

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — DEC. 13, 2023

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Training Requirements • MCA Testing Directions • Requesting Extended Testing Time Across Multiple Days (EM) for the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS • MDE Employment Opportunity: Learner Centered Programs Evaluator • MTAS Participation Documentation (repeat) • Upcoming Opportunities 	<p>Nov. 27–Dec. 15: Indicate the number of ACCESS Online testers for grades 1–12 and order test materials during Materials Ordering in the WIDA Assessment Management System (WIDA AMS)</p>

Staff Training Requirements

The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is responsible for ensuring that all staff who have a role in testing or have access to secure materials are appropriately trained. This includes MDE’s *Test Security Training*, training on the district’s policies and procedures for statewide assessments, and any required trainings based on the staff member’s role in testing. It is considered a security violation if untrained staff are involved in testing in any way.

If untrained staff are involved in the administration statewide assessments or have access to secure materials, then DACs will need to submit a security violation through Assessment Security Records (ASR) in Test WES.

Training Requirements for Test Monitor and Test Administrators

In addition to *Test Security Training* and training on the district’s test security policy and procedures, staff members who are involved in the administration of statewide assessment have additional required trainings that must be completed annually. These requirements are outlined by test (ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, MCA, and MTAS) beginning on page 181 in the [Procedures Manual](#). A few important reminders:

- For ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS, Test Administrators must complete trainings in both the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) (for specific administration information) and the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) (for MDE test security information).
 - The *Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* and *Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* courses include modules that explain tasks that are typically completed by District or School Assessment Coordinators. Only the content in Module 1: *Introduction*, all content marked with a star symbol on the *Training Tasks* page, and passing the certification quiz are required by MDE for Test Administrators.
 - For the *Speaking for Grades 1–5: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener* course, *Speaking for Grades 6–12: Scoring Paper ACCESS and WIDA Screener* course, *Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs: Administration and Scoring* course, and *Alternate ACCESS: Administration and Scoring* course, all modules (including recommended practice) are required and the certification quiz must be passed.
- The *Test Security Training* (for all Test Monitors and Test Administrators) and *Active Monitoring for Statewide Assessments* trainings (for grades 1–12 ACCESS Test Administrators and MCA Test Monitors) are currently available in the ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS learning paths in the LMS and as standalone courses until the MCA/MTAS learning paths are available.
- The learning paths for MCA and MTAS are planned to be available in the LMS as follows:
 - MCA Test Monitor learning path > Administering the MCA course: Jan. 5
 - New MTAS Test Administrator – 1-2 years and Experienced MTAS Test Administrator – 3 or more years learning paths > MTAS Administration Overview and MTAS Administration and Scoring Practice courses: Jan. 10

District Policies and Procedures

In addition to MDE's *Test Security Training*, each district is required to provide training to staff on their own district policies and procedures for statewide assessments. Because these are district-specific policies, it is the DAC's responsibility to identify these policies and procedures in the district test security procedure. Refer to *Required District Test Security Procedure* beginning on page 126 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for further information on the types of policies and procedures that need to be developed and shared within the district.

Each district determines how this information will be communicated to staff as appropriate for their role; for example, this may be through a district or school training, or in writing (as an email, handout, etc.), and it must be provided to staff before test administration begins. Documentation of how staff are receiving this training is commonly missed or not clearly documented by many districts, and is a common finding in MDE's training documentation audits.

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MCA Testing Directions

In order to ensure fairness and equity, and for assessment results to reflect what Minnesota students know and can do, the administration of the statewide assessments should be as standardized as possible, both between schools within districts and between districts throughout the state. For this reason, it is imperative that all Test

Monitors are familiar with and use the applicable directions throughout test administration, especially any scripted instruction that must be read to students.

For MCA, there are two versions of the MCA Testing Directions, *Testing Directions: Online* for online administrations and *Testing Directions: Paper* for paper administrations. Both versions will be posted on the [Testing Directions](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website on Dec. 15. The testing directions will be also available in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish in January for Test Monitors to provide translated directions to students who need this universal support (Note: Only the portions read aloud to the student are translated.) The *Testing Directions: Paper* are also included along with the initial test materials shipment (if paper test materials are sent) and available in additional orders. The *Testing Directions: Online* are only available in additional orders (at a quantity of one copy per every 30 students).

The *Testing Schedules* section of each *Testing Directions* provides the number of items in each group/section that can be used for scheduling testing across multiple days so that Test Monitors know where students should stop testing. This information is not available in the *Procedures Manual* as it is not available until after the manual is published. Note: Estimated test administration times are not included the *Testing Directions* as testing schedules are set by each district. They are still available in the [Procedures Manual](#) (beginning on page 158), along with the Estimated Time to Impact Performance information so that DACs have the flexibility to use and communicate information on time as needed based on how schedules are set.

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Requesting Extended Testing Time Across Multiple Days (EM) for the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Extended testing time across multiple days (EM) for the ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a very rare accommodation that must be reviewed and approved annually by MDE. District Assessment Coordinators must email mde.testing@state.mn.us to request approval for each student with an EM accommodation. The request must include:

1. The student's MARSS/SSID number,
2. The student's grade and school,
3. The student's primary disability,
4. A student-specific rationale as to why extended time within a single day would not be sufficient, and
5. Confirmation that the accommodation is indicated in the student's IEP or 504 plan.

Do not include any other personally identifying in the request. Note: For Kindergarten ACCESS, MDE approval is required if it is estimated by an individual student's IEP team that they will require more than two sessions to complete the assessment. For WIDA Alternate ACCESS, MDE approval is required if it is estimated by an individual student's IEP team that they will require more more than two days for any single domain. More information can be found in Chapter 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

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MDE Employment Opportunity: Learner Centered Programs Evaluator

The Data Practices and Analytics division is currently seeking a Learner Centered Programs Evaluator to support the development and implementation of evaluation activities for learner-centered education programs and outcomes in K–12 education. 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 71839, and the posting is open until Dec. 27. Visit the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website for more information and to apply.

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MTAS Participation Documentation (repeat)

Districts and charter schools should have received an email on Nov. 20 regarding the Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) process. The ARC response must be completed and submitted to MDE by Dec. 22 via an online survey. To complete this task, districts and schools should use the *Alternate Assessment (MTAS) Participation District Report*, which is available in [Secure Reports](#) under 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 broken into five sections in which the district will provide data, 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* to guide district staff conversations in the ARC process. Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff should be included in conversations about alternate assessment participation, as reflected by the district's report, in order to complete the ARC response. Once the district has prepared to answer the questions, complete the [online ARC survey](#) by Dec. 22.

For more information about the federal requirements and the work Minnesota has done pertaining to alternate assessment participation, refer to the [MTAS Participation page](#).

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Upcoming Opportunities

December Q&A Session: Test Administration Training (Repeat)

Our December Q&A Session will be on Dec. 19, from 2–3 p.m. and will focus on test administration and answering questions from the Test Administration Training. [Register for the December Q&A Session](#). Details for joining are provided once participants register.

The prerequisite for the December Q&A session is completion of the Test Administration Training, either attended virtually or completed in the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS). MDE collects questions from DACs prior to the event to help prepare and find relevant resources to share. After completing the training, [submit questions for the December Q&A Session](#). Q&A Sessions will not be recorded nor will CEUs be provided as these are an additional support rather than a training event.

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

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

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