IEP team collaborates with EL staff and uses the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Criteria Decision Tree* to determine if the Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS.

- **MTAS**: For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team uses the *Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)* to determine if the MTAS is the most appropriate standards-based academic accountability assessment for one or more subjects in place of the MCA.

Note: participation decisions must **not** be made based on the following factors:

- Student's disability category

- Placement

- Participation in a separate, specialized curriculum

- Expectations about the student's performance on the MCA or ACCESS for ELLs

- Language, social, cultural, or economic differences

- Concern for accountability calculations

As in previous years, all districts will complete a process to provide assurance that all students in their districts planning to participate in the MTAS meet the eligibility criteria. This process uses the Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) template and takes the form of a survey that each district will submit to MDE. Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff may be included in conversations during completion of the ARC. A copy of the ARC survey questions, the survey link to respond, and accompanying user guide are expected to be released in mid-late January, with a tentative response deadline of mid-March. More information and specific timelines will be announced in a later *Assessment Update*.

Entering Preferred Names for MCA and MTAS

Districts can now enter a student's preferred name in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES for MCA and MTAS administrations. This is a workaround in Test WES until preferred names are able to be submitted to MDE through Ed-Fi.

A preferred name can be added to change how the student's name appears in PearsonAccess Next for test administration (such as on the student testing ticket, on the session roster, and on the student's screen in TestNav).

- While fields for preferred last name and preferred middle name are available in Test WES and will be provided to Pearson, only a student's preferred first name will appear on the student testing ticket, on the session roster in PearsonAccess Next, and on the student's screen in TestNav. More information on how preferred name will appear in Pearson systems will be included in the *MCA Online Testing User Guide* when it is posted for this year.

- The preferred name will ONLY be used for test administration purposes and will not appear on any student results (such as preliminary results available during testing and final results).

- Any preferred names entered will only appear in Precode Student Eligibility and will not appear on other Test WES screens, such as Precode Search and Edit.

For instructions on adding a preferred name, refer to the upcoming *Test WES Precode User Guide*, which will be posted on the Test WES page of the MDE website. Note: For the preferred name work-around for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, email mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Training Management System (TMS) Dating Issue

Pearson has identified an issue with incorrect "Started" dates on TMS Reports. Rather than reflecting the most recent date when the training was started, it lists dates corresponding with when the training was first ever accessed by the user. Further, the user is prompted to start over or resume the module, even though they have not started the most recent module with updates for this year's administration.

The reporting issue has been identified for the following modules:

- Minnesota Statewide Assessments Overview

- Scheduling Testing

- Understanding Training Requirements

- Testing Policies and Procedures

- Understanding MCA Linguistic Supports and Accommodations

Please note that all trainings are up to date and the "Finished" dates reflect when the training was most recently completed. DACs should refer to the "Finished" dates to confirm completion of a training.

Upcoming Opportunities

Pearson DAC Test Administration Training

Pearson will provide an overview of changes to its systems for all District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) on Jan. 12 from 9–11:30 a.m. Join the Jan. 12 Pearson DAC Test Administration Training (passcode: 711848). Registration is not required.

The training will focus on changes to PearsonAccess Next, TestNav, the Training Management System, and reporting for the MCA and MTAS 2023 administrations. A recording will be posted to the Training Management System (TMS) on Jan. 20 (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under Pearson Recorded Webinars).

MTAS Administration 2023 Informational Meeting

The Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment Division will host virtual informational meetings in January for MTAS Test Administrators and special education staff to share upcoming changes to the MTAS in the spring of 2023. While this information will also be included in the required training materials for MTAS administration, this event will highlight some MTAS test administration changes and show a sample of new reading and science field test tasks that are included in a portion of the assessment. Test Administrators and other district staff involved in administering the MTAS are encouraged to attend so they are prepared for the changes, are familiar with the new reading and science tasks, and can have their questions answered. **Note: This meeting does not replace the required MTAS Test Administrator trainings that will be available on the Training Management System (TMS).**

If you are interested in attending one of the MTAS Administration 2023 Informational Meetings, register below. Both events cover the same information, so you only need to select one date to attend.

- Jan. 19, 10–11 a.m. Register for the Jan. 19 virtual meeting

- Jan. 24, 3:30–4:30 p.m. Register for the Jan. 24 virtual meeting

Please note: MDE aims to deliver our presentations in a way that will be accessible for our participants. If you anticipate needing accommodations, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. MDE requests a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and 48-hour notice to cancel them. If the request comes within two weeks of the event, MDE will still make an effort to provide the accommodation.

A recording of the informational meeting will be available at a later date. Look for information in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

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Minnesota Department of Education

education.mn.gov > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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