DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Assessment Update

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—FEBRUARY 24, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
• Updated Minnesota Assessments Guidance • New DAC Q&A Webinar: Save the Date • FAQ about MCA and MTAS for Families • Test Administration Reminders • Indicating Test Codes for Students Who Do Not Test • Summer 2021 MCA or Alternate MCA Review Committees • Odds and Ends • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update	*Jan. 25–April 16:* ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window *Feb. 23–24 or March 2–3:* Districts receive MCA and MTAS test materials based on District Options selections in Test WES *March 1:* Begin entering LCI data in PearsonAccess Next *March 5:* Deadline for districts to submit their Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) response to MDE *March 8:* MCA and MTAS testing window opens

Updated Minnesota Assessments Guidance

An updated version of the *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19* is available on PearsonAccess Next on the Assessment Update page. This version reflects updated information communicated to DACs and/or included in the *Assessment Update*, as well as addresses DAC questions that MDE has received. The applicable date the updated information was communicated is used to highlight updates from the previous version.

New DAC Q&A Webinar: Save the Date

The next New DAC Q&A webinar will be held March 16 from 2–3 p.m. For the March webinar, there are no prerequisite readings or trainings to review, and MDE will answer any questions related to test administration. Experienced DACs are also welcome to attend.

FAQ about MCA and MTAS for Families

MDE has prepared a frequently asked questions document that districts can provide to families as part of their communication about MCA and MTAS testing; translations will be provided in approximately 2–3 weeks. As each district or charter school's situation is different in regards to communicating with families, providing this document is not required. It is posted on the Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources page under Assessing Learning.

Test Administration Reminders

Cell Phone and Device Policy

For all statewide test administrations (MCA/MTAS and ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS), students may **not** use or access cell phones, wearable technology, or other devices at any time during testing, including during breaks or when testing is completed. District and School Assessment Coordinators must develop and train staff on school-specific policies and procedures prior to test administration. The full policy is included in Chapter 8 of the *Procedures Manual*, starting on page 171.

Note: Use of a device is allowed if it is used as a medical monitor, as long as the use is officially documented by a medical professional. The Test Monitor must ensure the device is not accessed for other purposes.

Training Requirements

The DAC is responsible for ensuring that all individuals involved with any aspect of test administration or materials receive training on test administration and test security **each year** prior to testing. This includes technology staff who set up online tests, office staff who receive shipments of test materials, and all staff who have keys to areas where secure test materials are stored. Minimally, all staff are required to complete the *Test Security Training* and be aware of district-specific testing procedures.

Much of the training to be completed is in the Training Management System (TMS), and MDE has developed courses that are available by role. Consult Chapter 7 of the *Procedures Manual* for more information; the section on training requirements starts on page 152.

Required District Test Security Procedure

While the *Test Security Training* addresses MDE policies and procedures for testing, each district has additional policies and procedures for test administration that must be communicated and followed. Because they are specific to each district, it is the DAC's responsibility to identify these policies and procedures in the district test security procedure. Each district determines how to communicate this information to staff as appropriate for their role. This may be through a district or school training or in writing (e.g., email, handout, etc.).

If districts need to revise or revisit their procedure, there is a list of specific requirements in Appendix B of the *Procedures Manual*, and districts may use the *District Test Security Procedure Template* as needed.

Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations

The *Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations* are available on PearsonAccess Next. These guidelines provide information for the administration of the MCA with a scribe, mathematics or science script, and signed interpretation; the signed interpretation section includes additional guidance on how to interpret specific academic terms on the math and science tests for American Sign Language (ASL).

Note: As previously communicated, accommodated text-to-speech and the script are no longer available as linguistic supports for English learners on the Mathematics and Science MCA; English learners who need read-aloud support should use standard text-to-speech.

Applicable guidelines should be provided to Test Monitors administering these accommodations for review prior to testing. You may choose to provide only the information on the relevant accommodation instead of the entire document.

Timelines for Providing Materials to Testing Staff

For staff administering a braille test or a sign language interpreter administering a Mathematics or Science MCA script, District or School Assessment Coordinators should provide applicable test materials up to five business days prior to the scheduled administration. This includes the Mathematics or Science MCA script, as well as the braille test book. The same timeline applies for a sign language interpreter for MTAS (if not the Test Administrator). Staff must keep materials secure as they prepare for testing.

In addition, for paper ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS, Test Administrators may need additional time to prepare test materials based on health and safety guidelines. Test Administrators can be provided materials ahead of time to prepare, and there is no specific timelines for when materials may be provided as long as they are kept secure throughout preparation.

Indicating Test Codes for Students Who Do Not Test

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

For students who will not participate in ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS, districts can indicate test codes (referred to as Do Not Score codes) directly in WIDA AMS during the testing window, or they can indicate the test codes in Test WES during Posttest Editing. Detailed information about indicating test/Do Not Score codes starts on page 61 of the *WIDA AMS User Guide*.

Note: Certain test codes (i.e., Extenuating Circumstances (EXC), Not Enrolled (NE), and Medical Excuse(ME)) can only be indicated during Posttest Editing in Test WES; for more information, refer to the Test Codes section in the *Procedures Manual*.

MCA and MTAS

For students who will not participate in MCA or MTAS, a DAC or Assessment Administrator (AA) may document some test codes in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window. Step-by-step instructions for indicating test codes are available in the *MCA Online Testing User Guide* and the *MTAS Data Entry User Guide*, which are posted on the User Guides page in PearsonAccess Next. It is important to ensure that test codes adhere to the following eligibility rules when entered:

- Refusal (REF-P and REF-S) and Medical Excuse (ME) test codes can only be indicated for students who **have not completed** any test items.

- Invalidation (INV-D, INV-O, and INV-S) test codes can only be indicated for students who **have completed** at least one test item.

Test codes indicated that do not adhere to these rules are automatically removed by Pearson. Pearson will contact districts weekly who enter incorrect test codes during the administration to make districts aware the test code was removed and to be corrected, if needed.

Note: The Extenuating Circumstances (EXC), Not Enrolled (NE), and Absent (ABS) codes can only be indicated during Posttest Editing.

Specifically for High School Science MCA or MTAS, action must be taken during the testing window in PearsonAccess Next in order to be able to indicate the EXC-N test code in Posttest Editing. (Blank assessment records cannot be added in Posttest Editing for high school science.) Refer to the *EXC-N and High School Science* section of the *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19* for more information.

Summer 2021 MCA or Alternate MCA Review Committees

Every year, through Educator Review Committees, Minnesota educators across the state bring invaluable classroom experience, perspectives from teaching diverse students, and engagement with Minnesota Academic Standards to the test development process. This committee participation ensures that the content and question type align closely with best practices in classroom instruction. Each committee is a separate entity that meets for two to four days. When the committee completes their specific review task, a new committee is formed for the next task in the test development process.

As MDE starts to prepare invitations for virtual Educator Review Committees this summer, please encourage your district's math, reading, science, English learner, and special education staff to consider registering in order to be considered for one of these future meetings. Flyers for MCA and Alternate MCA Educator Review Committees are available to share with the educators in your district on the Educator Review Committee page.

Odds and Ends

MCA Testing Directions

Hard copies of the *Testing Directions: Online* are not available this year and cannot be ordered during the additional orders window. *Testing Directions: Online* and *Testing Directions: Paper* are available in English, Hmong, Somali, and Spanish on the Testing Directions page. A *Health and Safety Guidance for Test Monitors* resource is also available.

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Upcoming Opportunities

Virtual DAC Test Administration Training Part 2 – To Be Rescheduled

The DAC Test Administration Training: Part 2 (originally planned for Feb. 24 at 2:30 p.m.) will be rescheduled. Further information will be provided to DACs once the new date has been determined.

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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 has 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:

  o An overview of the types of assessment data publicly available and how to access it

  o How to interpret and filter assessment data by student group or grade level using the Minnesota Report Card

  o A comparison of the various public reports of assessment results that MDE generates

Note: Recordings of all previous webinars are available on Testing 1, 2, 3.

Users who receive a warning message on the Testing 1, 2, 3 website may need to clear their cache by refreshing the webpage, using (CTRL + F5) on a PC or (Command + F5) on a Mac, or restart their device.

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Tech Update

Testing Devices

As stated in the *Procedures Manual*, only district-owned computers or devices can be used for online tests; student-owned computers or devices are not permitted. Devices issued to students by the school can be used for testing. More information regarding preparing technology for testing is available in the *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19*.

Note: Due to the unique nature of this year, MDE did investigate whether student-owned devices could be used. These devices are not allowed due to the test security and technology preparation concerns. Contact mde.testing@state.mn.us if you have questions.

Proctor Cache Browser Security Updates

If proctor caching for the MCA, changes to web browser security will prevent ProctorCache commands from reaching the ProctorCache machine unless confirmed by the user. Depending on the browser and browser version, users may see an additional pop-up message prompt when precaching test content, asking the user to confirm sending information over an insecure connection. Users must confirm in order to precache content. If users do not confirm, the content will not be cached. Note: The content is still encrypted when sent between Pearson and the precaching computer; there is no security risk to schools or district that items will be viewed by a third party when proctor caching content.

The prompt is browser specific:

- Chrome: A second pop-up window opens with a message "The information you're about to submit is not secure." Select "Send anyway." Note: The pop-up window disappears after a few seconds. This is the only browser where the pop-up prompt disappears.

- Firefox: A second pop-up window opens with a message "The information you have entered on this page will be sent over an insecure connection and could be read by a third party." Select "Continue."

- Edge: A second pop-up window opens but the user is NOT prompted to confirm.

For further information about proctor caching (and whether it is needed for your district), refer to the *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist* on PearsonAccess Next.