

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—FEB. 1, 2023

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • February Q&A Session: Precode and General Test Administration • ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Reminders • Updates on the Alternate ACCESS Field Test • MTAS Participation Documentation • Student Participation and Students in Special Circumstances and Situations • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update 	<p>Jan. 9–March 24: Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS</p> <p>Jan. 30: ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS testing window opened</p>

February Q&A Session: Precode and General Test Administration

MDE will host a virtual Q&A session for DACs on Tuesday, Feb. 14, 2023, from 2–3 p.m. that will focus on precode, general test administration, and preliminary results. New and experienced DACs are welcome to attend. [Register for February Q&A Session](#). Details for joining are provided once participants register.

The prerequisites for the February Q&A session are the following:

- *Understanding Student Precode Training*, which is posted on the [Training Management System](#) (TMS) (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under New DAC training)
- Sections from Chapter 11 (*Use of Results from Service Provider Systems* and *Abiding by the Embargo* sections) of the [Procedures Manual](#).

MDE collects questions from DACs prior to the event to help prepare and find relevant resources to share. After completing the prerequisites, please [submit questions for the February Q&A Session](#). Q&A Sessions will not be recorded nor will CEUs be provided as these are an additional support rather than a training event.

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ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Reminders

The testing window for the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is now open. Below are a few reminders for testing.

- Districts must make sure they are prepared to administer the grades 1–12 ACCESS online using the available [technology resources](#).
- Districts will need to manually add any newly enrolled or newly identified English learners directly into WIDA AMS.
- Paper test materials were recently delivered to districts. The additional orders window is now open. WIDA requests that districts use both the district overage and school overage before requesting additional orders. Districts should combine all additional material needs from individual buildings as one district order, if possible.

For any questions about technology preparation, manually adding students in WIDA AMS, or ordering additional test materials, contact the DRC help desk at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-787-9615.

Indicating EL in MARSS

For English learners to be eligible to take the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS, their enrollment record must indicate EL in MARSS. **If a student participates in the assessment but their enrollment record indicates they are not EL, their test will be automatically invalidated** in June. Once invalidated, it is not possible to reinstate the student's testing record. Work with your EL Team and your MARSS Coordinator to ensure that English learners' enrollment records reported to MDE indicate that they are ELs.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Irregularities

The *ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Irregularities* document is available on the [Minnesota](#) page of the WIDA website, under the Manuals, Guides and Test Materials expandable header.

While not an exhaustive list, this irregularities document outlines examples of possible test administration situations or misadministrations, the likely outcomes, and which actions are needed, if any, by the district, MDE, or DRC. In most cases, the DAC or English learner (EL) staff will contact the DRC Help Desk and provide detailed information about the issue that occurred and the student or students who were affected. In situations where DRC needs state approval, they will refer the DAC or EL coordinator to contact MDE.

Common Misadministrations from Past Administrations

Each year, the three misadministrations listed below are common across the state. Consider reminding your Test Administrators to be diligent in order to prevent these situations:

- Students are logging in with the wrong test ticket. Be sure Test Administrators distribute the correct test tickets to students and that each student verifies they are logging in with the correct information. This

check is part of the *Testing Administrator's Script* that is required to be read before students begin testing.

- Students in grades 4–5 are not provided a Writing Response Booklet for the Writing domain or do not know how to provide their responses, since they are viewing the prompts online. The grades 4–12 *Test Administrator's Script* includes instructions for Test Administrators to ensure the test is administered correctly.
- Students are taking the wrong test (for example, ACCESS instead of Alternate ACCESS) or the wrong mode of the test (for example, online instead of paper). Ensure that Test Administrators know which students are to be provided with appropriate general supports and/or accommodations, as indicated in their IEP or 504 plan, and any related specific test administration procedures prior to the testing session.

Active Monitoring

Test Administrators must actively monitor students throughout the entire test administration and ensure that all students are working independently and making progress in their tests. They cannot complete other tasks, including lesson planning, grading papers, or talking casually with other staff.

Materials on Walls or Student Desks

Any materials that pertain to explicit language instruction or the language expectations of an academic content area should be covered or removed during test administration. If testing is taking place in the EL classroom, all materials on walls or student desks that pertain to language instruction should be covered or removed. Although content is referenced in the test items, a student's content knowledge is not part of the language proficiency scoring. If there are questions about whether the materials are considered content or for language instruction, then cover or remove them. MDE does not have a list of materials that can remain visible to students during testing.

Test Security Reminders

Per Minnesota Statutes 13.34, test content is nonpublic data. DACs should remind their staff that it is not acceptable to copy, reproduce, retain, or use any portion of test items or test materials in a manner inconsistent with test security policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- Capturing and/or sharing any secure test content.
- Making a copy of a test.
- Allowing untrained staff to take any part in the testing process, including handling test tickets or having access to securely stored test materials.

Refer to Chapter 5 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information on test security requirements.

DRC System Status Webpage

Please refer to the [Tech Update](#) section below for information on the [DRC System Status webpage](#).

Administering ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Screener on iPad Devices

Please refer to the [Tech Update](#) section below for information on using iPad devices to administer ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Screener.

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Updates on the Alternate ACCESS Field Test

The Alternate ACCESS field test window is quickly approaching. As you prepare to administer this one-time, stand-alone assessment, keep the following important points in mind.

- Initial shipments of Alternate ACCESS field test materials will begin arriving at districts the week of Feb. 6–10. The materials will be clearly marked with the words “field test” on each and every cover as well as by an image of the field test guide dog, Candoo, the mascot. The Alternate ACCESS field test will also feature different label colors than those used for other ACCESS test materials. WIDA and DRC recommend that Alternate ACCESS field test materials be kept separate from operational Alternate ACCESS test materials.
- Additional materials ordering (AMO) for the Alternate ACCESS field test will be completed using an AMO Form that can be accessed via a link to be included with the field test materials. The AMO Form for the field test is separate from the additional materials ordering completed in WIDA AMS for the operational ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS.
- Accommodations for the Alternate ACCESS field test are the same as those available for the Alternate ACCESS.
- Because the Alternate ACCESS field test will not provide individual student results, there is no requirement that this assessment be added to a student’s IEP.
- For kindergarten English learners, the decision to participate in the field test should be made by the student’s IEP team, including the student’s parents/caregivers, following the [Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Criteria Decision Tree](#). Note that the decision to participate in the Alternate ACCESS should be revisited each year; therefore, participation in the Alternate ACCESS field test as a kindergartener does not require that a student participate in the Alternate ACCESS during first grade.

The Alternate ACCESS field test is an important part of WIDA’s work to update the Alternate ACCESS, which includes expanding the test to kindergarten and creating a brand-new Alternate ACCESS screener. To support districts as they plan for administration of the Alternate ACCESS Field Test, MDE has developed a *Frequently Asked Questions About the Alternate ACCESS Field Test* resource, which can be found on the [District Resources](#)

page of the MDE website (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading). As a reminder, the Alternate ACCESS Field Test administration window is Feb. 14–April 17.

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MTAS Participation Documentation

As indicated in the Dec. 14 *Assessment Update*, which is available on the [Assessment Update](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website, districts and charter schools should have received an email on Jan. 26 regarding the Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) process. The ARC response must be completed and submitted to MDE by March 3 via an online survey. To complete this task, districts and schools should use the *Alternate Assessment (MTAS) Participation District Report*, which is available in [Secure Reports](#) under Assessment Secure Reports, and the *Alternate Assessment Participation and Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) User Guide*, which is available on the [MTAS Participation page](#).

The ARC survey is broken into five sections in which the district will provide information, assurances, and where appropriate, narratives regarding alternate assessment participation rates. The questions in the survey can be found in the *Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) Response Survey Questions* section of the *ARC User Guide* to guide district staff conversations ahead of the final submission of the ARC response to MDE. Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff, should be included in conversations about the district reports and completion of the ARC response. Once the district has prepared to answer the questions, complete the [online ARC survey](#) by March 3.

For more information about the federal requirements and the work Minnesota has done pertaining to the alternate assessment participation, refer to the [MTAS Participation page](#).

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Student Participation and Students in Special Circumstances and Situations

ESEA and Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, require that all students be assessed annually in reading, mathematics, and science. Similarly, ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, require that all English learners be assessed in English language proficiency. Districts must attempt to test all students who are enrolled at any time during the applicable testing window. Student with disabilities may participate in statewide assessment in these ways: with or without accommodations, or taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible.

Chapter 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#) provides information and guidance for student participation requirements under ESSA; however, districts should always make decisions based on what is right for each individual student.

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Upcoming Opportunities

PearsonAccess Next: New DACs (1–2 years)

Pearson will provide a comprehensive overview of PearsonAccess Next for first and second year District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) on Feb. 7 from 1–3 p.m. [Select this link to join the Feb. 7 PearsonAccess Next: New DACs \(1-2 years\) Training](#) (passcode: 932348).

For MCA, the training will focus on viewing student data, viewing accommodations and linguistic supports, creating and managing test sessions, printing student testing tickets and session rosters, resuming student tests, and indicating test codes. For MTAS, the training will cover assigning teachers to student tests, entering LCI and student scores and responses, indicating test codes, and data entry reports.

This training will be recorded and posted to the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on Friday, Feb. 17 (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under Pearson Recorded Webinars).

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Tech Update

DRC System Status Webpage

The [DRC System Status webpage](#) provides real-time updates on operations of WIDA AMS, INSIGHT, the Testing Site Manager, and Educator Scoring.

Administering ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Screener on iPad Devices

If you are using iPad devices to administer ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA Screener Online testing, you may need to manually enable Cross-Website Tracking on each iPad testing device. This feature must be enabled due to the enhanced privacy feature, Intelligent Tracking Prevention (ITP), released by Apple.

If the iPad device does not have the Cross-Website Tracking feature enabled, student testing in DRC INSIGHT will be interrupted by Content Retrieval Errors. In this case, student testing cannot resume until the feature is enabled.

To manually enable Cross-Website Tracking, perform the following steps on **each** iPad:

1. Navigate to **Settings**.
2. Click **DRC INSIGHT Online Assessments**.
3. Toggle **Allow Cross-Website Tracking** to on.

Refer to the *Technology User Guide*, located on [WIDA AMS](#) for further information, as needed. (No log in required. In the second paragraph under the first heading, select “WIDA AMS Library (login not required)” > on the Training Materials page, click the Show Documents button to display all documents > from the list of

documents, locate the *Technology User Guide*). Please contact DRC Customer Support at wida@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-787-9615 with any questions.

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Minnesota Department of Education

education.mn.gov > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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