

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE TESTING—AUGUST 7, 2019

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## Accountability Release Timeline

Results from the North Star accountability system were released at noon today, Aug. 7. The major dates for release are:

- Wednesday, Aug. 7—embargoed release of district- and school-specific data in Secure Reports
- Monday, Aug. 26—embargoed release of the public North Star file to districts in Secure Reports
- Tuesday, Aug. 27—embargoed release of the public North Star file to the press
- Thursday, Aug. 29—public release, including updated data on the Minnesota Report Card, and general availability of the public North Star file

In the Accountability Secure Reports section of Secure Reports, users are able to access the embargoed [North Star Report](#). This report provides information about school and district performance on each indicator in the North Star system. Users are also able to download secure rosters for academic achievement and progress, progress toward English language proficiency, and consistent attendance (secure rosters for graduation have been available since the spring).

MDE will offer a webinar for users with questions about navigating and interpreting their data, as well as some discussion of communicating the data to community members and the press. There are four dates and times available for the webinar, and the same content will be covered at each session. Use the following links at the time of the webinar to join.

- [Join the North Star Secure Release Webinar on Friday, Aug. 9, at 9 a.m.](#)
- [Join the North Star Secure Release Webinar on Tuesday, Aug. 13, at 8:30 a.m.](#)
- [Join the North Star Secure Release Webinar on Thursday, Aug. 15, at 4 p.m.](#)
- [Join the North Star Secure Release Webinar on Tuesday, Aug. 20, at 9 a.m.](#)

The accountability appeals window also opens today. Requests for an appeal can be made through the [North Star Appeals online survey tool](#). The appeals window will close on Aug. 21 at 4 p.m.

Contact Michael Diedrich at [michael.diedrich@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.diedrich@state.mn.us) or 651-582-8332 with questions.

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## ***Embargoed Data Reminder***

As a reminder, all assessment and accountability results are under embargo until Aug. 29. During the embargo, districts can use final assessment and accountability results for instructional planning and to prepare for questions from the media and local stakeholders. It is up to the district to determine whether or not to share embargoed data with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes; however, embargoed results cannot be discussed in public forums, reflected in public meeting minutes (e.g., school board meetings), or shared with the general public or media until the final results have been released publicly.

Only district employees or school officials who have a legitimate educational interest in the assessment or accountability results should have access to embargoed results in any form, including summary results. Individually-identifying student results should not be shared publicly at any point as required under FERPA regulations. Remind building principals and any other staff who have access to results of this policy regarding sharing embargoed data.

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## ***Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES***

Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES will close for 2018–19 on Aug. 9; it will reopen on Oct. 14 for 2019–20. Precode Student Eligibility will not be available from Aug. 9–Oct. 14.

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## ***Student Assessment History Report Rollover***

The [Student Assessment History Report](#) allows districts to look up the testing history for individuals who are enrolled in the district as verified by MARSS. The Student Assessment History Report will roll over to the new school year on Aug. 14, and districts will only have access for students who are included in MARSS enrollment for the 2019–20 school year. Until districts submit MARSS enrollment data for the new school year after MARSS submissions open on Aug. 14, there will be no data in the Student Assessment History Report.

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## ***Reimbursement Reports in GRR***

Districts must enter requests for reimbursements in the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\) system](#) for eligible students by Sept. 13. After requesting reimbursement, the district should confirm expected records using the reimbursement reports, which are refreshed early each morning.

- 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.

For more information, see the [Graduation Requirements Records \(GRR\) User Guide](#) or the *MDE Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) Training* posted in the [Training Management System \(TMS\)](#) (on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under the MDE Recorded Webinars category).

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## ***New Benchmark Reports for 2019***

The MCA Benchmark Reports have been redesigned for 2019 and will be available on Sept. 16. The new reports use a different calculation method to measure and report school- and district-level performance on each benchmark assessed from the Minnesota Academic Standards for the current year. Benchmark reports are produced for each grade level for the Reading, Mathematics, and Science MCAs. For the 2019 test administration, MDE and Pearson worked with various stakeholders to redesign the reports to make them easier to understand and use more effectively.

On the new reports, benchmark performance is calculated by comparing student performance on the MCA at the school or district to the expected performance of the “Meets” achievement level—in other words, how those students who perform at the “Meets” achievement level on the test would likely perform on the particular items for a given benchmark.

The benchmark reports are designed to be an additional resource educators can use to identify benchmarks within a grade and subject for which a school or district show performance less than, similar to, and greater than the current year's MCA relative to the "Meets" achievement level. When analyzing a benchmark report, it is important to have conversations about the full educational experience and consider other factors, such as curriculum, instructional practices, and all local assessments. Each benchmark report has three sections to help your school or district put the information in context:

- Overall performance, by achievement level, for the school, district, and state
- Performance by strand/substrand for the school, district, and state
- Performance by benchmark within strands or substrands

New and improved resources will be available to support districts in the appropriate use and understanding of the benchmark reports. The *Benchmark Report Interpretive Guide* is already available on the [Additional Reporting Resources page](#). Note that in the *Benchmark Report Interpretive Guide*, there is a reference and link to the *Benchmark Report Calculations Resource*, which is not yet available. Other resources are listed below:

- *Benchmark Report "How To" Quick Guides* for each subject (scheduled to be available in mid-August)
- *Benchmark Report Calculation Resource* (scheduled to be available in late August)
- *Benchmark Report Video Guide* (scheduled to be available in mid-September)
- Webinars (to be scheduled for September)

Note: Benchmark report resources from previous test administrations are still available on PearsonAccess Next, but will be removed on Monday, Aug. 26.

For additional questions or to request professional development or support, contact MDE's Outreach Specialist, Kendra Olsen, at [Kendra.Olsen@state.mn.us](mailto:Kendra.Olsen@state.mn.us) or 651-582-8542.

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## ***Preparing for the 2020 MCA Administration: Bluetooth Headphones***

As districts prepare for the MCA administration in the spring of 2020, note that Bluetooth headphones will not be allowed as they have the ability to connect to and receive information from a device other than the testing device, which cannot be verified by the Test Monitor or Test Administrator during testing.

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## Upcoming Opportunities

### Pearson Reporting Training

Pearson will provide an in-depth review of Published Reports, Longitudinal Reports, and Historical Student Data in PearsonAccess Next on Aug. 23 from 10–11 a.m. The webinar is limited to the first 150 participants. No registration is required. [Join the PearsonAccess Next: Published and Longitudinal Reports on Aug. 23.](#)

Use the link above to join the webinar. To join by phone, use the following information:

- Date: Aug. 23 from 10–11 a.m.
- Call-in phone number: 877-554-0877
- Conference code: 571 468 0293

The training will be recorded, and the session recording and PowerPoint presentation will be posted in the Training Management System on Friday, Aug. 30.

Note: While access to the new Benchmark Reports will be discussed in this training, detailed information about these reports will be provided in a separate training.

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## Tech Update

### WIDA Transition from TSM to COS SD: Action Required

WIDA is transitioning from the Testing Site Manager (TSM) to DRC's new site management solution Central Office Services Service Device (COS SD). Districts must migrate to the COS SD in their configurations and to retire all of their TSMs before Aug. 15.

The *Technology User Guide* and the *Tech Bulletin: TSM to COS Service Device* are available in the General Information – Documents section of [WIDA AMS](#), and will walk you through the process of installing a COS SD and integrating it into an existing configuration using the COS Device Toolkit. Links to the recordings of the COS Transition Webinars are available on the [ACCESS for ELLs Webinar Recordings page of the WIDA Secure Portal](#).

Note: The documentation described above related to the transition to COS SD can also be found on the [Technology Coordinators page of the WIDA Secure Portal](#).

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