

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—JANUARY 6, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19 • WIDA AMS Test Setup • Professional Learning Seminar for Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators • Selecting Test Administrators and Training Requirements for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS • PearsonAccess Next DAC and AA Admin Access in TMS • Science Alternate MCA Test Specifications: Public Review • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update 	<p>Jan. 4–March 19: Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</p> <p>Jan. 15: Receive paper test materials and student labels for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</p> <p>Jan. 15: ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Additional Materials ordering window opens</p> <p>Jan. 22: 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>Jan. 25–March 19: ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window</p>

2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19

The *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19* is now posted on the [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources page](#), under the Assessing Learning expandable heading. This document is meant to provide guidance for DACs related to the administration of the Minnesota Assessments (ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, MCA, and MTAS) during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is intended to be flexible so it can adapt to the changing situation, and it will be updated as required. It is also meant to supplement the policy and procedure requirements outlined in the [Procedures Manual](#); in general terms, the information in the manual should be followed unless revised guidance is included in the document. The information provided will be the basis of the Jan. 12 DAC Test Administration Training.

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WIDA AMS Test Setup

Districts can now complete tasks in WIDA AMS in preparation for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing. Tasks include viewing students in the system and ensuring they appear in the appropriate test sessions; students who were indicated as EL in MARSS (prior to the December deadline) were automatically placed into generic test sessions based on grade cluster and domain. To view test sessions, log in to [WIDA AMS](#), then select Test Management > Manage Test Sessions. There is detailed guidance in the *WIDA AMS User Guide* posted in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) (under Key Resources). Contact DRC Customer Support with questions at WIDA@DataRecognitionCorp.com or 855-787-9615.

If EL students are not in WIDA AMS, check the Sent Precode in Test WES (under the File Transfer heading in the menu on the left). If the student is not included in the file, it means they were not indicated as EL in MARSS by the December deadline. Work with your MARSS Coordinator to make sure the student is indicated correctly in MARSS. These students will also need to be manually added in WIDA AMS, and any paper materials (e.g., writing response booklet) will need to be ordered in WIDA AMS during the additional orders window and hand-bubbled since they will not have a pre-populated student label.

Note: For online testing with COS-SD this year, it is required to check and verify that the test content is downloaded and updated for the most current administrations. Work with your Technology Coordinator to ensure your technology and system is ready.

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Professional Learning Webinar for Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators

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

- WIDA Kindergarten ACCESS Overview will be on Wednesday, Jan. 13 from 9–10:30 a.m. [Join the meeting on Jan. 13](#). To join audio using your phone:
 - Phone number: 415-655-0001
 - Access code: 120 259 5707
- 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

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Selecting Test Administrators and Training Requirements for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

The requirements for who can be a Test Administrator are outlined in Chapter 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#). This year, districts may need to consider training additional staff members to administer assessments due to the extra time needed for health and safety protocols and more, smaller test sessions. This may be especially important for grades 1–12 online ACCESS in order to ensure that EL instruction can continue to be provided. As communicated last year in [Guidance on English Learner Instruction during ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Testing](#), the administration of the grades 1–12 online ACCESS is similar to the administration of the online MCA and is not required to be administered by EL staff.

The DAC is responsible for ensuring that all individuals who may be associated with any aspect of test administration or test content receive training on test administration and test security policies and procedures **each year** prior to testing. This includes the *Test Security Training*, assessment-specific trainings, and district policies and procedures for test administration specific to that district.

All ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators complete the applicable online WIDA Training Courses and pass the applicable quizzes prior to administration of any assessment. Test Administrators must achieve a quiz score of 80% or higher to pass the quiz; MDE does not limit the number of attempts to achieve 80%. Required MDE trainings in the TMS must also be completed once annually. Refer to pages 152–157 of the *Procedures Manual* for more detailed information.

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PearsonAccess Next DAC and AA Admin Access in TMS

Users with District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and Assessment Administrator (AA) user roles are able to track staff training in the Training Management System (TMS). Starting this month, Pearson will provide new users Admin access more frequently than during the rest of the year. If a user has had a DAC or AA role for more than two weeks and does not see the Admin option, contact Pearson at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#).

Note: If a DAC or AA user account becomes disabled or inactive in PearsonAccess Next, the user will no longer have the Admin features in TMS. Once a user has been enabled or restored in PearsonAccess Next, the user's account will be considered "new," and they will have to wait 1–2 weeks to be able to review reports in TMS. To avoid this, users should log in to PearsonAccess Next and ensure their account is active.

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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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Upcoming Opportunities

Virtual DAC Test Administration Training: Registration

MDE will provide the DAC Test Administration Training virtually on Jan. 12 from 8:30–11:30 a.m. MDE will record the session for DACs who are unable to join the live webinar. During this training, MDE will provide information and detailed guidance on preparing for 2021 test administrations. MDE will also address new and clarified information from the [Procedures Manual](#), focusing on the most applicable changes for test administration this year.

[Register for the Jan. 12 DAC Test Administration Training](#). Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register, and the handouts will be provided on [MDE & Pearson DAC Trainings site](#) by Friday.

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Tech Update

Technology Communication for ACCESS

DRC Customer Support sent out an email to District Technology Coordinators (DTCs) on Dec. 16 regarding ACCESS and screener testing device preparation. DACs or DTCs can access the information electronically as well: [ACCESS and Screener Online Testing Device Preparation](#).

Note: For online testing with COS-SD this year, it is required to check and verify that the test content is downloaded and updated for the most current administrations. Work with your Technology Coordinator to ensure your technology and system is ready.

WIDA Webinar: Technology Troubleshooting

WIDA will host the *Technology Troubleshooting* webinar on Thursday, Jan. 7, from 1–2 p.m. [Join the Technology Troubleshooting webinar on Jan. 7](#). This webinar is designed for District Technology Coordinators and will include information on the following:

- An overview of the various error messages
- Common troubleshooting solutions

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