

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—MARCH 22, 2023

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window Closing</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MCA/MTAS Irregularities</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Test Security Notification and Test Administration Report</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Save the Dates! Balanced Assessment Systems and Assessment Inventory Professional Learning Series</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Upcoming Opportunities</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>March 6–May 5 (May 12 Science MCA Only):</b> <i>MCA/MTAS testing window</i></p> <p><b>March 24:</b> <i>End of the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS testing window</i></p> <p><b>March 24:</b> <i>Last day to complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS</i></p>

## ***ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window Closing***

**This Friday, March 24**, is the last day of the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window. All domains of the test must be completed by the end of the school day **this Friday**.

The deadline for shipping all ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS secure test materials back to DRC is next **Friday, March 31**. This date must be followed to ensure that all paper tests can be scanned and scored before data is provided to MDE.

Note: the Alternate ACCESS field test closes on April 17.

You must contact UPS at 866-857-1501 at least one day before you want a pickup scheduled. Scheduling pickup for the same day will result in UPS asking the school to pay an additional charge. Refer to the Returning Test Materials and Shipping Materials sections (pages 26–27) of the *ACCESS for ELLs District and School Test Coordinator Manual*, which can be found under Resources of the [WIDA Secure Portal](#), for instructions on returning materials.

### **Checking Booklets for Additional Markings**

For all paper ACCESS test materials, confirm there are no additional markings or bubbled information inside the test booklets or on the back cover. Inadvertent markings and/or incorrect bubbling by students can affect how

the test booklet is scanned and scored (for example, if the incorrect grade is bubbled or if a Do Not Score code is bubbled in, the student's test may not be scored correctly).

## Implications of Returning Materials Late

If districts return materials after April 1, DRC will process them as a late return. Paper tests will not be scored before data is provided to MDE, and the following would be unavailable or incomplete for any domain taken on paper (such as writing booklets for students in grade 1–5 and all domains in Kindergarten) until late fall 2023:

- Early student-level results (used by EL teams to make decisions about instruction or placement)
- Assessment records for Posttest Editing in Test WES
- Embargoed and final release of data
- Individual Student Reports (ISRs)
- All accountability calculations
- Score appeal, transcription request or test booklet search

## Non-Secure Materials

To reduce shipping costs, the following materials can be destroyed: *District and School Test Coordinator Manuals, Test Administrator Manuals, Grades 4–12 Online Test Administrator Scripts*, and school box range sheets.

Preprinted student labels contain student information and must be securely disposed within two business days after the close of the testing window.

Please contact DRC at [WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com](mailto:WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com) or 855-787-9615 with any questions or concerns about returning test materials. To track the return of secure test materials, districts can use the Return Materials Receipt Report in [WIDA AMS](#) (Log in to WIDA AMS > My Applications > Materials > Return Materials Receipt Report).

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## MCA/MTAS Irregularities

MDE provides districts a resource called [MCA/MTAS Irregularities](#), which outlines some situations and misadministrations that may occur during testing and require additional action. In most cases, the DAC will contact the Pearson help desk and provide detailed information about the issue. While not an exhaustive list, this document describes many situations that arise during testing and may help the district know the proper action to take.

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## ***Test Security Notification and Test Administration Report***

For all statewide testing administrations (MCA/MTAS and ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS), Test Security Notifications (TSNs) and Test Administration Reports (TARs) are methods of documenting certain occurrences during testing. Detailed information starts on page 110 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

### **Test Security Notification (TSN)**

The TSN is used for reporting security violations related to statewide assessments; it must be submitted online in Test WES by the DAC. Security violations involve actions that jeopardize the integrity of test results and/or give an unfair advantage to a student or group of students, including, but not limited to, leaving test materials unsecured, discussing secure test items with staff or students, distributing secure test content via email or social media, and reviewing or changing student responses.

When a security violation occurs, DACs contact Virginie Sanchez at 651-582-8674 or [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us), no later than 24 hours after the violation occurs. More information about how to submit a TSN is available in the [Submitting Assessment Security Records in Test WES](#) help document.

### **Test Administration Report (TAR)**

The TAR is used to record the occurrence of a special circumstance (for example, the district uses a sign language interpreter or translator for test directions), misadministrations (for example, a student is administered the incorrect test or accommodation), and reasons for invalidations. In addition, the information documented on TARs can assist with questions from district staff and parents regarding special circumstances or misadministrations when student results are available.

A copy of the TAR is available on page 260 of the *Procedures Manual*, but districts may use their own template for collecting the information required on a TAR (such as electronically).

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## ***Save the Dates! Balanced Assessment Systems and Assessment Inventory Professional Learning Series***

Have you been getting questions like, how are MCA and ACCESS results used? Or, why are MCA scores decreasing over the last few years? Communicating about standardized assessment results can be daunting, especially when connecting them to your district's vision for teaching and learning. Add to that a global pandemic, and it can easily feel overwhelming to sort out what exactly these results mean in context of your local curriculum and instruction goals.

Join us for a three-part series focused on stepping back to take stock of the assessments used in your district, what information they are providing, and how they can tell you more. Save the dates below and register on

Zoom for each session to receive a calendar invite. All interested DACs, teaching and learning staff, district/school leaders, and educators are welcome to join!

## **Assessment Inventory Session 1: Overview of balanced assessment systems and the inventory tool**

- Tuesday, May 16, 1–4 p.m.
- [Register for Session 1](#)
- Description: This session will provide a framework and resources you can bring back to your district in order to complete an assessment inventory.
- Session outcomes:
  - Gain an understanding of recent research calling for more [balanced assessment systems](#) that have clear purpose and produce useful information to continuously guide teaching and learning.
  - Have access to criteria and tools for evaluating your assessments as a system to guide teaching and learning, as well as for evaluating the quality and alignment of interim assessments.
  - Gain a clearer understanding about how the information either works together in a coherent system to improve teaching and learning, and/or where there might be gaps or redundancies in the information you are getting from your assessments.

## **Assessment Inventory Session 2: Using the findings from an assessment inventory to adjust your balanced assessment system**

- Thursday, Aug. 3, 1–4 p.m.
- [Register for Session 2](#)

## **Assessment Inventory Session 3: Developing a theory of action for your Balanced Assessment System**

- Tuesday, Sept. 26, 1–4 p.m.
- [Register for Session 3](#)

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## ***Upcoming Opportunities***

### **March Q&A Session: General Test Administration**

MDE will host a virtual Q&A session for DACs on Tuesday, March 28, from 2–3 p.m. and will focus on general test administration. New and experienced DACs are welcome to attend. [Register for March Q&A Session](#). Details for joining are provided once participants register.

The prerequisite for the March Q&A session is the following:

- Chapter 10 (After Test Administration) of the [Procedures Manual](#), focusing on ACCESS

MDE collects questions from DACs prior to the event to help prepare and find relevant resources to share. After completing the prerequisites, please [submit questions for the March Q&A Session](#). Q&A Sessions will not be recorded nor will CEUs be provided as these sessions are an additional support rather than a training event.

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Minnesota Department of Education

[education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov) > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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