

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—OCTOBER 6, 2021

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District Testing Calendar

Districts are required to post a comprehensive testing calendar on the district website before the first day of the school year; this information may also be posted on school-level websites if the district chooses. Districts may choose how to display the information (e.g., in a chart, a calendar format), but it should be presented in a way that is as easy to access as possible. Core requirements for the district testing calendar have not changed and are detailed in the [Procedures Manual](#), starting on page 121.

If a district has not yet established specific dates when students will be testing, MDE recommends using previous years' timeframes as a starting place and then updating them as schedules are known or changed.

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Procedure Manual and Supporting Documents

The *2021–22 Procedures Manual for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* is available on the [Policies and Procedures page](#) of PearsonAccess Next. This version of the *Procedures Manual* provides policy and procedure information for a typical school year and test administration.

Two related resources have also been updated on the Policies and Procedures page:

- The *District Test Security Procedure Template* was updated to include minor text edits, but there were no changes to requirements. If you use the template for your district test security procedure, you can use the updated version or continue using the version from last year.
- The *Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations* includes only minor updates this year. One specific addition was noting that while the American Sign Language (ASL) guidelines included in the document are specific to the MCA, MTAS Test Administrators may reference them as well if providing signed interpretation support for the MTAS.

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Statewide Testing Participation for Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

The current reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide assessments that are designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. IEP teams or 504 plan teams determine the appropriate manner for students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments.

Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments in these ways:

With or without accommodations. IEP and 504 plan teams determine which accommodations, if any, and general supports are appropriate for students with disabilities. Accommodations are documented in the IEP or 504 plan and must be provided based on individual need, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. General supports are features or practices available for all students that may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student’s disability; general supports may also be provided along with linguistic supports and accommodations.

- **English language proficiency accountability assessments:** IEP and 504 plan teams use the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#) when considering the needs of each student for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS. In addition, information about general supports and accommodations specific to Minnesota are included in Chapter 4 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

- **Standards-based accountability assessments:** IEP and 504 plan teams use the general supports and accommodation information in Chapter 4 of the *Procedures Manual* when considering the needs of each student for MCA and MTAS.

By taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible. Only students with IEPs are eligible for alternate assessments. The IEP team documents the decision to administer an alternate assessment in the student's IEP.

- **English language proficiency accountability assessments:** For English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team, in conjunction with EL staff, determines if the Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS, using the [Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Decision Tree](#).
- **Standards-based accountability assessments:** For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements, the IEP team may determine that MTAS is the most appropriate measure of academic skills in one or more subject areas in place of the MCA. Access the [Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills \(MTAS\)](#).

Please make sure that relevant EL and Special Education staff are aware of the available resources and either know how to access them or are provided them for reference when making decisions about student participation and accommodations.

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Deadline for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Requests

The deadline to request a scoring appeal, transcription request, or test booklet search for spring 2021 ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS is Oct. 13.

- Scoring appeals may be requested for either the Writing (paper or online) or Speaking (online only) domains of the grades 1–12 ACCESS when there is a concern that a student's test may have been scored incorrectly. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us with the student's MARSS number and the rationale for the score appeal.
- Transcription requests may be submitted if there is concern that a student or Test Administrator did not use a Number 2 pencil or did not fill in the bubble or answer area to completion for paper test materials.
- Test booklet searches may be requested when student's score was not included results and it is suspected that a completed test booklet 1) had a district/school label but no student information bubbled, 2) bubbled student information but no district/school label, or 3) a Do Not Score Label applied.

More detail, including possible costs, are described in Chapter 10 of the [Procedures Manual](#) starting on page 212.

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Deadline for MCA and MTAS Late Score Entry or Rescore Requests

The deadline for late score entry or rescore requests for spring 2021 MCA and MTAS testing is Oct. 13.

The *Request for Late Score Entry Form* can be found on page 249 of the [Procedures Manual](#). These requests can be made if a district did not enter a student's MTAS scores or responses from an MCA paper test book in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window. Contact Pearson at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#) with further questions.

Note: For late score entry requests received at this time, students will not receive an Individual Student Report (ISR), but districts can request that Pearson provide an On-Demand Report for the student.

A rescore may be requested when a parent/guardian or school district staff disagrees with the final score a student received (typically for an MCA paper administration). Note: Items for online administrations are reviewed multiple times before and during testing for scoring accuracy and unanticipated responses. Because of MDE's rigorous item review process, a rescore is highly unlikely to result in a score change for an individual student. If a discrepancy is found for an online item during a scoring review, scores will be updated for all affected students. DACs must email mde.testing@state.mn.us with the student's MARSS number and the rationale for requesting a rescore, and MDE will review the request. If approved, the cost for rescoring a test is \$125 per test. A rescore does not include test or score code changes (INV, NC, EXC-A, EXC-N, etc.).

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Inclusion of American Sign Language (ASL) in English Learner Identification Process

The following article was shared with superintendents and school leaders on Oct. 1.

Beginning with the 21–22 school year, American Sign Language (ASL) will be included as a valid home language in the English learner (EL) identification process and subsequent state EL funding and English language development (ELD) service. MDE will change the student accounting reporting system (MARSS) in order to include ASL as an allowable language code for EL identification. ASL users identified as ELs will be included in the Oct. 1 EL enrollment count. ASL users should be screened for English language development needs using [statewide EL identification procedures](#). ASL users identified as ELs should receive English language development services as appropriate. ASL users identified as ELs will take ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS annually. MDE will provide guidance to school districts regarding identification and service of ASL users identified as ELs. MARSS Coordinators will be notified via email when the MARSS edit has been updated. The update will allow ASL users who are identified as needing EL services to be reported without causing an error.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us with questions about EL identification and service. Contact Mary.Cashman-Bakken@state.mn.us with questions about working with students who use ASL. Contact MARSS@state.mn.us with questions regarding MARSS reporting.

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Apply for the Mathematics Standards Review Committee

The application for and details on participating in the 2021–22 Minnesota Academic Standards Mathematics Review Committee is posted on the [MDE Mathematics](#) page. The deadline for application is next Friday, **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.

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NAEP 2022 Update

Approximately 180 Minnesota schools have been selected for NAEP 2022, which will include assessments in mathematics, reading, civics, and U.S. history in grades 4 and 8. The assessments will be administered within selected schools from Jan. 24–March 4, 2022. Selected districts and schools have been notified. If you have any questions or concerns about NAEP, please contact Jenny Cain, NAEP State Coordinator, at Jennifer.cain@state.mn.us.

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Upcoming Opportunities

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 are available in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#), 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 when creating an 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

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.

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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.