

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—JANUARY 13, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Extension of the Spring 2021 ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Materials Delivery</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Student Resources for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">FAQ about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for Families</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">High School Science MCA and MTAS</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Testing 1, 2, 3 Website Tip</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">DAC Test Administration: Important Information</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">College Entrance Exam Administrations</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">WIDA Educator Feedback Requested</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Upcoming Opportunities</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Jan. 15:</b> Receive paper test materials and student labels for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</p> <p><b>Jan. 15:</b> ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Additional Materials ordering window opens</p> <p><b>Jan. 22:</b> Deadline in Test WES for changes affecting initial test materials shipment for MCA/MTAS, ISR delivery confirmation, and MCA/MTAS test material delivery options</p> <p><b>Jan. 25–April 16:</b> ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window</p>

## ***Extension of the Spring 2021 ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window***

After hearing from school leaders, organizations, and families, MDE has extended the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window to allow schools as much flexibility in administering the test as possible. The testing window will still open on the originally scheduled date; the testing window is now Jan. 25–April 16.

Additionally, if time permits in your assessment calendar, MDE recommends that districts wait to start administering ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS until the week of Feb. 8; although not required, this allows additional time for any possible changes at the federal level. While any actions (e.g., a waiver from testing requirements) would also require state legislative action, delaying the start of test administration allows more flexibility and time for MDE to provide guidance based on any changes. MDE understands that districts may not

be able to wait, depending on their logistics for testing and the number of students who need to be tested. As you are scheduling, consider prioritizing ELs that are close to being proficient so that they have an opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency and have an ACCESS composite score that can be used for reclassification.

MDE will be working with WIDA to determine schedule impacts for test results and reporting.

## **Updated Dates**

With the extension of the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window, the dates to order additional test materials and the deadline to return materials have been updated:

- Order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS: Jan. 15–April 9
- Deadline to ship paper test materials to DRC: April 23

Dates for early student-level results, Posttest Editing, and reporting are still to be determined.

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## ***ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Materials Delivery***

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS paper materials will arrive in districts on Jan. 15. It is important that districts have staff available to receive the materials. DACs must ensure there is a plan for receiving the shipments and keeping the test materials secure upon delivery following the district's procedure.

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## ***Student Resources for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS***

For districts administering assessments early in the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS window, districts should consider what student resources are most applicable to prepare their students. Districts should develop a plan to provide these resources to support their students. More specific information is on the [Student Resources page](#).

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## ***FAQ about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for Families***

MDE has prepared a frequently asked questions document that districts can provide to families for more information as part of their communication about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing; translations will be provided in approximately 2–3 weeks. However, as each district or charter school's situation is different in regards to communicating with families, providing this document is not required. It is posted on the [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#) page under Assessing Learning. MDE will provide a similar document for MCA and MTAS in February.

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## ***High School Science MCA and MTAS***

High school Science MCA is administered to students in the school year when they complete a life science/biology class that covers grades 9–12 Minnesota Academic Standards in Life Science (Strand 4) and the Nature of Science and Engineering (Strand 1). For MTAS, the high school Science MTAS is administered in the year students receive this life science instruction. Students who were unable to take the High School Science MCA or MTAS in 2019–20 due to COVID-19 will not take the assessment in 2020–21 (or any other year), unless they are retaking their life science/biology coursework. Refer to page 28 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

This spring in Test WES, assessment records of grades 9–12 students defaults to the Precode Indicator “Y” (Yes) for high school Science MCA in the following situations:

- Students who have not taken a high school science assessment
- Students who would have participated to High School Science MCA and MTAS were not coded as EXC-N during spring 2020 test administration

This year, if a district wishes to indicate the EXC-N test code for these students who would have tested in 2019–20, these students can be added to a MCA test session along with any other students this year who will need to have the EXC-N code indicated during Posttest Editing. Similarly, action will need to be taken in PearsonAccess Next during testing for MTAS as well. (Action must be taken during the spring 2021 testing window in order to be able to indicate the EXC-N test code, since a blank assessment record cannot be added in Posttest Editing.) Further instructions about adding these students to test sessions and submitted MTAS records will be provided in the forthcoming *MCA Online Testing User Guide* and *MTAS Data Entry User Guide*. If the district or school chooses to indicate codes for students who would have tested last year, they should be prepared to explain the increase in test codes indicated this year.

Note: Students are not required to participate and/or achieve a specific score on the High School Science MCA or MTAS in order to graduate or meet graduation assessment requirements.

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## ***Testing 1, 2, 3 Website Tip***

For users who have received a warning message on the [Testing 1, 2, 3, website](#), MDE has discovered a solution to resolve this error. Users need to clear their cache by refreshing the webpage. Note: In order to refresh the webpage, use (CTRL + F5) on a PC or (Command + F5) on a Mac. Contact [testing123@state.mn.us](mailto:testing123@state.mn.us) for any additional questions.

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## ***DAC Test Administration Training: Important Information***

MDE hosted the virtual DAC Test Administration Training yesterday, Jan. 12. As communicated to DACs at the end of last week, it was NOT recorded and posted as originally planned, since information related to this spring's test administrations is fluid and changing. All the information covered is included in the [2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19](#), as well as the new and clarified information in this year's [Procedures Manual](#).

We understand it was not possible for all DACs to attend, and the resources linked above provide the most up-to-date information. A PowerPoint of the training is available on the [MDE & Pearson DAC Trainings site](#) on the DAC Test Administration Training page. An updated version of the *Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19* will be posted to address any questions or clarifications from the Jan. 12 training. In addition, future DAC office hours and/or training sessions will be provided as necessary.

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## ***College Entrance Exams Administrations***

Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker has consulted with Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm and has determined that ACT and SAT testing will be permitted in school facilities beginning Jan. 7, regardless of learning model. The commissioners will continue to monitor the public health situation to make determinations about testing in school facilities for future test dates and will update guidance as needed.

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## ***WIDA Educator Feedback Requested***

Please share the following information with educators in your district. WIDA is looking for Minnesota educators who are interested in participating in WIDA test development events this spring. These events will be held virtually, and WIDA will be offering an honorarium to compensate participants for their time and feedback.

Interested educators should complete the brief [Interest Survey](#) by Thursday, Jan. 28. Participants will be selected based on experience, expertise, and representation of regions; some events require participants to have content-area expertise. If selected, WIDA will contact educators with event details and next steps. Contact Sonia Upton at [Sonia.Upton@wisc.edu](mailto:Sonia.Upton@wisc.edu) or Joy Pfeiffer at [jcpfeiffer2@wisc.edu](mailto:jcpfeiffer2@wisc.edu) for questions or more information about specific events available.

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## Upcoming Opportunities

### Professional Learning Webinar for Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators

Professional Development staff from the WIDA Consortium will conduct the following virtual training for Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators. These trainings are intended for educators who will administer the Alternate ACCESS for the first time this year. It will allow participants to get their questions answered and to reflect on the test preparation and administration process as a group. **This training does not replace the required Alternate ACCESS Training Course on the WIDA Secure Portal.**

- WIDA Alternate ACCESS Overview will be on Wednesday, Jan. 20 from 9–10:30 a.m. [Join the meeting on Jan. 20](#). To join audio using your phone:
  - Phone number: 415-655-0001
  - Access code: 120 258 2374

### Science Alternate MCA Test Specifications: Public Review

Following the 2019 revisions to the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Science, the Science Alternate MCA (formerly MTAS) will begin assessing these standards in the spring of 2024 for students with significant cognitive disabilities. In collaboration with a committee of Minnesota educators, MDE has drafted the test specifications for the Science Alternate MCA to assist with the development of the new assessments. In addition to test specifications, the document includes extended benchmarks, which are based on the new Minnesota science benchmarks but reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.

Members of the public are encouraged to review the proposed test specifications and provide feedback through the [Science Alternate MCA Test Specifications Feedback Survey](#). The survey will be open until Jan. 24.

Feedback from multiple perspectives, including science and special education teachers, is important in creating the best assessment possible for Minnesota students with significant cognitive disabilities. Please share this information with applicable district staff.

Note: The link to the survey, as well as a copy of the survey questions (in the *Science Alternate Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Test Specifications* document), are available on the [Test Specification page](#).

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STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS

Minnesota Department of Education

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

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