

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — FEB. 28, 2024

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for MCA/MTAS • Volunteers Requested: Participate in an ACCESS Paper Test Enhancement Pilot • Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE (repeat) • Tech Update 	<p>Feb. 19–May 3 (May 10 Science MCA only): <i>Complete administration tasks in PearsonAccess Next for MCA and MTAS</i></p> <p>Feb. 27–29: <i>Receive MCA paper and MTAS materials</i></p> <p>March 4: <i>Start of the MCA/MTAS testing window</i></p> <p>Feb. 20–April 30 (noon): <i>Order additional Reading and Mathematics MCA paper and all subjects MTAS test materials in PearsonAccess Next</i></p> <p>Feb. 20–May 7 (noon): <i>Order additional Science MCA paper test materials in PearsonAccess Next</i></p> <p>March 15: <i>Last day to order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i></p> <p>March 22: <i>End of ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window</i></p> <p>March 22: <i>Last day to complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS</i></p>

Preparing for MCA/MTAS

The MCA/MTAS testing window opens on March 4 and will remain open until May 3 (May 10 for the Science MCA only).

MCA/MTAS Irregularities Document

The *MCA/MTAS Irregularities* document has been posted to the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website. This irregularities document outlines situations or misadministrations that may occur during MCA/MTAS testing and whether actions are needed by the district, MDE, or Pearson.

Pearson Help Desk Procedure

If irregularities occur during testing, the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) contacts the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submits a [Pearson help desk request online](#) for test administration situations that require action by Pearson. Clearly state, “I have a testing irregularity and need to speak with the Minnesota Program Team.”

- The help desk verifies the situation is being reported by the DAC. If the issue is not being submitted by the DAC, the help desk instructs the staff person to contact the DAC in order to report the situation and work through the resolution.
- The help desk collects the initial information before escalating the issue and connecting the DAC directly to the Minnesota Program Team. The DAC will receive a follow-up phone call or email directly from the Program Team.
- The Program Team discusses the resolution with the DAC and provides direction to resolve the situation.

If there are technical issues with students actively testing, clearly state, “I am having technical issues with students actively testing and need to speak with Level 2 support.” The help desk will collect initial information before escalating directly to technology support.

The DAC must document any misadministrations, including any invalidations, on a Test Administration Report (TAR), which is available in Appendix A of the [Procedures Manual](#) and is then kept on file at the district. Districts only submit the TAR to MDE or Pearson if requested. If there is a test security violation, the DAC must submit an Assessment Security Record (ASR) in [Test WES](#).

Item Sampler Retirement and New Resources

On June 30, 2023, the item samplers and student tutorials were permanently removed from PearsonAccess Next. The [Student Readiness Tools \(SRTs\)](#) are new resources available to prepare students for MCA tests. Based on input from educators and students, MDE developed the SRTs to meet student needs. Because students already prepare for the content of statewide assessments through daily instruction aligned to the academic standards, it is essential to provide students with resources that focus exclusively on the functionality of the test and types of questions. If students are comfortable with the format of the test, they are better prepared during testing to demonstrate what they know and can do related to the academic standards.

MDE understands that educators need to be familiar with content that is aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards and to have access to resources that can be used to inform instruction. To meet this need, previously

administered MCA and MTAS questions aligned to the academic standards are found in the [Minnesota Questions Tool \(MQT\)](#). The MQT was released in Summer 2022, and it contains hundreds of items to help show how questions are written to reflect the rigor and complexity of the standards. There are many more questions available for educators to review in the MQT than there were in the item samplers. In addition, the new SRTs provide educators with greater flexibility in using them with their students; the information on test functionality, including navigation, tools, and item types, is easier to access and is presented in a more effective way for students.

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Volunteers Requested: Participate in an ACCESS Paper Test Enhancement Pilot

WIDA is exploring an alternative to the CDs used to administer the ACCESS Paper. In this proposed alternative, Test Administrators would stream audio on a computer using a WIDA AMS account. To pilot the streaming audio experience, WIDA is seeking Test Administrators, test coordinators, and technology coordinators at schools or districts that currently administer the ACCESS Paper to one or more students.

Participants in the pilot will log in to WIDA AMS and play a selection of audio files while following an ACCESS Paper *Test Administrator's Script*. After completing the activity, participants will provide feedback through a survey, which should take approximately 15 minutes. Note: Students will not be involved in the pilot.

Participation in this pilot will help WIDA improve the ACCESS Paper test experience. The pilot will run from April 8 to June 7, 2024. If you would like more information or are interested in participating, please contact mde.testing@state.mn.us by March 15, 2024.

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Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE (repeat)

When emailing MDE with a question about a specific student's test or situation, only use the MARSS/SSID number. For student privacy, do not send student names initials, birthdates, or other personally identifying information in the email, including screenshots or attachments.

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Tech Update

Technical Bulletin – iPadOS 17.3 and TestNav Update

Apple released the iPadOS 17.3 operating system (OS) update on Jan. 22. Pearson highly recommends updating to this version if testing on devices running iPadOS 17. This update provides programs the most stable and efficient testing experience. Those testing on iPadOS 15 and 16 do not need to take action on this update.

Pearson released a required TestNav app update (iPadOS only) version 1.12.6 on Feb. 1. This update improves TestNav security performance. Districts with auto-update enabled do not need to take any action to receive this update. Those using iPadOS 17 without auto-update should follow instructions in the [Technical Bulletin](#) to complete this update.

Customers running iPadOS 17 that experience any issues can contact Pearson support at 888-817-8659 or [submit a help desk request online](#).

Note: For districts currently testing for ACCESS, DRC now supports version 17.3. For more information, sign in to [WIDA AMS](#). On the landing page, select the tile for "Install and Configure Testing Software" to see the current list of supported operating systems.

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Minnesota Department of Education

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

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