AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE TESTING—DECEMBER 18, 2019

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
- WIDA AMS: Precode File Deadline Today - New DAC Q&A Webinars: MDE and Pearson - Training Requirements for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS - Alternate Assessment Decision-Making - Alternate Assessment Participation Documentation - PearsonAccess Next DAC and AA Admin Access in TMS - WIDA Webinars - Student Data Privacy Reminder - Odds and Ends - Upcoming Opportunities - Tech Update	*Dec. 18:* Revised deadline to submit MARSS updates for ELs to be sent in precode for loading students into WIDA AMS and printing student labels for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS *Jan. 6–March 20:* Administration tasks (e.g., managing test sessions) available in WIDA AMS in preparation for ACCESS testing *Jan. 17:* Receive ACCESS and Alternate paper test materials and student labels *Jan. 17:* Additional orders window opens in WIDA AMS for additional paper test materials needed *Jan. 17:* Deadline in Test WES for changes affecting initial materials shipment, ISR delivery confirmation, and test materials delivery options

WIDA AMS: Precode File Deadline Today

MDE will send the student precode file for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS to DRC first thing tomorrow morning, and it is important to ensure that **all English Learners (ELs) are indicated correctly in MARSS by the end of today**. MDE uses what is in MARSS to load student information in WIDA AMS for online testing and to create student labels for all paper test materials (i.e., Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, accommodations, and applicable booklets for the writing domain).

<div align="right">Back to Top</div>

New DAC Q&A Webinars: MDE and Pearson

MDE New DAC Q&A

The MDE January New DAC Q&A webinar will be Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 2–3:30 p.m. Registrants should review Chapter 8 of the *Procedures Manual*, as well as the Training section of Chapter 3, which starts on page 55. Submit your questions for the Jan. 7 New DAC Q&A webinar. MDE will answer your questions during the webinar.

Register for the Jan. 7 New DAC Q&A webinar. At the time of the webinar, use the following information:

- Phone number: 415-655-0003

- Access code: 964 133 954

- Password: newDACsrock!

Note: Registration will only be available in this week's *Assessment Update* since the next *Assessment Update* will be sent on Jan. 8 due to upcoming holidays.

Pearson New DAC Q&A

Pearson will host a New DAC Q&A on Thursday, Jan. 9, from 2–3:30 to review and discuss DAC questions related to user management in PearsonAccess Next and the Training Management System (TMS). Pearson will also provide an overview of the topics that will be covered at the upcoming Test Administration Training (see the article below in Upcoming Opportunities) to provide context and background information for New DACs.

Prerequisites for the Pearson New DAC Q&A are to watch the following trainings in the Training Management System (TMS) on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under Pearson video trainings:

- *User Management in PearsonAccess Next*

- *Training Management System* (Note: This training will be updated in TMS this Friday, Dec. 20. Ideally, staff interested in attending this webinar should wait and watch the video after it is updated.)

No registration or password is required. At the time of the webinar, use the following information:

- Join the Pearson New DAC Q&A webinar.

- Phone number: 877-554-0877

- Conference code: 571 468 0293

See the *Upcoming Pearson Trainings (2019-20)* document for additional information about the trainings Pearson will offer this spring; these trainings will also be described in *Assessment Updates* shortly before they are scheduled.

Training Requirements for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

The DAC is responsible for ensuring that all individuals who may be associated with any aspect of test administration or test content receive training on test administration and test security policies and procedures **each year** prior to testing. Involvement in test administration is not limited to staff administering tests, but also includes any staff who help organize secure test materials, have keys (and therefore access) to areas where secure test materials are stored, or are in the room during testing, like paraprofessionals. Minimally, all staff involved are required to complete the *Test Security Training* and be aware of district-specific testing procedures, in addition to any other trainings required for their role.

The training resources described in the table below are available online in the following service provider systems:

- The [Training Management System (TMS)](#) is accessed from PearsonAccess Next and contains the ACCESS training courses for staff involved; these training courses include the *Test Security Training* (and *Active Monitoring for Statewide Tests* training, if required). Users access the TMS by entering their email address and selecting their district and, if applicable, their school.

- The [My Account and Secure Portal](#) section of the WIDA Secure Portal contains the required Training Courses and quizzes and other resources for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS. DACs, or another designated staff person, must provide Test Administrators with logins and passwords for the WIDA Secure Portal to complete trainings.

See the training requirements below; more information related to training starts on page 55 of the *Procedures Manual*.

Test Administration	Trainings Required on WIDA Secure Portal	Trainings Required on TMS > Test Monitor Tab
Kindergarten ACCESS	Kindergarten Training Course: • All material in the Preparing, Testing, Afterward, and Domains tabs • Quizzes tab > *ACCESS Kindergarten Quiz*	*ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Kindergarten/ Alternate ACCESS* course
Grades 1–12 ACCESS Online	Online Grades 1–12 Training Course*: • Testing tab > *Administering the Test* • Quizzes tab > *ACCESS Online Administration Quiz Grades 1–12*	*ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Grades 1–12* course

Test Administration	Trainings Required on WIDA Secure Portal	Trainings Required on TMS > Test Monitor Tab
Grades 1–12 ACCESS Paper Accommodations	Paper-Based Grades 1–12 Training Course: • Testing tab > Administering the Test • Domains tab > *Speaking*** • Quizzes tab > *ACCESS Paper Administration Quiz Grades 1–12* and *ACCESS & Screener Speaking Quiz Grades 1–5* and/or *Grades 6–12*	*ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Grades 1–12* course
Alternate ACCESS	Alternate ACCESS Grades 1–12 Training Course: • All material in the Preparing, Testing, Afterward, and Domains tabs • Quizzes tab > *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Quiz*	*ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator – Kindergarten/ Alternate ACCESS* course

* MDE also recommends that Test Administrators view information about each domain in the Domains section of the Grades 1–12 Online training, as needed.

** MDE also recommends that Test Administrators view information about each domain in the Domains section of the Grades 1–12 Paper training, as needed.

Alternate Assessment Decision-Making

Alternate assessments (MTAS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) are only for students with significant cognitive disabilities; only a student with an IEP is eligible to participate in an alternate assessment. The IEP team is responsible for annually determining and documenting which test a student will take, and to ensure that any student who takes an alternate assessment meets all the eligibility requirements.

• **Alternate ACCESS**: For English learners with significant cognitive disabilities, it is recommended that the IEP team collaborates with EL staff and uses the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Criteria Decision Tree* to determine if the Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS.

• **MTAS**: For students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements, the IEP team uses the *Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)* to determine if the MTAS is the most appropriate standards-based academic accountability assessment for one or more subjects in place of the MCA.

Note: participation decisions must **not** be made based on the following factors:

- Student's disability category

- Placement

- Participation in a separate, specialized curriculum

- Expectations about the student's performance on the MCA or ACCESS for ELLs

- Language, social, cultural, or economic differences

- Concern for accountability calculations

Alternate Assessment Participation Documentation

In January, MDE will provide a new secure report, the *MTAS Participation District Report*, in Assessment Secure Reports; this report will provide districts details about their alternate assessment (MTAS) participation rates. The data in the district reports provide a starting point for being able to complete the Assurance, Rationale, and Context (ARC) template, which each district will submit to MDE.

Districts will use the ARC template to provide information, assurances, and where appropriate, narratives regarding alternate assessment participation rates. Special Education Directors, District Assessment Coordinators, Special Education case managers, and other key district staff, should be included in conversations about the district reports and completion of the ARC. The reports, ARC template, and accompanying user guide are expected to be released in mid-January, with a tentative response deadline of mid-March.

More information and specific timelines will be announced in early January. For more context around the alternate assessment participation work, refer to the Nov. 27 *Assessment Update*.

PearsonAccess Next DAC and AA Admin Access in TMS

As users with the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and Assessment Administrator (AA) roles track staff training or enter group trainings for tracking, they will need access to the Admin features in the Training Management System (TMS). Pearson manually provides Admin access to TMS users with the DAC or AA role in PearsonAccess Next. Starting Jan. 6, Pearson will provide Admin access more frequently to new users. Once Pearson starts providing access more often, the Admin option will be available to new DAC or AA users on the Friday following the week their PearsonAccess Next account is created or enabled (e.g., if a user is given the AA user role on Wednesday, Jan. 8, they should see the Admin option on Friday, Jan. 17).

If a DAC or AA user account becomes disabled or inactive in PearsonAccess Next, the user will no longer have the Admin features in TMS. Once a user has been enabled or restored in PearsonAccess Next, the account would be considered "new," and they will have to wait 1–2 weeks to be able to review reports. To avoid this, users should log in to PearsonAccess Next and ensure their account is active.

Note: While the Training Management System (TMS) is not directly linked to PearsonAccess Next, having the DAC or AA user role provides access to the Admin option in the TMS. DAC or AA users who need Admin access must use the same email address from their PearsonAccess Next account when creating a TMS account.

WIDA Webinars

Managing Paper Materials

On Jan. 9, WIDA will provide a webinar for DACs that will provide information about paper materials that are initially sent, additional materials, and keeping materials secure. Join the WIDA webinar: *Managing Test Materials* on Jan. 9 at 1 p.m.

Note: While some of the information will not be relevant to Minnesota since some states in the WIDA Consortium administer all ACCESS testing using paper materials, much of the information still applies to states like Minnesota who administer the grades 1–12 ACCESS online.

Technology Troubleshooting

On Jan. 15, WIDA will provide a webinar for DACs, Test Administrators, and Technology Coordinators with an overview of various error messages and common troubleshooting solutions. Join the WIDA webinar: *Technology Troubleshooting* on Jan. 15 at 11 a.m.

Student Data Privacy Reminder

The PearsonAccess Next secure site and Training Center landing pages were updated in October to include additional reminders about student data privacy. A yellow bar has been added to remind users that PearsonAccess Next contains student personally identifiable information (PII). When accessing the site, users should take precautions to ensure student data privacy when using the site and protect student data from being accessed by external users.

DACs should also keep student data privacy in mind when emailing MDE. If districts need to email specific student data to MDE, they can upload information securely using the File Transfer in Test WES. DACs may also email a *MARSS number only* to MDE if there is a question about a specific student.

Odds & Ends

- **MDE Closed**: Due to the upcoming holidays, the mde.testing@state.mn.us will only be monitored on a limited basis from Dec. 23–27, as well as Jan. 1. Emails sent to mde.testing@state.mn.us will have a delayed response time during those days.

- **Next *Assessment Update***: There will be no *Assessment Update* sent on Dec. 25 or Jan. 1. The next *Assessment Update* will be sent on Jan. 8. If essential information needs to be shared with districts before Jan. 8, MDE will send a targeted email to districts as needed.

Upcoming Opportunities

MCA-IV Reading Test Specification Committee

MDE is requesting applications from language arts, special education, and EL teachers in grades 3–10 for the MCA-IV reading test specifications committee. MDE is looking for a diverse representation of educators to ensure the committee represents the state with respect to ethnicity, gender, school district type, district size, and geographical region. This is an opportunity for educators to provide advice on the new assessment, and to ensure test content aligns closely with best practices in classroom instruction.

Committee members will receive an honorarium or substitute reimbursement. Travel expenses and lodging for those travelling from outside the metro area will be provided. The committee will meet at MDE in Roseville for a total of eight days. Committee members must commit to attend all meetings. Meeting dates are as follows:

- June 23–24, 2020

- Sept. 29–30, 2020

- Nov. 17–18, 2020

- Feb. 23–24, 2021

Interested applicants need to apply for the Reading MCA–IV test specifications committee by Jan. 5.

DAC Test Administration Training Registration

In mid-January, MDE and Pearson will conduct DAC Test Administration Trainings at three different locations. The Test Administration Training is required for all DACs to prepare for spring testing; all DACs must attend the MDE webinar, attend an in-person session, or listen to the MDE recording.

- MDE will focus on changes to policies and procedures for the 2019–20 school year.

- Pearson will present changes and updates to PearsonAccess Next, TestNav, Training Management System, and reporting.

- During the last part of the day, MDE will present information on changes to growth reporting and use of results.

Because this training will focus on changes for this year, New DACs will have opportunities to get more information from MDE and Pearson prior to the training at New DAC Q&A webinars in early January. See the articles above for more information.

Each in-person training will be from 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. with check-in beginning at 8:30 a.m. Morning refreshments and lunch will be provided. For those unable to attend one of the trainings, MDE will provide a webinar option as an alternative for their portions; Pearson will post a recording of their portion of the training in TMS. Registration and information is in the table below.

Note: If your district has an EL Coordinator administering the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, consider having them attend the MDE morning portion of the DAC Test Administration Training.

DATE	TRAINING AND REGISTRATION	LOCATION
Monday, Jan. 13	Register for the webinar option of MDE's portion of the Test Administration Training.	Webinar for MDE portion 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Register for the Mankato Test Administration Training.	Courtyard by Marriott: Mankato 901 Raintree Rd. Gallery A Mankato, MN 56001
Wednesday, Jan. 15	Register for the St. Cloud Test Administration Training.	St. Cloud River's Edge Convention Center 10 4th Ave. South Herberger Suite St. Cloud, MN 56301
Thursday, Jan. 16	Register for the Metro Test Administration Training.	Delta Hotels by Marriott: Minneapolis NE 1330 Industrial Blvd NE Minneapolis Ballroom Minneapolis, MN 55413

Tech Update

ACCESS for ELLs Technology Preparation

The ACCESS for ELLs testing window is Jan. 27–March 20. Technology Coordinators should confirm they have downloaded the COS-SD to replace the retired TSM as the online content caching solution. See the *COS-SD Technology Readiness Checklist for WIDA Online Assessments* for more information [Log in required].

Technology Coordinators should also work with their District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) to discuss technology needs, confirm the communication plan for sharing information during testing, and ensure all training requirements have been completed prior to testing, including the *Test Security Training*.

Preparation may include downloading software to testing machines, checking that all devices have minimum system requirements and are configured to support testing and verifying that firewalls and filters are configured properly. More information on preparing for ACCESS for ELLs test window is found on the WIDA's Technology page.

Key Technology Information for MCA

- **Testing Window**: Reading/Mathematics MCA from March 2–May 1; Science MCA from March 2–May 8

- **Service Provider and Website:** Pearson; minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com

- **System Requirements**: TestNav system requirements for MCA administration

- **Customer Support**: 888-817-8659 or submit a Pearson help desk request

- **Key Technology Resources**: The *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist (2019–20)* and other information and resources are on Pearson's Technology page.

- **Training Opportunities**: Webinar recordings and PowerPoints from the New and Experienced Technology Coordinator Trainings will be posted in the Training Management System (TMS) on Friday, Dec. 20, on the Technology Staff tab.

STATEWIDE TESTING: MEASURING EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota Department of Education

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