

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—DECEMBER 1, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New DAC Pearson Basics Training (1–2 years) • MDE Employment Opportunity: Training Visual Graphics Assessment Specialist • Statewide Testing Participation • Pretest Editing in Test WES for MCA/MTAS Preparation • Updated GRR User Guide • Preparing for the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Testing Window (repeat) • District Testing Calendar (repeat) • Upcoming Opportunities 	<p>Nov. 29: Pretest Editing open in Test WES</p> <p>Dec. 16: Deadline to submit MARSS data for EL students to be sent for loading student records into WIDA AMS and for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS preprinted student labels</p> <p>Dec. 17: Deadline to indicate the number of online testers for grades 1–12, and order test materials during Materials Ordering in WIDA AMS</p>

New DAC Pearson Basics Training (1–2 years)

Pearson will provide an overview of its systems for new District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) in their first or second year on Dec. 9 from 2–3:30 p.m. [Select this link to join the Dec. 9 New DAC Pearson Basics Training](#) (passcode: NEWDAC).

The training will focus on user management and preliminary reports in PearsonAccess Next, as well as the Training Management System (TMS). A recording of the training will be posted to the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on Friday, Dec. 17 (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under Pearson Recorded Webinars).

To prepare for the training, the *User Management in PearsonAccess Next* and *Training Management System* short video trainings are posted to the TMS for review (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under Pearson Video Trainings).

[Back to Top](#)

MDE Employment Opportunity: Training Visual Graphics Assessment Specialist

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division is currently seeking a training visual graphics assessment specialist to join the Program Management team.

Key responsibilities of the training visual graphics assessment specialist include:

- Designing and implementing trainings, training materials, and visual resources to accurately and concisely communicate legislative requirements, policies, procedures, the purpose of the Minnesota Standards-Based Accountability Assessments (MCA and MTAS) and English Language Proficiency Accountability Assessments (ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS), and division initiatives.
- Gathering feedback from stakeholders to ensure understanding and adherence to Minnesota statewide testing policies and procedures and to inform legislative requests.
- Building relationships and actively collaborating with division and agency staff to develop trainings, training materials, resources, and messaging.

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the complete position description and application instructions on the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website and **apply by Dec. 9**. The Job ID is 50603.

[Back to Top](#)

Statewide Testing Participation

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, require that all public school students be assessed annually in reading, mathematics, and science. Similarly, ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, require that all public school English learners be assessed in English language proficiency. Districts should attempt to test all students who are enrolled at any time during the applicable testing window.

There are no participation exemptions from statewide assessment based on first date of enrollment or disability, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.

- A recently arrived English learner (RAEL) is defined as a student who is designated as EL in MARSS and who first enrolled in a school in one of the 50 states in the United States or District of Columbia on or after April 15, 2021. Students identified as RAEL are required to participate in all subjects of the standards-based accountability assessments during their first year of enrollment, including reading; their results are included in test results summary information. These students are also required to participate in the English language proficiency accountability assessments during their first year of enrollment.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us for questions on RAEL identification, and contact mde.essa@state.mn.us for accountability questions for RAEL.

- Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments with or without accommodations, or by taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible. More information on general supports, linguistic supports, and accommodations is available in Chapter 4 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

Ensure that relevant EL and Special Education staff are aware of the policies and available resources when making decisions about student participation and accommodations.

[Back to Top](#)

Pretest Editing in Test WES for MCA/MTAS Preparation

The Pretest Editing window opened on Nov. 29. Authorized personnel (generally DACs) complete a variety of activities related to assessment to ensure students are loaded for the appropriate assessment (MCA or MTAS), and that the appropriate paper test materials will be shipped to the district or schools.

Resources

- The *2021–22 Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide* posted on the [Test WES](#) page includes step-by-step instructions and screenshots.
- The recorded MDE New DAC Pretest Editing Training posted on the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under MDE Recorded Webinars) provides detailed information about tasks that need to be completed.

[Back to Top](#)

Updated GRR User Guide

An updated version of the *Graduation Requirements Records User Guide* has been posted on the [Graduation Requirements \(GRR\)](#) page of MDE website. This guide provides information on entering reimbursement requests for eligible students for nationally recognized college entrance exams, the ACT and SAT.

[Back to Top](#)

Preparing for the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Testing Window (repeat)

WIDA AMS Tasks

DACs will need to complete the following tasks in WIDA AMS from Nov. 29–Dec. 17 for each of their schools. While the grades 1–12 ACCESS is administered online, all grades 1–5 writing test materials are based on these

indications, and entering the information now ensures you receive all the materials needed. Kindergarten ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are paper-based administrations.

It is very important that districts complete this information by Dec. 17.

- Indicate the number of online testers for each grade band.
- Indicate the number of kindergarten testers.
- Indicate the quantities of large print, braille, or paper test booklets needed.
- Indicate the quantities of Alternate ACCESS test booklets needed.

For more information, please refer to the [WIDA Assessment Management System \(WIDA AMS\) User Guide](#) (No log in required. In the second paragraph under the first heading, select “click here (login not required)” > on the Training Materials page, click the Show Documents button to display all documents > from the list of documents, locate and download the user guide).

Note that both the *Online ACCESS for ELLs: Administration* and the *Paper ACCESS for ELLs: Administration assessment trainings* (login required) available on the WIDA Secure Portal include modules on ordering materials.

Important Date for the Precode File

In December, MDE will send the student precode file for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS to DRC. This file is used to load student information in WIDA AMS for online testing and to create student labels for all paper test materials (i.e., Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, accommodations, and applicable booklets for the writing domain). It is important to ensure that all English Learners (ELs) are indicated correctly in MARSS, since MARSS is the source from which MDE pulls the precode file.

Districts need to confirm that accurate MARSS information has been submitted to MDE by Dec. 16. Note: This date may be earlier if your district uses a student information service provider for submitting MARSS. If this is the case, check with your provider for their timeline in order for MARSS information to be submitted to MDE by Dec. 16.

[Back to Top](#)

District Testing Calendar (repeat)

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.

Upcoming Opportunities

December New DAC Q&A: Registration

The December MDE Q&A webinar for New DACs will focus on preparing for test administration and will provide context and background information for New DACs in preparation for the Test Administration Training the following week. The Q&A webinar will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 7, from 2–3 pm. [Register for the New DAC Q&A Webinar](#). Experienced DACs are also welcome to attend.

The prerequisites for this webinar are Chapters 6 and 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#). MDE uses questions from new DACs to prepare for the webinar. After reading the chapters, [submit questions for the New DAC Q&A Webinar](#).

Note: Q&A webinars are intended to provide a conversational setting where new DACs can receive support on existing resources and upcoming tasks. Q&A webinars are not recorded as they are not trainings and do not provide any new content, as all information is available in the prerequisites.

COMPASS Data and Assessment Literacy Webinars

MDE's COMPASS team hosted a Data and Assessment Literacy webinar on Nov. 30; they will host another webinar on [Dec. 9 from 9:30–11:30 a.m. in Webex](#). During these webinars, an overview of the data and assessment literacy subcomponents in the MnMTSS framework will be provided, including future topics and resources about how to use meaningful evidence of student learning to guide instruction and improve practices. This will provide the groundwork for future COMPASS sessions specific to literacy, math, and school climate and mental health. The same information is presented at both webinars.

The COMPASS Data and Assessment Literacy Plan outlined in the webinar is now posted for public review on the [Testing 1, 2, 3 site](#). Recordings and session materials will also be posted to the same page as they become available.

Virtual DAC Test Administration Training: Registration

MDE will provide the DAC Test Administration Training virtually on Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 9–11 a.m. MDE will record the session for DACs who are unable to join the live webinar.

The Test Administration Training is required for all DACs in order to prepare for spring testing; all DACs must attend the MDE webinar or listen to the MDE recording. MDE will focus on new and clarified information from the [Procedures Manual](#) for the 2021–22 school year. The recorded training will be available on the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on Friday afternoon, Dec. 17 (on the Districts Assessment Coordinator tab under MDE Recorded Webinars).

[Register for the Dec. 14 DAC Test Administration Training](#). Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register, and the presentation handout will be provided on [MDE & Pearson DAC Trainings](#) site closer to the training. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to request a reasonable accommodation to participate in this

event. Note: MDE requires a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and 48-hour notice to cancel the request.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Webinars

WIDA and DRC will be hosting the During Testing: Managing Students in WIDA AMS – ACCESS Paper on Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 1–2 p.m. More information can be found in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) on the Webinars page. There is no need to register in advance.

Join the [During Testing: Managing Students in WIDA AMS – ACCESS Paper](#) on Tuesday, Dec. 14, from 1–2 p.m.

Recordings of these webinars will be posted in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) (on the Webinars page) within a week of each event.

[Back to Top](#)

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.