

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT—SEPTEMBER 15, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deadline This Friday: Reimbursement Requests • Local Assessment and Advisory Committee Applications • WIDA Webinars • Benchmark Reports Coming Soon • Upcoming Opportunities 	<p>Sept. 20: Retrieve MCA Benchmark Reports in PearsonAccess Next</p>

Deadline This Friday: Reimbursement Requests

Districts must enter requests for reimbursements for college entrance exams (ACT or SAT) in the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\) system](#) for eligible students **no later than this Friday, Sept. 17**. Tip: If using the file upload, make sure student MARSS numbers are formatted as text and include leading zeros.

After requesting reimbursement, the district should confirm expected records using the reimbursement reports, which are refreshed each morning.

- The *Claimed Student Detail Report* shows the records that will be reimbursed and provides the reason for any record that will not be reimbursed.
- The *Estimated Student Amount Report* gives an estimate of the total reimbursement amount.

For additional information, use the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\) User Guide](#) and [MDE Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\) Training](#) (available in the Training Management System on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under MDE Recorded Webinars).

Note: Requests can be entered for any fall or spring administrations offered by districts in 2020–21. Reimbursement requests entered after Sept. 17 will be reimbursed in September 2022 based on available funds. Refer to the *Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) User Guide*, as needed, for reminders about student eligibility for reimbursement.

[Back to Top](#)

Local Assessment and Advisory Committee Applications

Statewide Testing is advised by a variety of groups and organizations, each serving a specific role. The combined efforts of these groups contribute significantly to the program. One of these groups, the Local Assessment and Advisory Committee (LAAC), is looking for additional committee members.

This committee advises MDE on assessment and technical issues. In the past year, the committee has advised MDE on issues ranging from assessment redesign to testing calendar approval. Three virtually held meetings (October, April, and July) are currently planned. Members may include superintendents, charter school directors, principals, District Assessment Coordinator (DACs), and district program coordinators.

To apply, use the *Statewide Testing Advisory Committee Application* posted on the [Statewide Testing](#) page under the Opportunities for Participation expandable header section. More details on the commitment for this committee are available in the *Statewide Testing Advisory Groups Overview*. Applications are due by Monday, Sept. 20.

[Back to Top](#)

WIDA Webinars

The recording of the *Welcome Back: What's New in 2021* webinar that was held on Sept. 14 will be posted to the Webinars page of the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) [Login required]. It introduces new features in WIDA AMS, in the WIDA training process, and on the WIDA website.

The *Pre-Testing: ACCESS for ELLs for New Test Administrators* webinar will be held on Sept. 16 from 1–2 p.m. It will provide information for new Test Administrators who will administer the ACCESS assessment. There is no need to register for the event. [Join the Pre-Testing ACCESS for ELLs for New Test Administrators webinar](#).

[Back to Top](#)

Benchmark Reports Coming Soon

The 2020–21 MCA Benchmark Reports will be available on Sept. 20 in PearsonAccess Next under Reports > Published Reports for DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) user roles.

Benchmark reports are generated at a school or district level for each grade and subject. They may be helpful as an additional resource for understanding school or district performance on each benchmark assessed on the MCA from the grade-level standards. The reports also provide summarized information about student performance on each strand or substrand from the standards. Educators should always consider additional information about student learning and instruction when reviewing benchmark reports, but may find the report helpful as one piece of information when making decisions that are larger in scope like curriculum alignment or scope and sequence planning. In addition, during the 2020–21 school year, educators and students experienced significant and profound changes in teaching and learning, as well as social and emotional well-being. It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting assessment results, including the benchmark reports.

Before digging in and making inferences from the benchmark reports, review the following resources:

- The *2020–21 Benchmark Report Interpretive Guide* and *2020–21 Benchmark Report “How To” Quick Guides* are posted on the [Additional Reporting Resources page](#).
- The *2020–21 Benchmark Report Video Guide* will be available on Sept. 17 on the [Additional Reporting Resources page](#).
- View the [Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors](#) developed by MDE staff for reading and mathematics on the on the Testing 1,2,3 website. The Benchmark ALDs can help make meaning out of the benchmark reports as they describe the knowledge and skills students typically demonstrate across the four achievement levels for each benchmark from the standards.
- For the technical details of the benchmark report calculations, refer to Appendix A: Benchmark Report Calculations Resource in the [Technical Manual for Minnesota’s MCA and MTAS Assessments](#).

For questions about the benchmark reports, please contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. If DACs or AAs have questions about accessing the benchmark reports, contact Pearson at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request](#).

Note: There were no benchmark reports produced for 2020 due to COVID-19. In 2019, the MCA Benchmark Report was redesigned using a different calculation method to report school and district performance on benchmarks. School and district staff should not compare benchmark reports before 2019 to benchmark reports from 2019 and 2021.

[Back to Top](#)

Upcoming Opportunities

Nurturing Speaking Growth - WIDA Webinar Series & Self-Paced Learning Module

English language development teachers, program coordinators and District Assessment Coordinators are invited to participate in a free, online professional learning series to explore the connection between the ACCESS Speaking Test and classroom practices that promote oral language development.

Participants will share ideas during two live webinars. Registration is limited to participants who can commit to completing the required self-paced learning module between Sept. 22 and Oct. 4 **and** also commit to attending the live webinars on Oct. 5 and Oct. 12 from 3–4:30 p.m. The total time commitment for this learning series is estimated to be less than five hours.

By engaging in this eLearning series, participants will:

- Apply the underpinnings of the Speaking Assessment to classroom practice.
- Connect the Key Language Uses to instructional practices in speaking.
- Explore the impact of holding the floor for extended classroom discourse.

- Choose Teacher Moves to support student voice.
- Develop an ear for language to support precision decisions.

Registration is limited and will close at noon on Sept. 20. [WIDA webinar series: Nurturing Speaking Growth registration and additional details](#). Registered participants will receive an e-mail from WIDA by Sept. 22 with next steps and a link to the self-paced learning module.

Please direct any questions about any of these sessions to MDE.EL@state.mn.us.

If you need access to eLearning content in the WIDA secure portal, contact your district's WIDA eLearning Coordinator or contact MDE.EL@state.mn.us.

[Back to Top](#)

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Minnesota Department of Education

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

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