

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

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability Waiver Opportunity for 2020–21 • Additional Orders Window for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS • Test Code Reminders • Science MCA-IV • Minnesota Report Card Update • College Entrance Exams • MCA Accommodation Reminders • MTAS Administration and Resource Reminders • Upcoming Opportunities • Tech Update 	<p>April 9: Additional order window closes for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</p> <p>April 16: Testing window closes for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS</p> <p>March 8–May 21: MCA and MTAS testing window</p>

Accountability Waiver Opportunity for 2020–21

School leaders received the following information on Friday, March 12:

In late February, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) announced that states would be able to apply for waivers from the accountability requirements of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). While states still have to meet the law’s testing requirements, those that receive accountability waivers will not use this year’s test results the next time schools are identified for support using the accountability system.

Minnesota is currently planning to pursue this waiver opportunity. MDE will consult with the Governor’s Office, tribal governments, administrators, educators, and community partners before posting the waiver application for public comment later this month. Unless there is significant opposition to pursuing this waiver, Minnesota will submit its waiver request to the ED on or around April 1. For questions, contact mde.essa@state.mn.us.

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Additional Orders Window for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

The last day districts and schools can order paper test materials for ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS in WIDA AMS is Friday, April 9. The last day of the testing window for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS is Friday, April 16. Please contact DRC at 855-787-8615 or WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com with any questions about ordering additional materials.

As districts place additional orders for ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS materials, remember that additional materials orders should not be placed at the site level in WIDA AMS; use the **District-level Additional Orders Only** site to place orders. Additional guidance on placing additional orders can be found in *Tips for Placing Your Additional Materials Order*, which is available in the [WIDA Secure Portal Download Library](#), under the ACCESS for ELLs heading.

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Test Code Reminders

Indicating Test Codes for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

For ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS, test codes (referred to as Do Not Score codes for WIDA) are either indicated directly in WIDA AMS during the testing window, or entered 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 Chapter 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

Indicating Test Codes for MCA and MTAS

For MCA or MTAS, a DAC or Assessment Administrator (AA) may document some test codes in PearsonAccess Next during the testing window: Invalidations (INV-S, INV-D, INV-O), Medical Excuse (ME), and Refusals (REF-P and REF-S). 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.

Notes:

- Invalidation test codes can only be indicated if the student started or completed testing; Medical Excuse and Refusal test codes can only be indicated if the student did not start testing. Any test codes that do not adhere to these rules are automatically removed by Pearson.
- 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. These are the only assessments where action needs to be taken during the testing window. For all other MCA and MTAS grades and subjects, all steps related to indicating EXC-N will occur in Posttest Editing.

Documenting Refusals and Extenuating Circumstances

As districts are communicating with families about testing, there are different requirements in regards to the documentation required for students who are not testing due to extenuating circumstances (EXC test code) or parent/guardian refusal (REF-P test code).

EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES (EXC)	PARENT REFUSAL (REF-P)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision does not have to be in writing. • Documentation of the decision is not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This year, decision does not have to be in writing. • Decision must be documented. • Decision must be indicated every year before testing.

Notes:

- MDE understands that districts and schools may not be able to collect documentation for parent/guardian refusals “in writing.” Each district or school determines how they will document required information.
 - Collecting refusals electronically (e.g., via email) is an option if the district or school chooses.
 - More flexibility is also allowed this year (e.g., creating documentation based on a phone call as students may not be in school to return forms).
 - If the district or school is gathering this documentation in a different way, they must ensure that families understand or provide all parts of the required documentation (e.g., talking through all parts of the [Parent/Guardian Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Assessments](#) form, which is located under the Student Participation expandable heading).
- The Test Administration Report (TAR) may be used to document specific circumstances for a specific student and/or school-level decision if it is helpful.

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Science MCA-IV

The Science MCA-IV, based on the *2019 Minnesota Academic Standards*, will first be administered in 2023–24. A new test design and new item type are being field tested this spring for MCA-IV including:

- Presentation of information on multiple tabs on the same page
- Constructed-response items where students answer the question by writing a response

Field testing is the process MDE uses to develop and construct tests for future years. This spring's field test data will play an important role in evaluating the new tab element and exploring the use of combined human and artificial intelligence (AI) scoring processes for constructed response items. The data will also aid in identifying exemplary phenomena and items for release to show MCA-IV style and alignment to standards.

Field test items do not count toward a student's score, but it is critical that students are familiar with these new elements and complete them to the best of their abilities. A *Science MCA-IV New Items Tutorial* and *Science MCA-IV New Items Teacher Guide* are available on the [Student Tutorial page](#) of PearsonAccess Next to familiarize students and educators with the new test design (information presented on tabs) and new item type (constructed response).

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Minnesota Report Card Update

MDE is required under ESSA and Minnesota state statute to report academic achievement (math and reading proficiency) of students in foster care on the [Minnesota Report Card](#). Minnesota state statute also requires the reporting of students who have ever been in foster care. Partnering with the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS), MDE has incorporated data from the Social Service Information Service (SSIS) for people ages 0–21 who are or who have ever been in foster care for the previous 22 years. The foster care data has been matched with MDE's academic achievement data to produce an aggregated summary at the school, district, and state levels.

The foster care filter will be available in the MCA/MTAS achievement panes of the Minnesota Report Card by **March 31**. When the foster care filter is selected in the achievement panes, no other filters can be selected to ensure student privacy protections. This includes race/ethnicity, gender, English learner, special education, free/reduced-priced meals, migrant status, active-duty parent, homeless, or limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) status.

Due to its sensitive nature, this data is subject to primary and secondary data suppression techniques to protect against the disclosure of personally identifiable information (PII). This is in the best interest of the student, and the security and privacy of the data. For additional information visit the [Student Privacy and Public Reports](#).

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College Entrance Exams

As part of legislation focused on career and college readiness, districts and schools are required to offer students in grades 11 and 12 an opportunity to participate in a college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) on a school day. Districts and schools are expected to contract and pay for the administration of the college entrance exam and

can request reimbursement from MDE for students eligible for/receiving free or reduced-priced meals (FRP), or who are unable to pay. More information about this requirement starts on page 32 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

Requesting Reimbursement

After districts and schools have ACT or SAT results from the college entrance exam administered in the district, they can request reimbursement in the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\)](#) system until Sept. 17, 2021.

When requesting reimbursements, districts and schools will use free or reduced-price meals (FRP) eligibility information (i.e., the FRP flag). However, district staff requesting reimbursements do not need detailed information or forms related to a student's FRP information. Note: FRP eligibility information is available in the *District and School Student Results (DSR & SSR)* in [Assessment Secure Reports](#).

Fee Waiver

ACT provides an opportunity for students eligible for/receiving free or reduced-price meals to apply for a fee waiver who are taking the ACT for the second time. Districts may receive reimbursement for the cost of their assessment when taken the first time, and may only be reimbursed for one assessment per student.

Note: If district or school staff are assisting students with fee waiver requests, be sure that laws regarding a student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and FRP status are followed.

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MCA Accommodation Reminders

Support for Accommodations

The [Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations](#) is available for districts and schools to provide to staff who will administer the MCA using the scribe (SC), script (MS), signed interpretation of the script (OA), or signed interpretation of directions (TD).

Hundreds and Multiplication Tables

Hard-copy versions of the multiplication and hundreds tables posted on the [Mathematics Table Accommodations](#) page of PearsonAccess Next may be provided during testing for students who require them as an accommodation for the grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA or general support for grade 11 Mathematics MCA.

- For grades 3–8, these accommodations are indicated in the student's IEP or 504 plan and require the student to test using a paper test book in an individual setting. Students only use the tables on the segments where calculators are allowed (Segments 2, 3, and 4).
- For grade 11, since a handheld calculator is allowed on all sections/segments of the grade 11 Mathematics MCA, the student may test online or with paper test materials, but must test in an individual setting. Using these mathematics tables is considered a general support for grade 11 Mathematics MCA and their use is not indicated with an accommodation code for MDE.

Note: If students use the same table(s) for instruction and testing, Test Monitors must ensure the tables do not have any additional writing on them before students used them for testing. If they do, Test Monitors must provide a clean copy. The tables must be collected at the end of each test session and kept as a secure material, as students may have written parts of test items on them. Following test administration, the tables must be securely disposed of.

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MTAS Administration and Resource Reminders

The [MTAS Data Entry User Guide](#) provides step-by-step instructions for entering Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) and MTAS scores. Staff can also view the optional *Entering MTAS Data in PearsonAccess Next* training available in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) on the Other Trainings tab, in the District-Assigned Trainings category.

- It is important that staff confirm they entered a score for each task before submitting, as there is no warning message or confirmation that scores for all tasks have been entered. While tasks may be left blank if they were not administered to students, most tests should have scores entered for all tasks.
- DACs can use On-Demand Reports to confirm expected valid scores; students receive a valid score when scores for all tasks are entered. On-Demand Reports that show Not Complete (NC) for a student that took the MTAS means there was not a score submitted for each task for that student.

How User Roles Affect MTAS Data Entry

DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) users can assign MTAS Score Entry users to student tests, as needed in PearsonAccess Next. The user role a person has determines if student tests must be assigned before entering MTAS data. Note: No test sessions are created for MTAS.

- MTAS Score Entry user roles: These users must have student tests assigned to them before they can enter MTAS score data.
- DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) user roles: If these users are completing the data entry, student tests do not need to be assigned to them.
- To enter LCI data only, student tests do not need to be assigned, regardless of user role.

Note: The MTAS Score Entry user role should not be added to users with the DAC or AA user role as their role already has all permissions related to entering MTAS data.

Preparing for Administration

Test Administrators need to have access to MTAS test materials before test administration to prepare for individual student needs (e.g., enlarge material or find manipulatives). This includes the Task Administration Manual, Presentation Pages, and Response Option Cards. MTAS test materials must be kept secure by the Test Administrators as they prepare for testing.

Upcoming Opportunities

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence Session 8 – How Should Individual MCA Scores be Interpreted and Used to Make Decisions?

This webinar is a continuation of the series for teachers and school leaders who would like to sharpen their data and assessment skills. All previous sessions have been recorded and posted on [Testing 1, 2, 3](#).

Registration is required using the WebEx link in the description below. Participants can earn one continuing education unit (CEU) for each session by sending a request to testing123@state.mn.us after attending the session.

- **Session 8:** [How should individual MCA scores be interpreted and used to make decisions?](#)
- March 25, 4–5 p.m.
- Participants will gain:
 - An overview of the MCA and what it is designed to measure
 - An understanding of individual student score interpretations
 - Guidance for using results to look at student growth

Tech Update

Supported System Requirements for ACCESS

[Updated Supported System Requirements for ACCESS for ELLs Online and WIDA Screener Online](#) have been posted to the WIDA AMS library of technical and test administration materials (My Applications > General Information > Document tab; click on Show Documents to see the list of published documents). These system requirements are valid February–June 2021.

Contact DRC Customer Support at wida@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-787-9615 with any questions.

STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS

Minnesota Department of Education

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

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