AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—MAY 19, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
• MCA and MTAS Testing Window Closes this Friday • What the Accountability Waiver Means for Test Code Indications • Embargoed Results Includes Participation Information • MDE and DAC Coffee Break and Sharing Registration • Posttest Editing Webinar: Save the Date • Entering Reimbursement Requests in GRR • Upcoming Opportunities	*May 20: Last day to indicate changes in test assignments or accommodation codes in Test WES* *May 21: Testing window closes for MCA and MTAS* *May 21: Deadline to confirm in Test WES that all staff have completed required trainings and all students taking MTAS are eligible* *May 24: Deadline to ship MCA and MTAS secure materials back to Pearson* *June 7: Early student-level results for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS available in Test WES* *June 7–June 25: Posttest Editing in Test WES*

MCA and MTAS Testing Window Closes this Friday

The testing window for all subjects of MCA and MTAS closes **this Friday, May 21**.

- All online testing must be completed by 5 p.m.

- All student responses in paper MCA test books and scores from MTAS must be entered online by 7 p.m.

    o Accommodation codes and test assignment (MCA/MTAS) must be indicated, removed, or changed in Pretest Editing in Test WES by tomorrow, May 20.

    o Districts and schools will NOT be able to add students to a Data Entry session or MTAS test in PearsonAccess Next on Friday, May 21, if the corresponding accommodations or test assignment have not been indicated in Test WES by the day before.

    o If responses or scores are not entered during the testing window, districts will need to complete a late score entry request with Pearson, which costs $125 (for up to 10 students).

Note: The last day to submit MARSS enrollment updates is **today, May 19**. The last date to manually add students in Test WES is **tomorrow, May 20**.

If you have any questions about online testing or the data entry process, contact Pearson at 888-817-8659 or submit a [Pearson help desk request](#); if you have questions about test administration policies and procedures, contact Virginie at [mde.testing@state.mn.us](#) or 651-582-8674.

Returning MCA/MTAS Materials

Secure test materials must be returned to Pearson via UPS after the tests are administered and student responses and MTAS scores are entered online. To ensure materials are received by the deadline, please work with your schools to ensure that all materials are returned in a timely manner. Depending on your process, materials at schools may be sent to the district for return or shipped directly to Pearson. All materials must be shipped back to Pearson no later than **Monday, May 24**.

For more information, consult the [*Returning Secure Test Materials*](#) guide. For questions or if additional return labels are needed, contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submit a [Pearson help desk request](#).

Note: Pearson does not scan any test materials for student responses or scores, so be sure **all MTAS scores have been entered in PearsonAccess Next** and **all student responses from paper MCA test books have been entered into a Data Entry form in TestNav** before the close of the testing window and shipping back the materials.

What the Accountability Waiver Means for Test Code Indications

As communicated in last week's *Assessment Update*, Minnesota's waiver for the accountability sections of its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan has been approved. For accountability purposes, this means that test results will not be used in any way to calculate or report accountability for this year, not even for students with valid scores. Next year, only students with valid scores will be used to calculate academic progress; students with a test code are not included.

Test Code Indications

As a result, what MDE will require of districts for indicating test codes has changed from what was originally outlined in the [*Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19*](#); the guidance document has been updated to reflect the following information.

- During Posttest Editing, MDE will automatically apply the EXC-N (extenuating circumstances – not attempted) test code to all students enrolled during the accountability window without a test record; this applies to all assessments (ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS and MCA/MTAS), but there is an exception for high school science – see below. Districts are not required to change the EXC-N to a different code.

- o If other test codes were indicated during the testing window (e.g., parent/guardian or student refusals, or medical excuse), these codes will be reported as indicated. If they were not indicated during the window, however, MDE does not require the district to change the EXC-N to another code regardless of whether the reason students did not finish testing was COVID-19 related or not.

  - o Similarly, MDE does not require the district to change EXC-N test codes to other test codes, like absent (ABS), for situations where the district did not receive communication from the family or student about health and safety concerns.

- In addition, MDE will automatically apply the EXC-A (extenuating circumstances–attempted) test code in Posttest Editing to document students who were not able to finish their test. EXC-A will be applied to all MCA and MTAS tests with a NC (not complete) score code.

  - o MDE will not require districts to change the EXC-A to another code, regardless of whether the reason students did not finish testing was COVID-19 related or not.

  - o Note: For ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS, the code EXC-A is not applicable because each domain is scored if attempted.

- Test codes indicated by districts will be reported.

Note: Though there are no accountability calculations being determined this year, the accountability window is still used in Posttest Editing as the timeframe in which districts need to account for students. This is consistent with past years.

Exception for High School Science

Because MDE does not know which students enrolled in grades 9–12 would be taking the high school Science assessment this year, the EXC-N test code 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 by **Friday, May 21**:

- 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.

Note: While Pearson will take additional actions once the testing window closes (see below), taking these steps during the window ensures that the correct students will have EXC-N indicated.

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.

As part of the close-out of the testing window in PearsonAccess Next, Pearson will take the following actions:

- Mark any student tests complete that have been added to a high school Science MCA test session – even if not started

- Submit any students with a high school Science MTAS assignment

This means any students in a high school Science MCA test session or with a high school Science MTAS test assignment will automatically have EXC-N indicated for them in Posttest Editing. If there are students currently in a test session or assigned to MTAS who you do not want EXC-N assigned to for high school Science, you must either:

- Remove them from the high school Science MCA test session

- Change their high school science test assignment from MTAS to MCA

Embargoed Results Includes Participation Information

Both preliminary student assessment results and final assessment results are embargoed until released publicly. In addition to the results themselves, information about participation is embargoed, including information such as percent of students who participated and participation by student group.

"Embargoed" means that this information cannot 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. Refer to Chapter 11 of the *Procedures Manual* for more information about abiding by the embargo, specifically the *Sharing Private Student Information Outside the School and District* section for the requirements if embargoed results will be provided to school board members, other school officials, and charter school authorizers during the embargo.

MDE and DAC Coffee Break and Sharing Registration

As few new policies or resources for test administration were created this year, in place of feedback sessions, MDE will be holding a *MDE and DAC Coffee Break and Sharing* webinar on Tuesday, June 1, from 2–3:30 p.m. This time is intended for DACs to share information and experiences from this year's test administrations with their fellow DACs and MDE. MDE will also gather some information to inform next year's resources and trainings. This Coffee Break is optional, simply a time to get together and share experiences and successes. MDE will not provide any training or new information and it will not be recorded.

Register for the MDE and DAC Coffee Break and Sharing Webinar. Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register. Note: If you join on a mobile device, you may have limited ability to join the breakout sessions.

Posttest Editing Webinar: Save the Date

The Posttest Editing Training webinar will be held on Monday, June 7, from 9–11 a.m. This training will address what is different due to the unique circumstances for this year, but will also provide a full training for New DACs on Posttest Editing functionality. Experienced DACs are welcome to attend this training, especially due to the changes for this year, but they can also review the changes in the forthcoming user guide. The training will also be recorded and posted in the Training Management System (TMS). Registration will be available in next week's *Assessment Update*.

Entering Reimbursement Requests in GRR

Districts who have received assessment results for the college entrance exam they administered (ACT or SAT) should enter requests for reimbursements in the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system for eligible students. If a district has not previously received reimbursement for a grade 11 or 12 student, the following criteria applies to reimbursement requests:

- Districts will be reimbursed for students eligible for a free/reduced-priced meal (FRP) who are entered into GRR.

- Districts may also be reimbursed on a prorated basis (if necessary) for students who are unable to pay for the exam. Districts must determine the criteria for unable to pay and enter those requests into GRR.

Districts must submit eligible reimbursement requests no later than Sept. 17.

Reimbursement Reports

After districts enter reimbursement requests in GRR, they must confirm that the students for which they expect reimbursement are included in the reimbursement reports, which are refreshed each morning. It is important to confirm student information is entered correctly to avoid incorrect reimbursements made to the district. The following reports are now available:

- The *Claimed Student Detail Report* details what records will be reimbursed (or the reason records will not be reimbursed).

- The *Estimated Student Amount Report* gives an estimate of the amount that will be received.

Resources

More information is in the *Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) User Guide* and in the *MDE Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) Training*, which is posted in the Training Management System (TMS) on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under the MDE Recorded Webinars category.

Upcoming Opportunities

May New DAC Q&A Registration

The May New DAC Q&A webinar will be held on Tuesday, May 25, from 2–3 p.m. Experienced DACs are also welcome to attend. Register for the New DAC Q&A Webinar. Details for joining the webinar will be provided once participants register.

The webinar will focus on entering and verifying reimbursement requests in the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system and wrapping up test administration. Submit your questions for the May webinar.

The following are the prerequisites:

- GRR: *Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) User Guide* and in the *MDE Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) Training*, which is posted in the Training Management System (TMS) on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under the MDE Recorded Webinars category.

- After test administration information: Chapter 10 of the *Procedures Manual*.