AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE TESTING—MARCH 20, 2019

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
- ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window Closing - Student Directions in the Reading MCA - Blacklisted Applications Disabled - Answering Questions/Providing Assistance During Testing - College Entrance Exam Reimbursement Requests - Assessment Accommodations Review Panel Applications - Free WIDA e-Learning Courses for Minnesota Educators - Tech Update	*March 22:* Last day of the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window *March 29:* Final date to ship paper test materials to DRC *March 4–May 3:* Testing window for Reading and Mathematics MCA and all subjects for MTAS *March 4–May 10:* Testing window for Science MCA

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window Closing

This Friday, March 22, is the last day of the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window. All tests must be completed this Friday.

The deadline for shipping all ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS secure test materials back to DRC is Friday, March 29. With the challenging weather this testing season, WIDA and DRC would like to stress the importance of returning materials to DRC no later than the scheduled deadline and recommend districts allow time for weather-related closures and shipping delays.

You must contact UPS at (866) 857-1501 the day before you want a pickup scheduled. Refer to the After Testing tutorial or the Returning Materials (After Testing) section of the *District and School Test Coordinator Manual* for instructions on returning materials (Log in to wida.us > My Account & Secure Portal > Online Grades 1–12 > Afterward > After Testing).

Implications of Returning Materials Late

If districts return materials after March 29, 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)

- All accountability calculations

Contact DRC with questions about returning materials at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-787-9615. To track the return of secure test materials, districts can use the Return Materials Receipt Report in WIDA AMS (Log in to WIDA AMS > All Applications > Materials > Return Materials Receipt Report).

Non-Secure Materials

Online grades 4–12 *Test Administrator Scripts*, *Test Administrator Manuals*, and *District and School Test Coordinator Manuals* are considered non-secure test materials and districts do not need to return these materials to DRC. Please recycle these materials to reduce shipping costs.

Student Directions in the Reading MCA

As Pearson announced in a memo sent on Monday, March 18, text-to-speech functionality is not available in 2019 for the student directions in all online Reading MCA for grades 3–8 and 10. (There is no text-to-speech in the rest of the Reading MCA and has only previously been made available for the directions.) Due to potential issues that could be introduced during testing, Pearson will not correct the text-to-speech for the student directions in Reading MCA during the testing window.

Districts may consider the following alternatives for the student directions in the Reading MCA, as all of the information in the text-to-speech is provided in print on the screen:

- Students may read the student directions text on the screen to themselves.

- Test Monitors may read the student directions aloud, using the Transcript of Student Directions, which can be found on pages 23–24 of the *Directions for Online Administrations* (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions).

Note: The text-to-speech for Mathematics and Science MCA student directions and test is not impacted and is available as expected.

Blacklisted Applications Disabled

Pearson previously announced a list of blacklisted applications for TestNav as a new security feature for testing in 2019. Both MDE and Pearson have received feedback from numerous districts that certain blacklisted applications and pre-programmed device settings were creating challenges for districts and students.

After careful consideration of the benefits and drawbacks, MDE has decided to disable the blacklist for the spring testing window. This is in effort to make the student testing experience as smooth as possible. MDE and Pearson apologize for any inconveniences districts have experienced throughout this process.

Due to applications no longer being blacklisted, districts will need to resume the process that was used in previous years to ensure that students do not launch applications before logging in to TestNav (e.g., YouTube).

When possible, technology staff should continue to configure applications to not launch automatically in order to maintain test security. Guidelines are available in step 4 of the *Infrastructure Readiness Checklist* (PearsonAccess Next > Technology).

If you have any questions, please contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submit a help desk request.

Answering Questions/Providing Assistance During Testing

Test Monitors need to use the applicable *Directions for Administrations* (either the *Directions for Online Administrations* or the *Directions for Paper Administrations*) when administering a test. Both versions of directions include a new *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section. This section is divided into two parts: Test-Related Scenarios and Student or Classroom Management Scenarios.

The Test-Related Scenarios part provides specific guidance and scripted language for questions related to test content or the test itself. The following are examples:

- A student cannot complete a fill-in-the-blank item.

- A student cannot move forward in the test because of a tool or navigation.

- A student does not think there is a correct answer to an item.

The Student/Classroom Management Scenarios part provides guidance to Test Monitors as to what is appropriate to say and do in general scenarios related to student behavior. The following are examples:

- A student is off task or being disruptive.

- A student is discouraged and not making progress.

- A student is rushing through the test.

See the *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section of the applicable testing directions for full information and guidance.

College Entrance Exam Reimbursement Requests

If you administered the college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) and have received student results, you may begin entering requests for reimbursements in the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system for eligible students who have not previously been reimbursed for a college entrance exam (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Graduation Requirements (GRR)).

Eligibility for Reimbursement

Beginning in 2017–18, Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, subdivision 1e, changed the reimbursement of college entrance exams. The following still applies in 2018–19:

- Districts will be reimbursed for students eligible for a free/reduced-priced meal (FRP). To be eligible, the reimbursement request must be entered into GRR and the student must have been identified in MARSS as FRP sometime during the 2018–19 school year.

- Districts may also be reimbursed on a prorated basis (if necessary) for students that are unable to pay for the exam. Legislation did not provide criteria for unable to pay, so districts must determine the criteria for unable to pay and enter those requests into GRR. MDE will not know what funds will be available until reimbursements are made for students qualifying for free and reduced-priced meals.

Refer to Chapter 2 of the *Procedures Manual* for more information (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures).

Entering Reimbursement Requests

To ensure that reimbursements are only provided for students that completed testing, district can only request reimbursement after results are received from ACT or College Board. All reimbursement requests for school year 2018–19 must be entered no later than Sept. 13 with a tested date prior to Sept. 1.

- For students identified as FRP in MARSS: reimbursement requests can be entered manually or via a file upload.

- For students determined by the district as unable to pay: reimbursement requests can **only** be entered manually. A manual entry ensures only students who have been determined as eligible are entered and a district is not overpaid if they upload all tested students.

An updated *Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) User Guide* is available with detailed instructions for entering reimbursement requests (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Graduation Requirements (GRR)).

In addition, MDE will be posting an online recorded training in early April for DACs in the Training Management System. This training will be available on-demand as you begin your work in GRR, and will outline the steps to enter reimbursement requests and general GRR functionality.

Reimbursement Reports

After districts enter reimbursement requests in GRR, districts should confirm expected reimbursements using the reimbursement reports, which are refreshed early each morning to reflect the current state of entries in GRR. **New for 2018–19**: The reimbursement reports are available now and throughout the reimbursement request entry time period; in past years, these reports were available later.

- 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.

Note: For unable to pay, reimbursement may be on a pro-rated basis depending on number of requests. The *Estimated Student Amount Report* will estimate pro-rated amounts, when applicable, and will remain an estimate until requests are finalized.

New for 2018–19: ACT has provided tiered costs for the ACT and ACT Plus Writing. MDE is applying the rates based on a district's negotiated contract with ACT, as provided by ACT. Districts should confirm the rate appearing on the *Estimated Student Amount Report* is correct.

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Assessment Accommodations Review Panel Applications

The Minnesota Assessment System 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. The Assessment Accommodations Review Panel (AARP) will meet in June and is looking for additional panel members. Note: The name of this group was recently updated and was formerly known as the Accommodations Advisory Review Panel.

This panel conducts reviews of proposed additions to the approved accommodations, linguistic supports, general supports, and non-standard test administration practices listed in the *Procedures Manual* to evaluate their use and determine if they are appropriate (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > Policies and Procedures). Members may include special education teachers, special education directors, EL teachers, educators of the deaf and hard of hearing, educators of the blind and visually impaired, parents, principals, or DACs.

See the Assessment Advisory Groups section of the Statewide Testing page for a more detailed description of the meeting and use the *Statewide Testing Advisory Committee Application*—found in that section of the webpage—to apply (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing). **Applications are due by April 1 for this year's meeting.** Share this opportunity with applicable staff.

Free WIDA e-Learning Courses for Minnesota Educators

MDE has partnered with WIDA in a 2018–19 pilot project that provides free, on-demand access to four e-learning courses through Aug. 31. The self-paced online courses allow any educator in Minnesota with a WIDA e-Learning account to access the content for individual learning. The courses can also be used as part of in-school professional learning communities focused on improving opportunities and outcomes for multilingual learners.

District staff can obtain a WIDA e-Learning account (or can add e-Learning access to an existing WIDA account) by sending a request to their district WIDA e-Learning Coordinator. Check with your district's English Learner or Multilingual Learner Education Coordinator to find out who has this role.

For additional help in finding your district's WIDA e-Learning Coordinator or if your district needs to assign a WIDA e-Learning Coordinator, please contact Mai Yang at mai.tong.yang@state.mn.us. If your district does not yet have a WIDA e-Learning Coordinator, you can request a WIDA e-Learning account directly by sending an email to mde.el@state.mn.us.

Once you have a WIDA e-Learning account, visit the WIDA e-Learning Center (Log in to the WIDA Secure Portal > [under the heading Professional Learning]). Additional details are outlined on Minnesota's WIDA page under Professional Learning (WIDA > Members/States > Minnesota).

Tech Update

Blacklisted Applications Disabled

As announced in a memo Pearson sent this morning, March 20, the functionality for blacklisting applications has been disabled. See the *Blacklisted Applications Disabled* article above for the full information of what was included in the memo.

STATEWIDE TESTING: MEASURING EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS IN MINNESOTA

Minnesota Department of Education

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

If you have any questions or want to unsubscribe, please send an email to mde.testing@state.mn.us.