

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

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminder: ARC Process Deadline is March 3 • Preparing for MCA/MTAS • District Testing Calendar Reminder • Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE • Testing Windows and Scheduling Testing • ACCESS Q&A Webinar 	<p>Feb. 20–May 5 (May 12 Science MCA only): <i>Complete administration tasks in PearsonAccess Next</i></p> <p>Feb. 21–23 or Feb. 28–March 2: <i>Receive MCA paper and MTAS test materials</i></p> <p>March 6: <i>Start of the MCA/MTAS testing window</i></p> <p>March 17: <i>Last day to order additional ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS paper test materials in WIDA AMS</i></p> <p>March 24: <i>End of the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS testing window</i></p> <p>March 24: <i>Last day to complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS</i></p>

Reminder: ARC Process Deadline is March 3

On Jan. 26, MDE sent district leaders (Special Ed Directors, DACs, and Superintendents/Directors) details about how to participate in this year’s Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) process. At this time, approximately 78% of districts have responded. The deadline to respond is this Friday, March 3. If you have questions or need further information about the required ARC process, please email Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us.

All districts are required to complete an Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) response and submit it to MDE via an online survey. To complete this task, districts should use the Alternate Assessment (MTAS) Participation District Report, which is available in [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 divided 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.

[Back to Top](#)

Preparing for MCA/MTAS

The MCA/MTAS testing window opens on March 6 and will remain open until May 5 (May 12 for the Science MCA only).

MCA/MTAS Irregularities Document

The *MCA/MTAS Irregularities* document has been posted to the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website. This irregularities document outlines situations or misadministrations that may occur during MCA/MTAS testing and whether actions are needed, by the district, MDE, or Pearson.

Pearson Help Desk Procedure

The DAC contacts the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submits a [Pearson help desk request online](#) for test administration situations that require action by Pearson. Clearly state, “I have a testing irregularity and need to speak with the Minnesota Program Team.”

- The help desk verifies the situation is being reported by the DAC. If the issue is not being submitted by the DAC, the help desk instructs the staff person to contact the DAC in order to report the situation and work through the resolution.
- The help desk collects the initial information before escalating the issue and connecting the DAC directly to the Minnesota Program Team. The DAC will receive a follow-up phone call or email directly from the Program Team.
- The Program Team discusses the resolution with the DAC and provides direction to resolve the situation.

If there are technical issues with students actively testing, clearly state, “I am having technical issues with students actively testing and need to speak with Level 2 support.” The help desk will collect initial information before escalating directly to technology support.

The DAC must document any misadministrations, including any invalidations, on a Test Administration Report (TAR), which is available in Appendix A of the [Procedures Manual](#) and is kept on file at the district. Districts only submit the TAR to MDE or Pearson if requested. If there is a test security violation, the DAC must complete a Test Security Notification (TSN) in [Test WES](#).

[Back to Top](#)

District Testing Calendar Reminder

Districts are required to post a comprehensive testing calendar on the district website before the first day of the school year, and must update it in a timely manner with any changes that may occur after its posting. MDE reviews testing calendars and will communicate directly with the DAC if MDE determines that the testing calendar is not available or incomplete. Verify that testing calendars are up to date for schools across the district. Detailed information on the core requirements can be found in the [Procedures Manual](#), starting on page 124.

Note: The Alternate ACCESS field test does not need to be included in the testing calendar.

[Back to Top](#)

Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE

When emailing MDE with a question about a specific student's test or situation, only use the MARSS/SSID number. For student privacy, do not send student names in the email, including screenshots or attachments.

[Back to Top](#)

Testing Windows and Scheduling Testing

MDE expects districts to schedule test administrations early enough in the testing window to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete testing and for data entry to be completed in time for applicable assessments. Administering assessments earlier in the testing window allows for the final week(s) to be used for make-up testing and data entry, as needed. To ensure a smooth online testing experience, MDE expects districts to follow all recommended steps and procedures for online testing preparation at each of their sites prior to test administration. MDE does not grant an extension of the testing window if a school or district experiences technical difficulties at the local level. The same is true for weather conditions; the length of the online testing windows mitigates the need to extend online testing windows for inclement weather.

Districts that elect to schedule assessments on the last week of the testing window must have a contingency plan (such as an alternative site or scheduling testing after hours to ensure all students have the opportunity to complete testing) should they experience technical issues in a building.

[Back to Top](#)

ACCESS Q&A Webinar

WIDA and DRC will be hosting a webinar on *Post Testing: Interpreting Score Reports* on March 14 at 1–2 p.m. This webinar will be recorded and the recording will be posted on the WIDA Secure Portal. More information, including the webinar link, can be found on the Webinars page of the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).

[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.