Assessment Update

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
• [Pretest Editing Deadline](#) • [ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Additional Materials Ordering](#) • [Reminder: ARC Process Deadline is March 1](#) • [Learning Management System Updates and Overview](#) • [Statewide Testing Participation for Students with IEPs or 504 Plans](#) • [Release of Equation Editor, Script, and Braille Student Readiness Tools](#) • [MDE Employment Opportunity: Student Pathways Analyst](#)	**Jan. 8–March 22:** Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS **Jan. 19:** Test WES deadline to make changed affecting MCA/MTAS initial materials shipment, confirm ISR delivery, and indicate test materials delivery options **Jan. 22:** Receive ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS paper test materials and student labels **Jan. 22–March 15:** Order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS **Jan. 29–March 22:** ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window

Pretest Editing Deadline

DACs need to complete the following Pretest Editing tasks in [Test WES](#) by Jan. 19:

- On the District Confirmations page, confirm that your district provided all 2023 individual student reports (ISRs) to families no later than Dec. 1.
- On the District Options page, select the appropriate options for MCA and MTAS test materials delivery:
  - Request materials be shipped to the district (default) or individual schools.
  - Request materials be delivered on either Feb. 20–22 (default) or Feb. 27–29.
  - Receive MTAS test materials automatically (default), or, if your district has historically received more MTAS materials than needed, you can choose to order MTAS materials during the additional orders window.
- In Precode Search and Edit, the following changes and indications can be made throughout the testing window; however, in order to automatically receive paper test materials in the initial February shipment, these actions must be done by Jan. 19:

- o Enter accommodation and universal support codes to receive MCA paper test materials.
- o Change test assignments from MCA to MTAS to receive MTAS test materials.

For detailed instructions, refer to the *Pretest Editing User Guide*, which is posted on the Test WES page of the MDE website and includes step-by-step instructions and screenshots. In addition, there is also a recorded training, "Pretest Editing Training for New DACs," which is posted to the Learning Management System (LMS) (DAC Catalog > MDE Systems tag).

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Additional Materials Ordering

Initial materials ordered for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS from WIDA/DRC are scheduled to arrive in districts on Jan. 22. After you receive and inventory your initial test materials, you may need to place an order for additional materials. This often occurs when a district has recently enrolled numerous new students with English learner status or when an IEP team has updated a student's test accommodations and the student now requires specific materials. Here are some important tips to keep in mind regarding additional materials ordering:

- Check your district and/or school's overage first. Most districts receive an overage with their initial order and an additional materials order may not be necessary.
- Attempt to consolidate the materials requests from all schools in your district into a single district order. To the extent practicable, please avoid placing more than one additional materials order during the ordering window.
- Order only what you need. Do not order extra materials "just in case," as this increases waste and costs.

Find more information on additional materials ordering in the *District and School Test Coordinator Manual*, located in the WIDA Secure Portal, under Resources.

ARC Process Deadline is March 1

On Jan. 26, MDE will send district leaders (Special Ed Directors, DACs, and Superintendents/Directors) details about how to participate in this year's Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) process. At this time, approximately 78% of districts have responded. The deadline to respond is March 1. If you have questions or need further information about the required ARC process, please email Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us.

All districts are required to complete an Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) response and submit it to MDE via an online survey. To complete this task, districts should use the Alternate Assessment (MTAS) Participation District Report, which is available in Assessment Secure Reports, and the *Alternate Assessment Participation and Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) User Guide*, which is available on the MTAS Participation page.

The ARC survey is divided into five sections in which the district will provide information, assurances, and where appropriate, narratives regarding alternate assessment participation rates. The questions in the survey can be

found in the *Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) Response Survey Questions* section of the *ARC User Guide;* they can be used to guide district staff conversations ahead of the final submission of the ARC response to MDE. Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff, should be included in conversations about the district reports and completion of the ARC response. Once the district has prepared to answer the questions, complete the online ARC survey by March 1.

Learning Management System Updates and Overview

All Learning Paths containing required courses have been posted to the Learning Management System (LMS) for Learners to complete prior to test administration. Learners should refer to the registration videos and NEW how-to registration quick guides available on the Training page of PearsonAccess Next for information on registering and logging into the LMS.

Tips for LMS Learners: Finding Learning Paths and Courses

Required and optional courses are organized into role specific learning paths within the LMS, and most Learners will complete a learning path within the Test Administration catalog. Learners can select the Test Administration catalog checkbox to find only learning paths within this catalog, and all available learning paths will be displayed as green tiles.

To complete a learning plan, Learners must first enroll in the learning path and then complete all required courses within the learning path. Optional courses are added to the learning path as they become available. An updated LMS Test Administration Learning Path Courses and Posting Dates document containing dates when optional trainings will be available in the LMS is available on the Training page of PearsonAccess Next. Note: When using the search feature in LMS, Learners should search for the learning path name, as most courses are only posted within learning paths, and entering the course name within the search field will yield no results.

Tips for LMS Managers: Enrolling Learners and Sharing Learning Path Links

LMS Managers (for example, District or School Assessment Coordinators with a DAC or Assessment Administrator (AA) PearsonAccess Next account) can enroll Learners in the applicable learning paths. Managers can also copy the learning path link and share with Learners through email or as part of training documentation. Steps on enrolling learners and sharing learning path links were covered during Pearson's *DAC Test Administration Training* on Jan. 11. The recorded training and PowerPoint will be posted to the LMS (DAC catalog > Pearson Trainings and Webinars tag) on Jan. 19. Additional short video trainings for Learners and Managers will be posted to the LMS on Jan. 26.

Available Resources & Trainings

The [Training page](#) of PearsonAccess Next has been updated to contain video resources and how-to quick guides for LMS Learners. These resources include:

- LMS account registration and sign-in links
- LMS account registration and sign-in video tutorials
- LMS account registration and sign-in how-to quick guides
- LMS Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Learners and Managers
- An updated "LMS Test Administration Learning Path Courses and Posting Dates"

These resources can be shared with staff prior to registering an LMS account or assist with finding the appropriate learning path and courses to complete.

Within the LMS, there are two optional courses posted to the LMS Training catalog:

- *Using the LMS Portal*
- *Managing Learners in the LMS*

LMS Manager Office Hours

Pearson will be hosting an Office Hours with District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) to review the LMS Manager role and answer DAC questions. The registration link and office hour descriptions are in the following table. Please note that for the LMS Office Hours, DACs can enter their questions in this [online form](#) that will be reviewed during the call. Note: Office Hours are not recorded and posted to the LMS. Information covered is this Office Hours can be found in Pearson's DAC Test Administration recorded training that is posted to the LMS or within the short video trainings Pearson will post to the LMS on Jan. 26.

Date and Time	Topic	Registration Link
Thursday, Jan. 25 10–11 a.m.	LMS Office Hour #4: Questions from LMS Q&A form, LMS Manager role overview, enrolling Learners in courses/learning paths, marking courses/learning paths complete for learners, sharing courses/learning paths, viewing dashboards and reports.	[Register for LMS Office Hour #4](#)

Statewide Testing Participation for Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

Please share with your IEP, 504 plan, and EL teams as they plan for the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments.

The current reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide assessments that are designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. IEP teams or 504 plan teams determine the appropriate manner for students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments.

Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments in these ways:

With or without accommodations. IEP and 504 plan teams determine which accommodations, if any, and universal supports are appropriate for students with disabilities. Accommodations should be documented in the IEP or 504 plan and must be provided based on individual need, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. The use of a universal support may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student's needs; universal supports may also be provided along with accommodations.

- English language proficiency accountability assessments: For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, the primary source of information about available universal supports and accommodations is the *Accessibility and Accommodations Manual*. In addition, information about state-specific guidance about universal supports and accommodations is included in the in the *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments*.
- Standards-based accountability assessments: IEP and 504 plan teams use the universal supports and accommodation information in the *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* when considering the needs of each student for MCA and MTAS.

By taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible. Only students with IEPs are eligible for alternate assessments. The IEP team documents the decision to administer an alternate assessment in the student's IEP.

- English language proficiency accountability assessments: For English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team, in conjunction with EL staff and using the *WIDA Alternate ACCESS Participation Decision Tree*, determine if the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment to use in place of the ACCESS.
- Standards-based accountability assessments: For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the *Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)*, the IEP team may determine that MTAS is the most appropriate measure of academic skills in one or more subject areas in place of the MCA.

Please make sure that relevant EL and Special Education staff are aware of the available resources and either know how to access them or are provided them for reference when making decisions about student participation and accommodations.

Release of Equation Editor, Script, and Braille Student Readiness Tools

Various Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) were developed and released for use in preparation of the 2024 MCA test administration. The releases include:

- Equation Editor and Educator Guides: For the 2024 MCA, students will encounter a new math question type known as Equation Editor. The online SRTs have been updated to include a practice item for each appropriate grade level. The Equation Editor item can be found under THE QUESTIONS section of the Review list of the SRT. More information on this question type and practicing with the SRTs can be found in the *Online SRTs Guide for Educators* and *Online SRT Tutorials Supplemental Information* resources on PearsonAccess Next under the Online SRTs.
- MCA SRT Scripts: For students eligible for the script accommodation, MCA SRT scripts are available for all grade-level SRTs containing a mathematics or science section and provide an opportunity for students and educators to become familiar with test administration using a script. More detailed information on these resources is provided in the introductory section of each grade-level resource. Districts and educators can access MCA SRT Script accommodated practice resources on PearsonAccess Next under the Paper SRTs and Corresponding Grade-Level.
- MCA Braille Resources and Braille SRTs Order Form: For students eligible for the braille accommodation, braille SRT resources will be available for all grade-level SRTs and provide an opportunity for students and educators to become familiar with test administration using braille materials. Braille SRT resources can be ordered in contracted and uncontracted versions using the *Braille SRTs Order Form* on PearsonAccess Next under the Paper SRTs. Note: Braille SRT resources will be available for order and the *Braille SRTs Order Form* will be posted on PearsonAccess Next starting Jan. 29. Please allow one week for arrival.

Contact the Pearson help desk with any questions at 888-817-8659 or submit a Pearson help desk request online.

MDE Employment Opportunity: Student Pathways Analyst

The Data Practices and Analytics division is currently seeking two Student Pathways Analysts to enhance overall knowledge of K–12 educational programs and their outcomes through expanded use of the Statewide Longitudinal Education Data Systems (SLEDS) data and reports.

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the position description and application instructions on the State of Minnesota Careers website. The Job ID is 72562, and the posting is open until Jan. 24. Visit the State of Minnesota Careers website for more information and to apply.