

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — FEB. 21, 2024

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">PearsonAccess Next and TestNav Changes for 2024 MCA and MTAS Test Administration</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MDE Monitoring Test Administrations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Timelines for Providing Materials to Testing Staff</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Feb. 19:</b> Start completing administration tasks in PearsonAccess Next for MCA and MTAS</p> <p><b>Feb. 20–22 or Feb. 27–29:</b> Receive MCA paper and MTAS materials</p> <p><b>Feb. 20–April 30 (noon):</b> Order additional Reading and Mathematics MCA paper and all subjects MTAS test materials in PearsonAccess Next</p> <p><b>Feb. 20–May 7 (noon):</b> Order additional Science MCA paper test materials in PearsonAccess Next</p> <p><b>March 15:</b> Last day to order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS</p> <p><b>March 22:</b> End of ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window</p> <p><b>March 22:</b> Last day to complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS</p>

## ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administration

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing is well underway and will continue until March 22. Please consider the following reminders as these assessments are administered in your districts.

### Common Irregularity

For the ACCESS Online, the default response mode for the Writing domain for students in grades 4–5 is to handwrite their responses in a Writing Response Booklet. Please ensure Test Administrators provide each student with a test ticket and a Writing Response Booklet as indicated in the *Online Test Administrator’s Script*

for Grades 4–12 (a copy of which was included in the shipment of your test materials; an electronic version can be found in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#)). As a reminder:

- The Test Administrator must check that students are on the correct page of the Writing Response Booklet prior to the student clicking the “Begin the Test” button on their screen.
- After students have completed the practice tasks, the Test Administrator should ensure that students have been able to respond. As needed, instruct students to turn the pages in their Writing Response Booklets; the titles on each page of their booklets must match the titles on the screen.

Districts must ensure that all students are familiar with the test they will take. Please refer to the *Student Resources for Testing* section of Chapter 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information on which resources are available and recommended for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

## SPD Codes

English learners with disabilities should participate in as many domains of the ACCESS or the WIDA Alternate ACCESS as possible. The decision to use the Special Education Deferred (SPD) code can only be made by an IEP team after considering all the characteristics of an individual student. An SPD code indicates that the IEP team has determined it is impossible for the student to participate in a given domain due to a disability. In most cases, appropriate supports and/or accommodations will allow a student’s participation in all domains of the ACCESS. In some cases, it may be determined that the WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a more appropriate assessment that will enable the student to fully demonstrate their English language proficiency.

Refer to *Test Codes* in Chapter 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information. If the IEP team determines that the SPD code is appropriate for more than two domains, contact MDE at [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us) for approval. Note: SPD cannot be used to exempt a student from taking a test.

[Back to Top](#)

## ***PearsonAccess Next and TestNav Changes for 2024 MCA and MTAS Test Administrations***

The following changes have been made in PearsonAccess Next and TestNav in preparation for the 2024 MCA and MTAS test administrations.

### **PearsonAccess Next**

- **PearsonAccess Next Secure Homepage:** PearsonAccess Next users can now engage directly with a live help desk agent via the chat feature located on the PearsonAccess Next homepage. The chat feature is available between 6 a.m.–7:30 p.m. You must be logged into PearsonAccess Next to use this feature.

- User Management: DAC and AA users can now enable user accounts and resend user passwords in a single step. Refer to the [PearsonAccess Next User Accounts Guide](#) for more details.
- Dashboards: An organization filter is available directly within the dashboards allowing users to quickly filter dashboard data by organization.
- Sessions: The Sessions Details page now includes the username of the staff member who created the session.
- Student Test Status Dashboard: The student test status dashboard icon has been updated to make it more visible to users. The test duration calculation was also updated to stop when a student exits the test and resume when the student resumes testing. This provides a more accurate view of test duration for students who test over multiple days.
- On-Demand Reports: After processing reports in PearsonAccess Next, users can edit file names before downloading reports to their local device. Refer to the [On-Demand Reports and Export User Guide](#) for more information.

## TestNav

- Back/Next Navigation Arrows: After the first item in each section or group of questions, the back and next navigation arrows will always appear active (meaning, the buttons are blue) throughout the test. If a student selects the back or next button before answering the current question, a message will appear reminding them to answer all parts of the question first.
- Scratchpad Tool: The Scratchpad tool has replaced the Notepad tool. This new tool allows students to take notes by typing in the text box or drawing within the drawing pane.

For more information, refer to the *MCA Online Testing User Guide*, *MCA Data Entry User Guide*, and *MTAS Data Entry User Guide* on the [User Guides](#) page on the PearsonAccess Next website. Also, refer to the *Pearson DAC Test Administration Training*, *PearsonAccess Next: For New DACs (1-2 Years)*, and *2024 TestNav and Student Readiness Tools (New DACs and Educators (1-2 years))* trainings in the LMS (DAC catalog > Pearson Trainings and Webinars tag).

[Back to Top](#)

## MDE Monitoring Test Administrations

### ACCESS and MCA Site Visits

MDE conducts on-site monitoring visits for both the ACCESS and MCA test administrations. These visits are part of an overall strategy to improve the administration of Minnesota's statewide assessments and to verify that test security requirements are followed. Because these visits are unannounced, it is important that districts keep

their posted testing calendars updated, which includes a requirement to specify the days each grade will be taking the various domains/subjects.

Starting on page 325 of the [Procedures Manual](#), the *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* outlines the areas the monitors will observe and questions they will ask assessment staff during ACCESS and MCA site visits.

## MTAS Field Audits

Each year, MDE employs Field Auditors to observe MTAS administrations in selected schools. The primary purpose of MTAS field audits is to gather evidence to evaluate the validity and reliability of the assessment. Since Test Administrators score the assessment, it is critical they are properly trained in MTAS administration and scoring. Likewise, it is critical for test score integrity that all Test Administrators across the state are applying this training consistently.

Unlike monitoring visits for MCA or ACCESS, which are unannounced, the Field Auditors work with the District Assessment Coordinator and the school to schedule the visit. MDE recently sent an email to districts to communicate the schools that have been selected. These notifications were sent to DACs, Superintendents, and Special Education Directors.

Information about how MTAS field audits are scheduled is on page 137–138 of the [Procedures Manual](#), and the *MTAS Field Audit Checklist*, which outlines the areas the Field Auditors will observe and questions they will ask, starts on page 327.

[Back to Top](#)

## *Timelines for Providing Materials to Testing Staff*

For staff administering a braille test or a sign language interpreter administering a Mathematics or Science MCA script, District or School Assessment Coordinators should provide applicable test materials up to five business days prior to the scheduled administration. This includes the Mathematics or Science MCA script and the braille test book. The same timeline applies for a sign language interpreter for MTAS (if not the Test Administrator). Staff must keep materials secure as they prepare for testing.

In addition, ensure staff administering these accommodations are provided the *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* (available on the [District Resources](#) page under Universal Support and Accommodations Resources) as it provides specific test administration guidance.

[Back to Top](#)

[education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov) > District, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

If you have any questions or want to unsubscribe, please send an email to [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us).