

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—MARCH 8, 2023

| QUICK LINKS | IMPORTANT DATES |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft Release of the MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) • Students Moving Into or Out of the District during Testing • Indicating EL for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS • Science MCA Test Materials • Verifying Student Information for MCA/MTAS • Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) System Unavailable | <p>March 6–May 5 (May 12 Science MCA Only): <i>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> |

Soft Release of the MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs)

New student resources, called the Student Readiness Tools (SRTs), are now available on the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website to familiarize students with the online or paper MCA they will be taking. Note: You may need to clear your browser’s cache to navigate to the page using the dropdown menus on PearsonAccess Next.

- No login information is needed for the online SRTs. Students select their grade level to review videos and practice activities on how to navigate within the test, how to use tools, and how different item types function.
- The paper SRTs are available for students taking the MCA using paper test materials. The paper SRTs guide students on how to navigate through paper test books and answer different types of items. Note: The 24-point SRTs will be available by March 16.
- Braille and scripts will not be available for this soft release but will be available next year.
- A teacher’s guide for both the online and paper SRTs are available.

For the soft release, districts will determine which student resources (the existing [item samplers](#) or [student tutorials](#) and/or the SRTs) to use for this school year. If testing later in the window, for example, you may choose to use the SRTs to familiarize students along with or instead of other resources. Or you may choose to use the

SRTs with some grades or groups of students and other resources with other grades or groups. Staff may also choose to review the SRTs to become familiar with them this spring.

Students, staff, and DACs will be able to provide feedback based on their use or review of the SRTs through the [SRT Feedback form](#). This form can also be accessed on the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website or the online SRTs landing page. The feedback form will be available through May 19.

As we transition to the SRTs, the item samplers and tutorials will continue to be available until the end of this school year. However, in 2023–24, only the SRTs will be available.

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Students Moving Into or Out of the District during Testing

Districts should attempt to test all students who are enrolled during the testing windows. If a student moves during a testing window and has not tested in their former district, the new district should test the student.

A student who moves from one district to another near the end of the testing window and has not yet taken the test should be tested if possible.

If a student moves from another state and was administered the other state's standards-based and/or English language proficiency accountability assessments, the student must be tested again in Minnesota if they are enrolled on the first day of the applicable testing window.

Refer to pages 210–211 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information about students moving during the testing window.

New English Learners

There are no exemptions from statewide assessments for English learners who are new to Minnesota or to the country. Any student who is identified as an English learner, as determined by the district, is required to participate in ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS. A paper administration of the ACCESS is available for English learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than a year (first enrolled within 12 months of the first day of the ACCESS testing window) and have an English proficiency level of 2.9 or below on the ACCESS or a 2.5 or below on the WIDA Screener. Refer to page 184 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information about paper administration considerations.

New students, including students who have just been identified as English learners, are also required to participate in the MCA/MTAS if applicable for the student's grade level.

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Indicating EL for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS

For English learners to be eligible to take the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS, they **must be indicated** as EL in MARSS. If a student took the assessment but their enrollment record indicates they are not EL, the student's test **will be automatically invalidated** when final results are published and it cannot be changed. While districts will have the opportunity to review these records during Posttest Editing, work with your EL Team and MARSS Coordinator to ensure that your English learners' enrollment records reported to MDE is correct and that they are indicated as EL.

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Science MCA Test Materials

For the first time starting this spring, a 12-point paper test book is available for the Science MCA. It may be used by any student with an IEP or 504 plan whose disability prevents them from accessing the content online. As with Reading and Mathematics MCA, requests for this 12-point paper test book accommodation must be determined by the IEP or 504 team rather than student or administrator preference for a specific mode of testing.

As these accommodation decisions are made, remember that students who need the script accommodation for Science MCA have the option to test online with a script, which is different from Mathematics MCA (where all students who need a script must test on paper). Unless the student requires a paper assessment, they can continue to test online with a script. Share this reminder with your IEP and 504 Plan teams as needed.

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Verifying Student Information for MCA/MTAS

Test Eligibility for MCA/MTAS

Students must be registered for the correct tests in PearsonAccess Next before they can be added to test sessions or assigned for MTAS data entry. Information for all students enrolled in a district or school is sent nightly to Pearson in precode files throughout the testing windows.

If a student's test eligibility does not appear in PearsonAccess Next, first verify the student's information in Test WES under Precode Student Eligibility. Enter the student's MARSS/SSID number to check on the following possibilities:

- If blank demographic fields appear when you enter the MARSS/SSID number, either there is an issue with the student enrollment record submitted to MDE, or the student has not been submitted to MDE. Work with your MARSS Coordinator to correct any issues and resubmit student enrollment data.
- The student record is being sent in precode for another district or school. The first column appearing in the Precode Eligibility table (at the bottom of the screen) is the district/school where the student record

is being sent in precode. If the student is dual-enrolled, verify which district or school will be testing the student and manually change the school where the student will be testing, as needed, by selecting “Add” on the student’s information.

- The student record has not yet been sent in precode to Pearson. If a student was recently submitted in enrollment information to MDE, or if a change in Precode Student Eligibility was made recently, the record may not have been sent to Pearson yet. When changes are made through a student enrollment update, the student information and test eligibility is typically available in PearsonAccess Next two business days after the data is submitted.

More information is included in the [Test WES Precode User Guide](#).

Accommodations and Linguistic Supports for MCA

Districts can continue to make changes to accommodations and linguistic supports for MCA in Test WES throughout the testing window. Additional test materials can be ordered in PearsonAccess Next as needed. Refer to the [Ordering Additional Test Materials](#) resource posted on the PearsonAccess Next website for more information.

Districts must ensure accommodations/linguistic support codes affecting the tests students take online are indicated at least one business day prior to the student testing, including word-to-word pop-up translation codes for Mathematics and Science MCA (HM, SO, SP).

Students can only be added to a session if they are eligible for the test assigned:

- Only students with the script for Science MCA accommodation code (MS) will be eligible for Science Script test sessions.
- Only students with an accommodation code requiring data entry (for example, 18, BR, HC) will be eligible for Data Entry test sessions.
- All other students, including those students requiring accommodated text-to-speech or word-to-word pop-up translations, will be eligible for a regular test session (for example, Grade 07 Mathematics MCA).

Full details, including how to verify that the applicable codes appear in PearsonAccess Next, are included in the [MCA Online Testing User Guide](#) posted on the PearsonAccess Next website.

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Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) System

Unavailable

This year, ACT has a different cost structure for districts based on whether their students are participating in the test online or on paper. In response to the price difference between types of ACT administrations, MDE has been developing a method for districts to indicate whether they provided an online or paper administration of

the ACT for the students whom the district is requesting reimbursement. Due to this development process, the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system is currently unavailable for districts, and districts are not able to make reimbursement requests. MDE will announce when GRR has been reopened for districts and requests for 2022–23 ACT administrations may begin. MDE will also inform districts of the changes in the process including how to indicate “online” or “paper” for each student.

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Minnesota Department of Education

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

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