Assessment Update

m DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Procedures Manual for 2023–24

The *2023–24 Procedures Manual for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* will be posted on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of PearsonAccess Next on Monday, Oct. 2. The *Procedures Manual* has been prepared for DACs, administrators, and others with a role in administering statewide assessments. It provides MDE's policies and procedures for implementing statewide assessments and using the results in your district or charter school.

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.
- 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.
- Use the "jump to" feature in the table of contents to go to specific chapters or sections.

For new DACs, MDE will discuss how to use the *Procedures Manual* as a reference and suggest ways to break up the content throughout the school year during New DAC Orientation.

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

Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments 2023–24

MDE has created a new document, *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments*, which can be used by district and school staff who have a role in decision-making and/or test administration with universal supports and accommodations for statewide assessments. This is a companion document to Chapter 4 of the forthcoming *2023–24 Procedures Manual.* While much of the information is the same between the *Guidance* and Chapter 4, it allows some text to be more specific to each audience (district/school staff and DACs, respectively). MDE believes district staff will find a stand-alone resource outside of the *Procedures Manual* to be more accessible and useful. The *Guidance* document will be posted to the District Resources page, along with a stand-alone version of an infographic summarizing the available universal supports and accommodations for the MCAs. Both resources are anticipated to be posted in the first week of October.

Note: The *Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations* is no longer posted as a separate stand-alone document on PearsonAccess Next, and the information is now included in the *Guidance.*

Both the *Guidance* and Chapter 4 include a reorganization of how supports and accommodations are presented for statewide assessments. This new framework replaces the former categorization (general supports, linguistic supports, and accommodations) with two main categories (universal supports and accommodations), and it includes additional subcategories that better organize and describe available supports. Linguistic supports have been re-categorized as universal supports to reduce the complexity in determining appropriate supports for all learners. It also recognizes a more inclusive population of multilingual learners, as some universal supports may be appropriate for English learners, former English learners and/or students who have participated in dual language education programs.

Learning Management System (LMS) Login

The Learning Management System (LMS) will go live on Oct. 2. There are two ways for district and school staff to set up their accounts for the LMS, depending on whether staff have a PearsonAccess Next account.

Learners *with* a PearsonAccess Next account are automatically uploaded into the LMS and connected to their applicable district and school. On the Training page, they will select the first button: Learning Management System (LMS) Access and Registration. In the Email ID field, the Learner will enter the email associated with their PearsonAccess Next account.

Learners *without* a PearsonAccess Next account will need to self-register their own LMS account. On the Training page, they will select the second button: Learning Management System (LMS) Self-Registration. These users will need to correctly select their district and school (if applicable) when creating their account. Use Ctrl+F/Command+F to search for the district/school name or district/school number. Multiple districts and schools can be selected, as needed.

It is important for Learners to select the correct district and school when registering an LMS account. Once selected, the Learner cannot view or change their district and school selections without contacting the Pearson Help Desk.

Regardless of how Learners first access the LMS, an Adobe account also must be established.

If the Learner has an Adobe account associated with their district email, they can sign in to Adobe using their email and password.

If the Learner does not have an Adobe account associated with their district email, they will need to create an Adobe account.

Tip: Select the "Stay signed in" toggle button to avoid signing into Adobe each time in the future. Note: Learners with an existing Adobe account may also need to select whether this is a personal or company account.

Refer to the *LMS FAQs* and the resources on the Training page on PearsonAccess Next for detailed information and videos on logging in to the LMS and updating accounts, if needed.

Learning Management System (LMS) Office Hours

In preparation for the LMS go live date, Pearson will be hosting virtual webinar and Office Hours with District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) to review the LMS and answer DAC questions. The webinar will be recorded and posted to the LMS on Friday, Oct. 6. Registration links 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.

DATE AND TIME	TOPIC	REGISTRATION LINK
Thursday, Sept. 28 10–11 a.m.	**LMS Webinar for DACs:** Logging into the LMS, LMS walk through and navigation, catalog structure and filters, assigning/enrolling in courses, marking learners complete, running reports Q&A	Register for LMS Webinar

DATE AND TIME	TOPIC	REGISTRATION LINK
Thursday, Oct. 5 10–11 a.m.	**LMS Office Hour #1:** Questions from LMS Q&A form, logging into the LMS, LMS walkthrough and navigation, assigning/enrolling in courses, completing a course, Q&A	[Register for LMS Office Hour #1](#)
Thursday, Oct. 12 10–11 a.m.	**LMS Office Hour #2:** Questions from LMS Q&A form, badges, running reports, Q&A	[Register for LMS Office Hour #2](#)
Thursday, Oct. 19 10–11 a.m.	**LMS Office Hour #3:** Questions from LMS Q&A form, marking learners complete, running reports, Q&A	[Register for LMS Office Hour #3](#)

2023–24 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 2023–24 school day. Districts must enter into a contract directly with the test vendor. While a district may offer other assessment options to students at their discretion (for example, ASVAB or ACCUPLACER), a college entrance exam must still be offered. The requirements for offering a college entrance exam have not changed and are detailed in Chapter 2 of the *Procedures Manual*. More information about ACT and College Board is included below.

ACT

Districts can view administration information, Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRLP) pricing structure, and key testing dates and deadlines on the ACT District Testing page of the ACT website.

In order to determine if the district will get a reduced price from ACT, districts will need to provide ACT the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals.

Contact Jeremy Willey, Minnesota Account Executive, at Jeremy.Willey@act.org or 612-940-3441 with any questions or concerns. Jeremy will be able to get your unique link to register.

College Board

View administration information on the SAT School Day page of the College Board website. Additional information about the deadlines for registration are on the SAT Timeline to Test Day page.

Contact Tamika Thomas at tthomas@collegeboard.org with any questions.

WIDA and DRC October Q&A Webinars

WIDA and DRC will be hosting the following webinars in October:

- **Pre-Testing: Software Updates and Tech Readiness Checklist,** Oct. 3 at 1–2 p.m.

- **Pre-Testing: Technology Installations Part 1**, Oct. 10 at 1–2 p.m.

- **Pre-Testing: Technology Installations Part 2,** Oct. 12 at 1–2 p.m.

- **Pre-Testing: Test Scheduling**, Oct. 17 at 1–2 p.m.

More information, including the webinar link, can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal on the Webinars page. The recordings for WIDA Q&A Webinars are posted to the WIDA Secure Portal on the Webinars page within a week of the presentation.

Test Specifications Posted for Science and Reading MCA-IV and Alternate MCA

Assessments are typically designed to collect evidence for one of the following purposes: to indicate students who may need additional support before the end of the school year, to evaluate programs and policies, to summarize individual achievement, or to provide information useful to instruction. No single assessment can be used to support all purposes. The MCA-IV and Alternate MCA statewide assessments serve an evaluative purpose as they are used in the accountability system to ensure all students have access to rigorous, standards-based content across the state and can be used by district and school leaders to evaluate curricula and instructional program alignment to standards.

For the next series of assessments aligned to the revised standards, the Science MCA-IV and Science Alternate MCA test specifications, as well as the Reading MCA-IV and Reading Alternate MCA test specifications, are currently posted. The MCA-IV and Alternate MCA test specifications provide a summary blueprint for test construction, specifying the planned reporting categories and the number or percentage of questions in each. This blueprint outlines the test design to provide consistency and transparency across test forms for the life of the assessments.

As our division name indicates, academic standards, instruction, and assessment are deeply connected. The development of the MCA-IV and Alternate MCA series of assessments is focused on the role of assessment, seeking to foster instruction aligned to standards by measuring what matters and monitoring implementation of standards statewide. Our division is committed to supporting standards-based instruction in classrooms so that student learning can be reflected on the MCA-IV and Alternate MCA.

Because of this commitment, the test specifications for MCA-IV and Alternate MCA will look different than those for MCA-III, including that benchmark-level information is not available. Keep in mind that support for understanding the standards and standards-instruction is available from MDE Academic Standards Content Specialists. MDE encourages schools and educators to explore and reference the standards implementation resources on the K–12 Academic Standards page.

Upcoming Opportunities

New DAC Orientation (repeat)

As communicated in the Sept. 9 and 13 *Assessment Updates*, MDE will host an in-person session of New DAC Orientation on Tuesday, Oct. 3 from 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. in the Minneapolis Ballroom at the Delta Hotels by Marriott (1330 Industrial Boulevard N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55413). Register for the in-person training. Please note: MDE aims to deliver our presentations in a way that will be accessible for our participants. If you anticipate needing accommodations, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. MDE requests a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and 48-hour notice to cancel them. If the request comes within two weeks of the event, MDE will still make an effort to provide the accommodation.

For more information regarding the virtual sessions for New DAC Orientation, please refer to the Sept. 13 or 20 *Assessment Updates*.

Alternate Assessment Coffee Break Series (repeat)

Meet with Alternate Assessment Specialists to Give Feedback and Ask Questions

The Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment Division will host a series of virtual coffee break sessions for MTAS test administrators and special education staff to ask any questions around alternate assessment, share your feedback, and connect with other special education staff from across the state. Bring your favorite beverage, along with your questions and any feedback you have, to share at this informal time focused around alternate assessment.

Join us for the first one of the year on Oct. 10 from 4–5 p.m. via Zoom: 2023–24 Alternate Assessment Coffee Break Series. Please register for the coffee break. This month we will be discussing the MTAS eligibility guidelines for choosing assessments for students, planning for assessment during IEP meetings, and asking the group for feedback on a few Alternate MCA topics.

We will be meeting the second Tuesday of each month during the school year. You only need to register once to join any of the monthly coffee breaks that work for you. The Coffee Break dates for this year are: Oct. 10, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 9, Feb. 13, March 12, April 9, and May 14 at 4 p.m. For more information, contact Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

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.