AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

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Procedures Manual for 2021–22

The *2021–22 Procedures Manual for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* will be posted on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of PearsonAccess Next on Friday, Oct. 1. The *Procedures Manual* has been prepared for DACs, administrators, and others with a role in administering statewide assessments. It provides the Minnesota policies and procedures for implementing statewide assessments and using the results in your district or charter school.

This version of the *Procedures Manual* provides policy and procedure information for a typical school year and test administration. As needed, updated information will be communicated through the *Assessment Update*. Note: Like last year, all statewide assessments will be administered in person and at school this year; there will be no remote administration options available for any assessments.

There are a variety of ways to use the manual:

- Keep an electronic copy on your computer and make frequent use of the Find function (Ctrl + F, Command + F).

- Review the "What's New" list in Chapter 1 and use the "New!" and "Info!" symbols to search for information that is new or clarified for this year.

- Print some of the lists to use as checklists.

- Refer to the *Important Dates* in the front of the manual to schedule testing in your district and make sure you do not miss an important task.

- Provide specific chapters to district and school staff (e.g., special education staff or English learner staff), as needed.

When DACs have questions or need clarification about anything in the *Procedures Manual*, they can contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Virtual New DAC Orientation: Registration

In October, MDE and Pearson will provide a Virtual New DAC Orientation. This virtual event will be spread across three days for a few hours each day, and each session will cover different topics. MDE recommends that DACs attend the live sessions, if possible, as they will include interactive information sharing as well as time to discuss topics with colleagues. However, the presentation will be recorded for each day's sessions if participants are unable to attend all three sessions live. DACs should sign up for all three sessions, as each session will provide different information.

MDE will provide an overview of the various roles and responsibilities of a DAC, the statewide assessments administered in Minnesota, relevant MDE and WIDA systems, available resources, and training opportunities. Pearson will provide information on Pearson systems and available resources. Though designed as an introduction for new DACs in their first or second year, other relatively new DACs are also welcome to attend.

Prerequisites

To prepare for the orientation, new DACs are encouraged to review the following New DAC trainings: *Understanding Training Requirements*, *Scheduling Testing*, and *Testing Policies and Procedures*. These trainings will be available in the Training Management System (TMS) on Oct. 1, under the District Assessment Coordinator tab, New DAC Trainings category. The *Minnesota Assessments Overview* training in this category is optional as the orientation will address much of the content in this training. Note: If you are a brand new DAC, you will use your district email to access TMS and select your district to create your account.

Registration

Registration links are in the following table. Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to request a reasonable accommodation to participate in this event. Please note: MDE requires a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and 48-hour notice to cancel the request.

DATE AND TIME	TOPIC AND DETAILS
Session 1: Tuesday, Oct. 26 9–11 a.m.	[Register for Session 1](#)
Session 2: Wednesday, Oct. 27 9–11 a.m.	[Register for Session 2](#)
Session 3: Thursday, Oct. 28 9–11:30 a.m.	[Register for Session 3](#)

Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)

The Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) are a resource for educators that describe in more detail some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities students typically demonstrate across the four achievement levels on the Reading and Mathematics MCAs. Descriptions are outlined for each benchmark from the standards at each achievement level. If staff are choosing to use this year's benchmark reports to discuss curriculum and instruction in the context of last school year, these resources can be used alongside the reports to guide discussions about reading and mathematics instruction. The purpose of the Benchmark ALDs is to:

- Promote equity for all students across the state by clarifying the expected learning outcomes for instruction and classroom assessment, which are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards in reading and mathematics.

- Support teacher analysis of the depth of their curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessments.

The Benchmark ALDs are available in two formats and are available for reading and mathematics only. The table format is organized by benchmarks within a grade level, while the vertical articulation version is organized by a list of each benchmark's descriptors across grade levels. The specific descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and abilities are the same in both. A training module is also available on the same page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website. Contact testing123@state.mn.us for any questions about the Benchmark ALDs.

2021–22 College Entrance Exam Requirement

As in past years, districts are required to offer a nationally recognized college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) to grades 11 and 12 students during a 2021–2022 school day. Districts must enter into a contract directly with the

test vendor. The requirements for offering a college entrance exam have not changed and are detailed in the *Procedures Manual*. More information about ACT and College Board is included below.

ACT

- View administration information, Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP) pricing structure, and key testing dates and deadlines on the ACT District Testing page.

- Districts will need to provide ACT the percentage of students that are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals to determine if the district will get a reduced price from ACT.

- Contact April Hansen at april.hansen@act.org with any questions and to get your unique link to register. Note: This year, you can click through the terms and conditions and update your organization file and registration information all in one step.

College Board

- View administration information on the SAT School Day page

- Additional information about the deadlines for registration are on the SAT Timeline to Test Day page.

- Contact Andy Houpt at ahoupt@collegeboard.org with any questions.

Upcoming Opportunities

WIDA Webinars

- The *Pre-Testing: Ordering Materials in WIDA-AMS* will be held on Oct. 12, 1–2 p.m. This webinar will provide information on ordering test materials for paper and online, monitoring order status, confirming shipping address, and communicating ordering expectations. There is no need to register in advance. Join the Pre-Testing: Ordering Materials in WIDA-AMS webinar.

- The *Pre-Testing: Test Scheduling* will be held on Oct. 19, 1–2 p.m. This webinar will provide information on scheduling paper and online testing, grouping students, timing of tests, scheduling practice tests, and scheduling a room. Join the Pre-Testing: Test Scheduling webinar.

Note: Recordings for WIDA Webinars are posted to the WIDA Secure Portal on the Webinars page within a week of the presentation.

Apply for the Mathematics Standards Review Committee

The application for serving on the 2021–22 Minnesota Academic Standards Mathematics Review Committee is posted on the MDE Mathematics page. The deadline for application is **Oct. 15**.

MDE seeks to establish a highly qualified, diverse committee with a broad representation of stakeholders including teachers, administrators, school board members, higher education, business/industry, and citizens;

content specialists with expertise across all developmental levels; people from diverse educational settings and from urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Serving on the committee means a commitment of at least 10 full-day committee meetings from Nov. 18 through August 2022, as well as work between these meetings. Please encourage teaching staff to participate. While it requires seven days out of the classroom, it is a fantastic professional development opportunity for teachers.

The applications for the Mathematics Review Committee are due **Oct. 15**. Committee members will be announced Oct. 25 on the MDE Mathematics page. If you have any questions, please contact Doug Paulson at mde.academic-standards@state.mn.us.

Tech Update

Upcoming WIDA Webinars

The Pre-Testing: Technology Installations webinar will be held on Oct. 5, 1–2 p.m. This webinar provide installs of the Central Office Services (COS) INSIGHT and DTK on varying devices (Windows, Macs, Chromebooks, iPads) and share information on updated system requirements. There is no need to register in advance. Join the Pre-Testing: Technology Installations webinar.

Note: Technology Coordinators may access recordings for technology-related webinars through the webinar schedule in WIDA AMS.

Planned DRC Outages

During the 2021-22 academic year, DRC will periodically conduct system maintenance that may result in downtime for WIDA AMS and/or the DRC INSIGHT Secure Applications.

- WIDA AMS Updates take place every four weeks on Thursdays, starting at 8 p.m. from November through May: Nov. 18, Dec. 16, Jan. 13, Feb. 10, March 10, April 7, and May 5. Services may be unavailable for approximately 60-90 minutes during each update.

- Security Patching of Servers, Databases, and Network will take place on Nov. 6–7, Dec. 4–5, Jan. 1–2, Feb. 5–6, March 5–6, April 2–3, April 30–May 1, June 4–5, July 2–3, and Aug. 6–7. These security patches will impact WIDA AMS, including Screener Scoring. Services will be unavailable from Saturday 11 p.m. to Sunday 11 a.m.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

education.mn.gov > Districts, 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.