

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—FEBRUARY 17, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXC Test Codes • Clarification for Transportation • Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) • DRC: Return of Online ACCESS Writing Grades 1–3 Test Materials • Virtual DAC Test Administration Training Part 2: Registration • MCA and MTAS Preparation Reminders • Pretest Editing Remains Open • Odds and Ends • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update 	<p>Jan. 25–April 16: ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window</p> <p>Feb. 22: Begin set up for MCA online testing sessions, data entry sessions, and reporting groups in PearsonAccess Next</p> <p>Feb. 23: Additional orders window opens in PearsonAccess Next for MCA and MTAS</p> <p>Feb. 23–24 or March 2–3: Districts receive MCA and MTAS test materials based on District Options selections in Test WES</p> <p>March 8: MCA and MTAS testing window opens</p>

EXC Test Codes

Students are expected to participate in statewide assessments. In general terms, if students in distance learning will not test based on COVID-19 health and safety concerns, then the EXC-N test code may apply. Similarly, if a district or school has made all reasonable efforts to plan for and provide the administration of an assessment but is unable, then the EXC-N (or EXC-A for tests started but unable to be finished) may apply.

MDE expects districts and schools to make all reasonable efforts to plan for and provide the administration of an assessment before determining that EXC will be used. Ultimately, districts and schools will make the best decisions at the time of testing based on their professional judgement for the health and safety of their staff, students, and families. Based on DAC questions related to EXC, MDE will provide additional information in an updated version of the *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19*.

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Clarification for Transportation

Transportation arrangements and options for students in distance learning will need to be established by the district or charter school and communicated for planned testing days; schools determine if they will provide transportation and/or if students may be dropped off.

A portion of the general education revenue that all public school students are generating is intended to be available for student transportation. The revenue generated is not dependent on the learning model. Additional funding for transportation costs specifically related to administering statewide assessments is not currently being proposed.

If a district or school has made all reasonable efforts to plan for and provide transportation and is unable, then an EXC code may apply.

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Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC)

An email was sent to all districts and charter schools with information about submitting an Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) response on Jan. 25. All districts and charter schools are required to complete the 2021 response by completing the [online 2021 ARC survey](#) by March 5. The *Alternate Assessment Participation and Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) User Guide* is available on the [MTAS Participation](#) page to help with this process.

Districts and charter schools that have yet to submit the 2020 response received an additional email on Jan. 25, informing them that they should complete the online 2020 ARC survey by March 31. Resources are available on the [MTAS Participation](#) page under the 2019–20 Alternate Assessment Participation heading.

Contact Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us with any questions or concerns about the 2019–20 or 2020–21 ARC process.

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DRC: Return of Online ACCESS Writing Grades 1–3 Test Materials

WIDA and DRC ask districts and charter schools to return completed grades 1–3 Writing test materials before the end of the test window, if feasible. Receiving these materials early plays a critical role in the scoring process.

Districts and charter schools do not need to use a yellow DRC box to return materials, but they **must** ensure to use both a UPS label and an orange DRC return label for WIDA. Using the orange DRC return label guarantees accurate handling, sorting, and prioritizing of the package.

For information on returning materials to DRC, view the *After Testing* tutorial located in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#). Contact DRC Customer Support with any questions at WIDA@DataRecognitionCorp.com or 855-787-9615.

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Virtual DAC Test Administration Training Part 2: Registration

MDE will provide a second DAC Test Administration Training virtually on Feb. 24 from 2:30–4 p.m. MDE will record this follow-up training for DACs who are unable to join the live webinar.

This second Test Administration Training is designed for all DACs and will provide an additional opportunity to hear information about this spring's test administrations. [Register for the Feb. 24 DAC Test Administration Training Part 2](#). Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register, and the PowerPoint Presentation will be provided on [MDE & Pearson DAC Trainings site](#) by Tuesday late afternoon.

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MCA and MTAS Preparation Reminders

Initial Shipment of MCA and MTAS Test Materials

The initial quantities of paper test materials for MCA and MTAS are based on information that was entered in Pretest Editing by Jan. 22. The shipment of these test materials will arrive at the district office or schools on either Feb. 23–24 or March 2–3, depending on the shipping location and dates selected in Test WES. If no changes were indicated in Test WES, the default options were ship to district and a delivery window of Feb. 23–24.

Districts can track the shipment status in PearsonAccess Next 2–3 days prior to the arrival date. For more information, refer to [Viewing Test Material Reports and Tracking Information](#).

Receiving and Inventorying Test Materials

MCA paper test materials and MTAS test materials will be boxed separately and have different packing lists and security checklists. Use these lists to inventory all materials received; electronic copies of each school's security checklists are also available on PearsonAccess Next.

The security of the test materials must be maintained when inventorying and organizing, and all secure test materials must be kept in a secure, locked location until testing. For more information, refer to [Receiving Secure Test Materials guide](#) or the *Handling Secure Paper Test Materials*—an optional module in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on the Other Trainings tab, under the District-Assigned Trainings category.

Note: Due to COVID-19, UPS will enter the name of the person who receives test materials into their device instead of asking for a signature. UPS still requires a record of receipt for all secure test materials. Ensure

someone is available to receive test materials when they are delivered. If your district has a policy in place that allows UPS to deliver packages without a record of receipt, your district is assuming responsibility for the receipt of materials as recorded by UPS.

Placing Additional Orders in PearsonAccess Next

The window for placing additional orders in PearsonAccess Next for MCA paper test materials and MTAS test materials opens on Feb. 23. Additional test materials can be ordered until noon on the Wednesday before the last day of the testing windows. Additional orders may be placed for any of the following reasons:

- Students have newly enrolled or there are changes in accommodations/linguistic supports or test assignments after Jan. 22.
- The district decided not to receive MTAS test materials in the initial test materials shipment (a decision made during Pretest Editing).
- Students require the MTAS Presentation Pages and Response Option Cards for reading in a symbol format.

For step-by-step instructions on placing an additional order, refer to [Ordering Additional Test Materials](#). For any questions about placing additional orders, contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#).

Student Resources MCA and MTAS

The [Purposes of Student Resources](#) document helps clarify the purposes of resources available for MCA and MTAS, and includes frequently asked questions.

The student tutorial is used to familiarize students and educators with the general functionality of the online test. There are three components of the tutorial—Navigation, Tools, and Item Types—each accompanied by a teacher guide. All three components have been updated for 2020–21 and are available on the [Student Tutorial page](#). In addition, for students taking the Science MCA, the Science MCA-IV tutorial and teacher guide are available on the same page and provide information specific to the Science MCA-IV item formats and item types that will be field tested this year.

The [item samplers](#) are used to familiarize students and educators with how the content is presented in the test. Item samplers are available in every grade and subject for the MCA and MTAS, as well as for applicable accommodations and linguistic supports.

When thinking about preparing students, districts should consider the following this year:

- With limited testing last year, additional students may need to review resources in order to prepare for testing this year than in past years (e.g., both grades 3 and 4 students for MCA).
- The way student resources are typically provided may need to be adjusted (e.g., students may complete online resources independently or teachers may demonstrate functionality for students).

- If students are using different devices for testing than in the past, ensure students are familiar with how to take a test on the device they will be using.

Online Preparation for the MCA and MTAS Administrations

As districts prepare for testing, the following tasks will be completed in PearsonAccess Next. See below for the dates of when these will become available; they will remain available throughout the testing windows. Details on all of these tasks will be available in the *MCA Online Testing User Guide*, *MCA Data Entry User Guide*, or the *MTAS Data Entry User Guide* (all of which are expected to be available on Feb. 19, on the [PearsonAccess Next User Guides page](#)).

Note: The *MTAS Test Administration Manual* is designed to support those completing the *Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI)* and administering the MTAS and is already available on the [User Guides page](#).

- Feb. 1: Assign MTAS Score Entry users to student tests, as needed; see below for additional information.
- Feb. 22: Begin creating reporting groups in PearsonAccess Next (see the Reporting Groups in PearsonAccess Next article below for more detailed information).
- Feb. 22: Begin test setup for MCA including the following tasks:
 - Create test sessions for online testing and data entry
 - Add students to test sessions
 - Prepare test sessions*(see Note below)
 - Print testing tickets and rosters
 - Proctor cache test content, in conjunction with technology staff if needed (districts should evaluate their bandwidth to determine whether proctor caching is needed for Science and Science Script tests)
- March 1: Begin entering Learner Characteristics Data (LCI) data for MTAS
- March 8: Testing windows open and the following tasks may begin:
 - Start MCA test sessions and monitor online testing and data entry progress
 - Enter MTAS score data

***Note for 2020–21:** For this year, due to the fixed forms used for the online Science MCA, it is strongly recommended that districts wait to Prepare and Start test sessions in PearsonAccess Next until 2–3 days prior to the scheduled start of testing. When test sessions are prepared, it connects the student in PearsonAccess Next with a test form in TestNav. This does not apply for science script and science data entry or online Reading and Mathematics MCA.

How User Roles Affect MTAS Data Entry

The PearsonAccess Next user role given to a staff member determines whether or not student tests need to be assigned to the user before they can enter MTAS data:

- MTAS Score Entry user roles: These users must have student tests assigned to them before they can enter MTAS score data. Users with the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) or Assessment Administrator (AA) user roles assign student tests to MTAS Score Entry users.
- DAC and AA user roles: If these users are completing the data entry, student tests do not need to be assigned to them.

Note: The MTAS Score Entry user role should not be added to users with the DAC or AA user role; adding additional user roles to either the DAC or AA role may limit the permissions of the DAC or AA. To enter LCI data only, student tests do not need to be assigned, regardless of user role.

Reporting Groups in PearsonAccess Next

District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) and Assessment Administrators (AAs) can begin creating reporting groups in PearsonAccess Next on Feb. 22. Teachers (users with the Test Monitor/Data Entry or MTAS Score Entry roles) must be assigned to the reporting group(s) by the DAC or AA in order to access student results in On-Demand Reports and Historical Student Data.

There are three options for creating reporting groups—manually, importing/exporting a file, or **New for 2020–21**: directly from a test session. For more information, refer to the [Reporting Groups User Guide](#). On Feb. 19, a short video training on creating reporting groups will be posted to the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on the Data and Reporting tab, under the Pearson Data and Reporting Trainings category.

Three-Button Gaming Mouse

During the 2018–19 MCA test administration, students who tested on Chromebooks using these mice may have been exited from their tests after using the extra side buttons on the mouse. TestNav interprets the side buttons as external hotkeys which are not allowed during testing. In some instances, TestNav presented an all-white screen and the student’s testing device had to be restarted and the test resumed in order to continue testing. Further review has shown the same issue when testing on a Mac or Windows device. Districts should avoid using 3-button gaming mice for the MCAs. Pearson recommends providing a standard mouse for testing.

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Pretest Editing Remains Open

DACs use Pretest Editing in Test WES to ensure the district is set up for spring testing. Though some tasks needed to be completed by Jan. 22, the Pretest Editing window is open throughout the testing windows. The following tasks—some of which are requirements—may still be completed in Test WES:

- By May 7, confirm the following on the District Confirmation page:
 - All staff, including the DAC, have completed training requirements prior to test administration.
 - All students indicated to take the MTAS will meet eligibility requirements at the time of testing.
- By June 11, confirm on the District Options page whether you want to receive student results labels, and **New for 2020–21**: whether you want to receive paper copies of Individual Student Reports (ISRs).

Throughout the window, districts may do the following on the Precode Search and Edit Screen:

- Add or remove accommodations/linguistic supports.
- Change test assignments for MCA and MTAS.
- Change the high school science send indicator.
- Assign custom groups.

Districts may also use a file upload to indicate accommodations/linguistic supports, assign custom groups, and change the science send indicator from “Y” to “N.” For further information, refer to the [Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide](#).

Note: Any paper test materials needed based on these changes must be ordered in additional orders in PearsonAccess Next. See more information about additional orders in the previous article.

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Odds and Ends

Kindergarten ACCESS

WIDA is beginning work on updating Kindergarten ACCESS and is asking Kindergarten ACCESS Test Administrators to provide feedback via a short [survey](#) (15 minutes or less to complete). The survey will close on March 17 at 11:59 p.m.

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Upcoming Opportunities

DAC Trainings from Pearson

Pearson will provide a variety of training options for DACs and any other interested staff in the district. The table below contains the topic, high-level agenda, and link to join the live training on Feb. 18. Note: Registration is required to join this training. Refer to the [Upcoming Pearson Trainings \(2020–21\)](#) document for more information.

DATE	TRAINING AND TOPIC	MEETING LINK
Thursday, Feb. 18 9–11:30 a.m.	<p><i>Pearson DAC Test Administration Training</i></p> <p>Overview of changes to PearsonAccess Next, TestNav, Training Management System, and reporting for the MCA and MTAS 2021 administrations.</p> <p>*Registration required.</p>	<p>Select this link to register for the webinar on Feb. 18.</p> <p>Note: Once registered, a confirmation email with the meeting password and call-in information is sent.</p>

In addition to the remaining live training, Pearson provides the following trainings as well:

- The *TestNav and Item Samplers: For New DACs and Educators (1–2 years)* training is an additional training that will be recorded and posted to the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on Friday, Feb. 19.
- A recording and PowerPoint of the *PearsonAccess Next: New DACs (1–2 years)* training from Tuesday, Feb. 9 will be posted to the Training Management System (TMS) on Friday, Feb. 19.

Upcoming New DAC Q&A Webinar

The February New DAC Q&A webinar will be on Tuesday, Feb. 23, from 2–3 p.m. [Register for the New DAC Q&A Webinar.](#)

- [Submit your questions for the Feb. 23 New DAC Q&A.](#)
- Prerequisites:
 - Chapter 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#) (Student Participation and Students in Special Circumstances and Situations)
 - *Understanding Student Precode* training in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under the New DAC Modules category)

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence: Webinar Series

MDE did a series of webinars about evidence-led teaching and learning in the fall, and now have an additional webinar based on feedback received from educators. This webinar is designed for any teacher or school leader who wants to center instruction on evidence of student learning or would like to sharpen their data and assessment skills.

- Registration is required using the link below. Participants will earn one continuing education unit (CEU) for each session. This webinar will be recorded and posted for future reference.
Session 7: [How can results from Minnesota Assessments be accessed and used by teachers?](#)
Thursday, Feb. 25, 4–5 p.m.
- Participants will gain:

- An overview of the types of assessment data publicly available and how to access it
- How to interpret and filter assessment data by student group or grade level using the MN Report Card
- A comparison of the various public reports that MDE generates of assessment results

Note: Recordings of all previous webinars are available on [Testing 1, 2, 3](#).

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Tech Update

Mouse Considerations

For more information and important hardware considerations see the [3-Button Gaming Mouse](#) article above.

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