

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—APRIL 21, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Shipping Deadline • On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next • EXC Test Codes • MCA/MTAS Reminders • WIDA Screener for Kindergarten • Odds and Ends • Tech Update • Upcoming Opportunities 	<p>April 23: <i>Deadline to ship ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS materials back to DRC.</i></p> <p>May 21: <i>Testing window closes for MCA and MTAS</i></p> <p>May 21: <i>Deadline to confirm in Test WES that all staff have completed required trainings and all students taking MTAS are eligible</i></p> <p>May 24: <i>Deadline to ship MCA and MTAS secure materials back to Pearson</i></p> <p>June 7: <i>Early student-level results for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS available in Test WES</i></p> <p>June 7–June 25: <i>Posttest Editing in Test WES</i></p>

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Shipping Deadline

The deadline for shipping all ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS secure test materials back to DRC is this Friday, April 23. You must contact UPS at 866-857-1501 the day **before** you want a pickup scheduled.

Refer to the [After Testing](#) tutorial or Section 3 (page 14) of the [District and School Test Coordinator Manual](#) for instructions on returning materials.

Note: If you have called UPS at the correct number for test material pick up (866-857-1501), asked for a future pick up that is NOT same day, and UPS indicate that there is a surcharge fee, call DRC Customer Service at 855-787-9615. DRC will document the charge request, work with UPS, and schedule a pickup with the school or district free of charge.

Note: Online grades 4–12 *Test Administrator Scripts*, *Test Administrator Manuals*, and *District and School Test Coordinator Manuals* are considered non-secure test materials and do not need to be returned and can be recycled.

Unused Paper Test Materials

Unused test booklets, labeled or unlabeled, can be sent back as is. There is no need to apply a Do Not Process label to unused booklets.

Implications of Returning Materials Late

If districts return materials after April 23, 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 (e.g., writing booklets for students in grade 1–5 and all domains in Kindergarten):

- Assessment records for Posttest Editing in Test WES
- Early student-level results
- Embargoed and final release of data
- Individual Student Reports (ISRs)

Contact DRC with questions about returning materials at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-7879615. To track the return of secure test materials, districts can use the Return Materials Receipt Report in WIDA AMS.

- Log into [WIDA AMS](#).
- Click My Applications > Materials > Return Materials Receipt Report.
- Select the Administration and District (select the School, if applicable).
- Click Show.

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On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next

On-Demand reports provide preliminary student scores for MCA and MTAS within 60 minutes after testing or data entry is completed. Results in on-demand reports can be generated as student detail reports (as PDFs) for individual students or downloaded as a list report (as a PDF or Excel spreadsheet). See the [On-Demand Reports and Export User Guide](#) for more detailed information.

Note: Districts determine whether to share on-demand reports with teachers, students, and/or families for instructional purposes.

- In order for users with the Test Monitor/Data Entry or MTAS Score Entry user roles to access On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next, reporting groups must be created for them. There are three options for creating reporting groups—manually, importing/exporting a file, or directly from a test session. For more information, refer to the [Reporting Groups User Guide](#).
- Preliminary student assessment results should not be discussed in public forums (e.g., on social media), reflected in public meeting minutes (e.g., school board meetings), or shared with the general public or

media until the final assessment results have been released publicly. Chapter 11 of the [Procedures Manual](#) includes additional information about the use of these results in the *Preliminary Student-Level Results* section (pages 212–213) and *Abiding by the Embargo* section (pages 214–215).

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EXC Test Codes

For all assessments (except high school Science MCA and MTAS – refer to [High School Science MCA and MTAS](#) below), **no action** is needed during the testing window for students who will have the EXC-N test code applied because they are not testing due to extenuating circumstances related to COVID-19.

- Students are not added to test sessions or marked complete for MCA.
- Blank assessments are not submitted for MTAS.

During Posttest Editing, MDE will automatically apply the EXC-N test code to all students without a test record for all assessments.

Note: In order to get a score for MCA, students must complete 90% of the on-grade items and field test items. MDE will automatically indicate the EXC-A (extenuating circumstances–attempted) test code this year in Posttest Editing to document students who were not able to finish their test whether it was COVID-19 related or not. Additional details will be provided to districts ahead of Posttest Editing.

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MCA/MTAS Reminders

Scheduling Considerations for MCA

MDE does not typically recommend that students take multiple tests (e.g., Reading and Mathematics MCA) in the same day, but districts or charter schools may need to schedule this way this year. Districts should do their best to balance the logistics related to bringing students into school buildings with what is best for students taking the assessment(s).

Districts may decide to administer different grades and/or subjects in the same testing room, but Test Monitors should be aware of any differences in administration or directions (e.g., use of headphones, scripted instructions about calculators) that may need to be clarified for students. While more uncommon, districts may administer paper and online tests in the same room if they choose, but districts must consider what is in the best interest of students and any accommodations or supports specified in the IEP or 504 plan. If administered together, Test Monitors must understand that both versions of the *Testing Directions* need to be used, and they must be familiar with the differences in administration.

More information is available in Chapter 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

High School Science MCA and MTAS

High school Science MCA is administered to students in the school year when they complete a life science/biology class that covers grades 9–12 Minnesota Academic Standards in Life Science (Strand 4) and the Nature of Science and Engineering (Strand 1). For MTAS, the high school Science MTAS is administered in the year students receive this life science instruction. Refer to page 28 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

For students who have not taken a high school science assessment, the Send Indicator in Pretest Editing for grades 9–12 students defaults to “Y” (Yes). (This includes students who would have participated in high school Science MCA and MTAS in 2020 and were not coded as EXC-N.)

Because MDE does not know which students enrolled in grades 9–12 would be taking the high school science assessment this year, EXC-N test codes cannot be automatically added in Posttest Editing based on enrollment alone. In order for MDE to indicate the EXC-N test code, the following steps must be taken during the testing window:

- Students who would have taken the High School Science MCA must be added to a test session in PearsonAccess Next and marked complete.
- Students who would have taken the High School Science MTAS must have a blank assessment submitted in PearsonAccess Next.

Instructions for adding these students to test sessions and submitting MTAS records are available in the *MCA Online Testing User Guide* and *MTAS Data Entry User Guide*, respectively. Both resources are posted on the [User Guides](#) page of PearsonAccess Next.

Note: Students who were unable to take the high school Science MCA or MTAS in 2019–20 due to COVID-19 will not take the assessment in 2020–21 (or any other year), unless they are retaking their life science/biology coursework. If districts wish to indicate the EXC-N test code for these students, districts will take the same steps described above.

Data Entry for MCA and MTAS

Districts must enter all student responses from MCA paper test books into a Data Entry form in TestNav and all MTAS scores in PearsonAccess Next by May 21. Pearson does not scan any test books for student responses or scores.

As the testing window continues, ensure your staff know the district or school procedure for data entry. In addition, it is important that DACs verify student responses (for paper MCA) and scores (for MTAS) are entered during the testing windows. This ensures that all students receive scores for the tests they have taken. For more detailed information, see the [MCA Data Entry User Guide](#) and the [MTAS Data Entry User Guide](#), as needed.

If responses and scores are not entered during the testing windows, districts can contact Pearson to arrange for a late score entry. There is a \$125 fee for up to 10 students for late score entry requests. More information is available in Chapter 10 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

TestNav Network Requirements and Guidance

Consult the [Tech Update](#) article below regarding important information on infrastructure, network, and application configuration.

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WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

Minnesota will launch the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten on July 1. WIDA made supporting materials and training resources available in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) on March 30. Minnesota educators who currently have WIDA Screener permissions will also have access to the Kindergarten Screener materials at that time. Staff who do not have the new screener tile in the WIDA Secure Portal can work with the DAC to request access to the new screener materials and resources.

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is a free, paper-based English language proficiency (ELP) tool used for initial identification of English learner status. Starting on July 1, certified test administrators in Minnesota can administer this new ELP screener.

Note: The Kindergarten W-APT and MODEL will continue to be available at least through 2021–22. Check the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten page in the future for the phase-out schedule.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us for any questions about the screener or other questions about identification of ELs.

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Odds and Ends

Updated Resources

The following resources have been updated on the [User Guides](#) page of PearsonAccess Next to reflect revised dates with the extended testing window:

- *Receiving Secure Test Materials*
- *Ordering Additional Test Materials*
- *Returning Secure Test Materials*
- *MTAS Task Administration Manual*
- *MCA Online Testing User Guide*
- *MTAS Data Entry User Guide*

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Tech Update

TestNav Network Requirements and Guidance

For online MCA testing, districts must configure all infrastructure services, network devices, and applications that may reject, redirect, reroute, delay, or modify network traffic packets between the student testing device and Pearson servers. This includes, but is not limited to: firewall/content filters, anti-virus software, IPS/IDS, network and device security, address translation services, packet inspection, load balancing, and global caching services. Refer to the [TestNav 8 Network Requirements and Guidelines](#) for more information. Note: Firewall and content filter configurations are typically unique to districts. For help configuring your specific security products, please reach out to your firewall or content filter product's support team.

To confirm student testing devices can access Pearson's servers, consider running an Infrastructure Trial in the Training Center. The Infrastructure Trial can help determine whether there are any issues to resolve prior to live testing. Refer to the [Infrastructure Readiness Checklist](#) for more information.

If you experience technical difficulties, contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submit a [Pearson help desk request](#). (Note: For time-sensitive issues (i.e., students actively testing), please call the help desk for a quick response.) You may be asked to provide Log Files that contain TestNav output and error messages displayed during testing to help Pearson Support diagnose the issue.

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Upcoming Opportunities

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence: Session 8 Rescheduled

This session has been rescheduled for Thursday, May 6 (previously planned for March 25). Registration is required using the WebEx link below, even if you were previously registered.

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?*
 - **Participants will gain:** An overview of the MCA and what it is designed to measure, a better understanding of individual student score interpretations, and guidance for using results to look at growth.
 - **Presenters:** Yufeng Berry and Kendra Olsen
 - **Date:** Thursday, May 6, 3–4 p.m.
 - [Register for Session 8: How should individual MCA scores be interpreted and used?](#)

Invitation to Minnesota Science Teachers

Please share this information with science teachers and other educators interested in becoming a science item writer.

MDE invites Minnesota science teachers to apply for the *Building Capacity for Science Assessment: Science MCA-IV Item Writing Workshop*. This compensated workshop will be 4.5 days total, starting with a half-day virtual training on June 25, and followed by virtual meetings on July 12–13 and July 26–27. Approximately 15–20 additional hours may be needed outside of these dates to complete the writing assignments. This workshop is focused on writing engaging grade-level phenomena tied to the 2019 Minnesota Science Standards and also generating questions for each phenomenon. The workshop goals are to generate creative thinking, engage with teachers' unique teaching approaches, and build a repository of engaging phenomena for the Science MCA-IV.

Interested science teachers can contact [Jim Wood](#) and [Judi Iverson](#), Science Assessment Specialists at MDE for more information, or [apply for the MCA-IV item writer workshop](#) by April 23. Writers will be chosen based on grade-level and content-area writing needs, as well as experience in developing assessments. Selected writers will be contacted the week of May 3–7.

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

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