

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—MARCH 02, 2022

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MDE on the Move • Common ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Misadministration • Reminder: ARC Process Deadline is March 4 • DAC Webinars and Trainings for 2021–22 Updated • Training Management System (TMS) Updates • Considerations for Sign Language Interpreters • MCA/MTAS Irregularities Document • MCA and MTAS Student Resources • MTAS Valid Score Rules • Resources for Families • New Training Graphics Specialist in Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment • Medical Excuse Test Code 	<p>Jan. 21–March 18: ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS additional test materials ordering window</p> <p>Jan. 31–March 25: ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window</p> <p>Feb. 22–May 3 (noon): Reading and Mathematics MCA, and MTAS additional test materials ordering window</p> <p>Feb. 22–May 10 (noon): Science MCA additional test materials ordering window</p> <p>March 7–May 6: Reading and Mathematics MCA, and MTAS testing windows</p> <p>March 7–May 13: Science MCA testing window</p>

MDE on the Move

The information below was shared in a press release on Monday, Feb. 28.

After 23 years in Roseville, the Minnesota Department of Education is excited to announce it will be moving offices to Minneapolis beginning March 1. The department’s lease in Roseville ended in February 2022. The new location will provide MDE with the space to carry out its work on behalf of Minnesota students, families, educators, and school and library communities. The State of Minnesota has signed a 10-year lease for the Minneapolis location, which is owned and managed by Artis REIT.

The new location is currently under construction, and MDE staff will continue to telework. Minnesotans are encouraged to continue contacting MDE staff by phone or email at 651-582-8200 and

mde.contactus@state.mn.us. Physical mail can be sent to the new address at **400 NE Stinson Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55413** effective immediately. Once construction is complete, MDE staff will welcome students, educators, families, and Minnesotans from across the state to the new location.

[Back to Top](#)

Common ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Misadministration

A common misadministration reported to MDE is students logging in with the wrong test ticket. Ensure 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.

If a student logs in and starts a test with the wrong test ticket, follow the directions below:

- When Student A logs into Student B's domain, they should finish the domain they started. The DAC then contacts DRC to:
 - Have them switch the demographic on the domain from Student B's domain to Student A
 - Create a new domain for Student B
- If Student A started or completed Student B's domain, but then retook the domain under their own name, the DAC contacts MDE, and MDE approves for DRC to:
 - Regenerate Student A's domain to remove the second attempt
 - Switch the demographic from Student B's domain to Student A
 - Regenerate Student's B's domain

Regeneration requests must come from the DAC, and MDE requires the following information in order to approve regeneration requests:

- Provide enough details of the situation to demonstrate a regeneration is needed
- The relevant domain(s) to be regenerated
- The relevant MARSS number(s) – only the number, no other identifiable student information

[Back to Top](#)

Reminder: ARC Process Deadline is March 4

On Jan. 31, 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

70% of districts have responded. The deadline to respond is this Friday, March 4. If you have questions or need further information about the required ARC process, please email Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us.

[Back to Top](#)

DAC Webinars and Trainings for 2021–22 Updated

The *MDE District Assessment Coordinator Webinars and Trainings* document has been updated on the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading). It now includes dates for the new DAC reporting trainings this summer. Detailed information, links to prerequisites, and registration information for all trainings listed will be provided in the weekly *Assessment Update* in advance of the upcoming trainings.

[Back to Top](#)

Training Management System (TMS) Updates

Content and Course Order

The Training Management System (TMS) has been updated to rearrange the order of courses in the Test Monitor and MTAS Test Administrator tabs. If you encounter an issue in the TMS where content is not loading or appearing as expected on the site, locate and clear your browser's cache under the browser settings. When you use a browser (e.g., Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari) it saves some information from the websites in its cache. Clearing cache can fix certain problems, like loading or formatting issues on the website. If you have any questions, please contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submit a [Pearson help desk request online](#).

Updated Excel Report Layout

The TMS Excel report layout will be updated on Friday, March 4, for District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) and Assessment Administrator (AA) users who have access to the report under the Admin feature. The layout change is needed to improve download performance and prevent districts with a large number of users from receiving errors. Several changes are also the result of past district feedback and survey responses. Note: Several districts contacted Pearson last Friday, Feb. 25, about a pivot table being applied by default to the Excel report. The pivot table is needed for the new report layout, but will operate in the background of the new report layout.

The Excel report will still contain two tabs: Overview and Staff Records. Please note the following changes:

- The Staff Records tab will display trainings vertically instead of horizontally (see screenshot below). This change will reduce the amount of horizontal scrolling in the report.
- The Overview and Staff Records tabs have filters enabled by default. Apply filters to find specific users, trainings, or courses. This will allow users to select only those trainings/courses needed for tracking and ignore optional trainings and/or webinars.

- The user email address appears after the user’s name. This will allow District and School Assessment Coordinators to easily contact users with missing trainings or completions.
- All times are displayed in Central Time (CT). Users can select the date in the Started/Finished columns to see a detailed timestamp for when the training was started/completed.
- The header along the top of the report has been removed.
- The colors were updated on the Overview and Staff Records tabs to make them more accessible.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	District	Organization	LastName	FirstName	Email	Training	Course	Started	Finished
1	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests	ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Grades 1–12	11/18/2021	11/18/2021
53	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	Test Security Training (Assurance of Test Security Included)	ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Grades 1–12	11/18/2021	11/18/2021
54	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	Test Security Training (Assurance of Test Security Included)	ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Kindergarten/Alternate ACCESS	11/18/2021	11/18/2021
55	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests	MCA Test Monitor	11/18/2021	11/18/2021
56	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	ADMINISTERING THE MCA	MCA Test Monitor	01/05/2022	01/05/2022
57	555509000	SAMPLE SCHOOL	Sample	User	user.sampler@sampleschool.org	Test Security Training (Assurance of Test Security Included)	MCA Test Monitor	11/18/2021	11/18/2021
58									

Pearson understands that the timing of this change comes as staff are actively completing training and monitoring training completions for the 2022 test administration. Also, districts and schools have used the previous report layout and developed systems for organizing the data in a meaningful way for their district/school. Pearson apologizes for the timing of this change. If you have any questions, please contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request online](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Considerations for Sign Language Interpreters

In many regions across Minnesota, sign language interpreters may be employed by a regional service cooperative or intermediate district and work with many districts during test administration. If there is a student in your district who requires signed interpretation of a script for Mathematics or Science MCA, ensure you know which staff will be providing the accommodation.

- You will need to verify that the applicable trainings have been completed, which may require the staff person to provide a record of their completed trainings to you if they are not employed directly by your district (e.g., their information in the Training Management System (TMS) is tied to a different organization).
 - All interpreters must complete the *Test Security Training* prior to accessing test materials, and the use of an interpreter, including the name of the people interpreting, must be documented on a Test Administration Report (TAR).
 - If the interpreter is also the Test Monitor, they must be a district employee and must complete the *MCA Test Monitor* course prior to accessing the test materials.

- Ensure you have ordered needed test materials and have a plan in place to provide them ahead of testing. For 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. Staff must keep materials secure as they prepare for testing.

[Back to Top](#)

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 which actions are needed, if any, 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 their 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](#)

MCA and MTAS Student Resources

Student resources for MCA and MTAS are available on the [PearsonAccess Next](#) website under Preparing for Testing. MDE requires districts to ensure that all students are familiar with the test(s) they will be taking. Each

district determines which resources will be used and how they will be used. MDE does not require all students to use all resources; districts must determine the resources to use, which may vary by school, grade, or student.

The student tutorial and item samplers are two student resources that have different purposes:

- The student tutorial is used to familiarize students and educators with the general functionality of the online test, including navigation, tools, and test item types. The student tutorial is available only for the online MCA.
- The item samplers are used to familiarize students and educators with how the content is presented in the test. Item samplers are available for the online MCA (with and without available accommodations and linguistic supports), MCA paper test materials, and MTAS.

Both the student tutorial and item samplers have Teacher Guides with additional information for educators. Refer to the *Purpose of Student Resources* document posted on the [Student Resources](#) page of the MDE website for more information, including frequently asked questions. Stand-alone calculators and formula sheets are also available to allow students to practice using them outside of the tests.

[Back to Top](#)

MTAS Valid Score Rules

Chapter 6 of the [Procedures Manual](#) includes the valid score rules by test. “Valid score rules” are the rules for determining how many items need to be answered to report a score for a student’s test. For MTAS, there is an update to the information outlined on page 128 due to the changes in tasks in preparation for the Alternate MCA.

For MTAS, a Test Administrator must enter a score entry for every operational task to receive a Valid Score (VS). (“Operational” means that the task counts toward the student’s score.) When scores are submitted for at least one, but not all, operational tasks, a Not Complete (NC) score code is received. If no scores are submitted for operational tasks, a Not Attempted (NA) score code is received.

[Back to Top](#)

Resources for Families

Translations of the *2021–22 Statewide Assessments Family Letter ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS* have been posted to the [Students and Families Statewide Testing](#) page of the MDE website (under the Translated Documents Expandable Header).

Translations of the *2021–22 Statewide Assessments Family Letter MCA and MTAS* will be posted as soon as possible.

[Back to Top](#)

New Training Graphics Specialist in Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment division is pleased to announce a new member of the Project Management team. Megan O'Reilly has been hired to fill our Training Graphics Specialist position. Megan was most recently a Multilingual Coordinator in Minneapolis where she designed and led professional development and delivered trainings online, in-person, and hybrid.

In her role, Megan will design and implement trainings, training materials, and visual resources, creating a comprehensive training and resource plan. She will gather feedback to identify areas of enhancements to the program.

[Back to Top](#)

Medical Excuse Test Code

Medical Excuse Definition

There may be circumstances when a student cannot participate in statewide assessments (ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS, MCA/MTAS) due to a significant medical emergency. A medical emergency is defined as a debilitating onset of a severe or life-threatening physical or mental illness, infection, injury, disease, and/or emotional trauma that meets all of the criteria listed on page 196 of the [Procedures Manual](#). If a student is unable to take the test because of a medical emergency, the district indicates the Medical Excuse (ME) test code for the student.

A medical emergency is different from a medical condition. A medical emergency is a short-term circumstance that directly interferes with a student's ability to participate in testing where no alternate arrangements can be made, or appropriate supports provided to assess the student. An ongoing medical condition, unlike a medical emergency, is a situation in which a school and/or district is providing instruction and the student should be tested with any supports or accommodations for which the student may be eligible. A student who has an IEP or 504 plan due to a medical condition is still expected to participate in the applicable standards-based and English language proficiency accountability assessments, unless the criteria for medical excuse apply.

MDE Review of Medical Excuse Documentation

Copies of the documentation should be kept when the ME test code is indicated (i.e., documentation from the licensed medical professional indicating that the student could not test). A sample form is available in Appendix A of the *Procedures Manual* and can be provided to the medical professional; this form is not required, however.

A review of ME documentation is being conducted on a random sample of schools, and it examines the decision-making process the district used to indicate the ME test code. In order to confirm that the rationale used for determining if the ME test code is appropriate, information about the process needs to be provided along with all related documentation. The rubric MDE uses to evaluate ME documentation is included in Appendix C of the

[Procedures Manual](#). In preparation for future audits of this documentation, DACs should review the requirements for documentation and the rubric to ensure appropriate documentation is collected for any ME test codes that will be indicated for Spring 2022.

[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.