

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—DECEMBER 15, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline for Tasks in WIDA AMS: This Friday • January New DAC Q&A: Save the Date • Additional Assessment Data Available • Verifying Shipping Addresses in MDE-ORG by Jan. 21 • Preparing for Statewide Assessments: Selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors • ESSA State Plan Amendment Updates • Professional Learning Webinar for Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrators • Alternate Assessment Decision-Making and Documentation • MTAS Administration 2022 and New Science Tasks Informational Meeting • Odds & Ends • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update 	<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 ACCESS, and order test materials during Materials Ordering in WIDA AMS</p>

Deadline for Tasks in WIDA AMS: This Friday

It is very important that districts complete required WIDA AMS tasks by this Friday, Dec. 17. Districts must indicate the following:

- The number of online testers for each grade band
- The number of kindergarten testers
- The quantities of large print, braille, and paper ACCESS test booklets

- Alternate ACCESS test booklets

Note that DRC automatically sends Writing Response Booklets for students in grades 1–3 and 4–5 based on the number of online testers the district indicates for each grade cluster. District do not order Writing Response Booklets separately. Paper test booklets, which include all domains of the ACCESS test only need to be ordered for students who will be taking their entire test on paper.

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January New DAC Q&A: Save the Date

The January MDE Q&A webinar for New DACs will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 11, from 2–3 pm. Experienced DACs are also welcome to attend. The prerequisites for this webinar are Chapters 8 and 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

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 answers are available in the prerequisites.

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Additional Assessment Data Available

By Monday morning, straggler data (i.e., “late” assessment records) for both MCA/MTAS and ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS will be added to the District and School Student Results (DSR & SSR) and Student Assessment History Report in [Secure Reports](#). This data comes from tests that were not included or available during Posttest Editing. For MCA and MTAS, this is typically due to a district making a late score entry request past the initial deadline; for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, this is typically due to later returns of paper test materials (e.g., Kindergarten ACCESS or test booklets for the writing domain) or any score appeals, test booklet searches, or transcription requests.

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Verifying Shipping Addresses in MDE–ORG by Jan. 21

Districts choose whether test materials will be shipped to the district or individual schools under District Options during Pretest Editing in Test WES. All addresses used to ship test materials will be populated from [MDE-ORG](#) and districts should verify the shipping addresses in MDE-ORG as needed.

- The Assessment Shipping address is a separate field in MDE-ORG that allows districts and schools to indicate a specific address where they would like test materials shipped at both the district and school levels.

- If there is no Assessment Shipping address present in MDE-ORG, the Location: Physical address will be used; if no Location: Physical address exists, the Mailing address will be used (but updates may be required as test materials cannot be shipped to P.O. boxes).
- If the Location: Physical address is the correct address to ship test materials, then a separate Assessment Shipping address does not need to be added for the district and/or each school.

If updates are needed in MDE-ORG, the district's Site Verification Coordinator must make changes in the [MDE District and School Site Verification system](#).

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Preparing for Statewide Assessments: Selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors

All students must be assigned to a Test Administrator or Test Monitor who will administer the test, actively monitor the students, and maintain test security throughout test administration; refer to Chapter 3 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for Test Administrator/Test Monitor roles and responsibilities. Test Administrators and Test Monitors must complete all required trainings for their role, as specified in Chapter 7.

Only trained staff involved in testing are allowed in the room during testing. It is considered a security violation if untrained staff are monitoring statewide assessments.

More information on selecting Test Administrators and Test Monitors is available in the *Procedures Manual*, starting on page 153.

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ESSA State Plan Amendment Updates

MDE shared the article below with superintendents and directors on Friday, Dec. 10.

MDE is preparing to update Minnesota's ESSA state plan with a primary focus on modifying the accountability system in response to both the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the quality of available data and known concerns about the accountability system that predate the pandemic. To collect feedback on potential changes, MDE has posted a [survey](#) that will be open through the evening of Jan. 3. A background [information document](#) is also available to provide more information to survey respondents.

MDE will also host office hours to answer questions school leaders have prior to submitting their survey responses. These office hours are intended to be informational for school leaders rather than places for feedback because the feedback will be submitted in the survey.

Office hours are scheduled for:

- [Friday, Dec. 17 from 10:30–11:30 a.m.](#)

- [Monday, Dec. 20 from 8–9 a.m](#)

Additional questions or feedback can be sent to mde.essa@state.mn.us.

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Professional Learning Webinar for Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrators

Professional Development staff from the WIDA Consortium will conduct a virtual training for new Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrators on Jan. 25. This training is intended for educators who will administer the Kindergarten ACCESS for the first time this year, and it allows 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 Kindergarten Training Course on the WIDA Secure Portal.**

The WIDA Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrator Training webinar will be on Tuesday, Jan. 25, from 9–10:30 a.m. [Join the meeting on Jan. 25.](#)

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Alternate Assessment Decision-Making and Documentation

Alternate assessments (MTAS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) are only for students with significant cognitive disabilities; only a student with an IEP is eligible to participate in an alternate assessment. The IEP team is responsible for annually determining and documenting which test a student will take, and to ensure that any student who takes an alternate assessment meets all the eligibility requirements.

- **Alternate ACCESS:** For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, it is recommended that the IEP team collaborates with EL staff and uses the [Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Criteria Decision Tree](#) to determine if the Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS.
- **MTAS:** For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team uses the [Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills \(MTAS\)](#) to determine if the MTAS is the most appropriate standards-based academic accountability assessment for one or more subjects in place of the MCA.

Note: participation decisions must **not** be made based on the following factors:

- Student’s disability category
- Placement
- Participation in a separate, specialized curriculum
- Expectations about the student’s performance on the MCA or ACCESS for ELLs

- Language, social, cultural, or economic differences
- Concern for accountability calculations

As in previous years, in 2021–22 all districts will complete a process to provide assurance that all students in their districts planning to participate in the MTAS meet the eligibility criteria. This process uses the Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) template and takes the form of a survey which each district will submit to MDE.

Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff may be included in conversations during completion of the ARC. A copy of the ARC survey questions, the survey link to respond, and accompanying user guide are expected to be released in mid-late January, with a tentative response deadline of mid-March. More information and specific timelines will be announced in early January.

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MTAS Administration 2022 and New Science Tasks Informational Meeting

MDE will be hosting an informational meeting in January for MTAS Test Administrators and Special Education staff related to upcoming changes to the MTAS in the spring of 2022. While this information will also be included in the required training materials for MTAS administration, this event will highlight some MTAS test administration changes and show a sample of new science tasks that are included in a portion of the assessment. Test Administrators and other district staff involved in administering the MTAS are encouraged to attend so they are prepared for the changes, are familiar with the new science tasks, and can have their questions answered.

Note: This meeting does not replace the required MTAS Test Administrator trainings that will be available on the Training Management System (TMS).

Register for one of the MTAS Administration 2022 and New Science Tasks informational meetings below. Both events cover the same information, so please select one date to attend.

- Jan. 13 from 3:30–4:30 p.m. [Register for the Jan. 13 meeting](#)
- Jan. 19 from 10–11 a.m. [Register for the Jan. 19 meeting](#)

Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us to request accommodations to participate in this event. Note: MDE requires a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and 48-hour notice to cancel the request.

A recording of the informational meeting will be available at a later date, which will be communicated in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

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Odds & Ends

Virginie Sanchez, who answers the majority of the phone calls and emails districts have about testing, will be out of the office Dec. 20–28. During this time, other assessment staff are answering questions from districts sent to mde.testing@state.mn.us, and you may see a delayed response time.

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Upcoming Opportunities

MDE Employment Opportunities

Training Visual Graphics Assessment Specialist—Posting Extended

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

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the complete revised position description and application instructions on the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website and **apply by tomorrow, Dec. 16**. The Job ID is 50603.

Ethnic Studies Specialist

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division is currently seeking an Ethnic Studies Specialist who will have a pivotal role in leading collaborative statewide initiatives to strengthen the capacity of Minnesota's schools to provide high quality Ethnic Studies education to ensure that all students achieve state academic standards and are prepared with knowledge and skills for postsecondary and career success. This position will work in collaboration with the Indigenous Education Specialist position listed below.

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the complete revised position description and application instructions on the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website and **apply by Dec. 27**. The Job ID is 50339.

Indigenous Education Specialist

The Office of American Indian Education is currently seeking an Indigenous Education Specialist who will work in collaboration with the Ethnic Studies Specialist position listed above. They will lead collaborative statewide initiatives to strengthen the capacity of Minnesota's schools so they can provide high quality Indigenous education. The Indigenous Education Specialist will help districts fully implement the standards through aligned instruction, curriculum, assessment, and professional development.

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the complete revised position description and application instructions on the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website and **apply by Dec. 27**. The Job ID is 50940.

Tech Update

Key Technology Information for ACCESS

- **Testing Window:** Jan. 31–March 25
- **Service Provider and Website:** Data Recognition Corporation (DRC); wida-ams.us
- **System Requirements:** [Technology Requirements for WIDA assessments](#)
- **Customer Support:** 855-787-9615 or WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com
- **Key Technology Resources:** The *Technology User Guide*, *Technology Readiness Checklist for WIDA Online Assessments*, and *WIDA AMS User Guide* are available on the [WIDA AMS](#) website. (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).
- **Training Opportunities:** Live and recorded webinars are included in the *2021-2022 Q&A Webinar Schedule for Technology Coordinators*, which is included in the list of technology resources on the WIDA AMS website, referenced in the previous bullet.

Key Technology Information for MCA

- **Testing Window:**
 - Reading/Mathematics MCA from March 7–May 6;
 - Science MCA from March 7–May 13
- **Service Provider and Website:** Pearson; minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com
- **System Requirements:** [TestNav system requirements for MCA administration](#)
- **Customer Support:** 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#); in addition to the Pearson help desk, you may also utilize Pearson’s [Technology Office Hours](#) and schedule a one-on-one virtual meeting with a technology field engineer to talk through edge cases, specific setup instructions, or discuss other challenges.
- **Key Technology Resources:** The [Infrastructure Readiness Checklist](#) is available on the Technology page (PearsonAccess Next > Technology > Online Testing Infrastructure Readiness) to assist districts and schools with preparation for online in-person MCA testing. This checklist provides steps to help create a successful testing experience for schools and students while administrating the online MCA in person. To limit test day technical issues, technology staff should perform the tasks outlined in the *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist* according to the recommended timelines.
- **Training Opportunities:** The *New Technology Coordinator Training (1–2 years)* recording and PowerPoint is now available on the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) under the Technology Staff role in the Pearson Recorded Webinars category. This recorded webinar provides an overview of technology systems and resources for new technology staff in preparation for the 2022 MCA online test

administration. Pearson will host a live training on Tuesday, Jan. 11. Refer to the [Upcoming Technology Trainings](#) document under Additional Technology Resources for more details.

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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.