TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

October 18, 2021

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Register Now for the COMPASS Overview Webinar on Wednesday, Oct. 20

Minnesota school districts, charter schools, tribal schools, and nonpublic schools are invited to attend the initial webinar on [COMPASS](#), the new statewide system to support student-learning recovery as we navigate another school year impacted by COVID-19. The webinar will be held on **Wednesday, Oct. 20, 9:30–11 a.m.,** and will provide an overview of the goals for the system, and the offerings that will be available throughout this school year. Registration is required for the webinar. Use this [COMPASS interest form](#) to let us know if you'd like to receive additional information about COMPASS, and register for the webinar on Oct. 20.

The first supports for schools available through COMPASS will be available in November, beginning with a two-part Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Supports Frame Work Overview webinar.

School leaders are encouraged to share information about the upcoming trainings with their staff. Any school staff who would like to learn more about COMPASS and its upcoming learning opportunities can sign up using this [COMPASS interest form](#).

Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors

The Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) are a resource for educators that describe in more detail some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities students typically demonstrate across the four achievement levels on the Reading and Mathematics MCAs. Descriptions are outlined for each benchmark from the standards at each achievement level. If staff are choosing to use this year's benchmark reports to discuss curriculum and instruction in the context of last school year, these resources can be used alongside the reports to guide discussions about reading and mathematics instruction. The purpose of the Benchmark ALDs is to:

•   Promote equity for all students across the state by clarifying the expected learning outcomes for instruction and classroom assessment, which are aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards in reading and mathematics.

•   Support teacher analysis of the depth of their curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessments.

The Benchmark ALDs are available in two formats and are available for reading and mathematics only. The table format is organized by benchmarks within a grade level, while the vertical articulation version is organized by a list of each benchmark's descriptors across grade levels. The specific descriptions of the knowledge, skills, and abilities are the same in both. A training module is also available on the same page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website. Contact testing123@state.mn.us for assistance with questions about the Benchmark ALDs.

2021–22 College Entrance Exam Requirement

As in past years, districts are required to offer a nationally recognized college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) to grades 11 and 12 students during a 2021–22 school day. Districts must enter into a contract directly with the test vendor. More information about ACT and College Board is included below.

ACT

•   View administration information, Free/Reduced-Price Lunch Program (FRLP) pricing structure, and key testing dates and deadlines on the ACT District Testing.

•   Districts will need to provide ACT the percentage of students who are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals to determine if the district will get a reduced price from ACT.

College Board

•   View administration information on the SAT School Day page.

•   Additional information about the deadlines for registration are on the SAT Timeline to Test Day page.

Dyslexia Screener Survey Request

The article below was also included in the Superintendent's Mailing.

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.12, requires MDE to publish a list of recommended dyslexia screeners on an annual basis. MDE will be reviewing the screeners currently on the recommended list (Acadience Reading, AimsWeb, DIBELS, FAST, STAR) as well as NWEA MAP. If your district is currently using a screener other than those listed above, and it measures all of the following: phonemic awareness, decoding (real or nonsense words), letter-naming fluency and oral reading fluency, please submit the name of the screener and the publisher to MDE for review. **The deadline to submit is Oct. 29**. The complete list of selection criteria is included below.

Please note: MDE will also review screeners appropriate for secondary students. Therefore, please submit the names of screening tools that you are **currently using** with secondary students.

The updated list of recommended screeners is scheduled to be published in January 2022. If you have questions, please contact Amy Schulting.

Recommended Universal Screening Tool List Criteria and Selection Process

1.   **Screening Tool Requirement:** The screening tool measures indicators of dyslexia in the elementary grades as described in Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) screening guidance. Indicators must include: phonemic awareness, decoding (real or nonsense words), letter-naming fluency and oral reading fluency. Subtests will vary by grade level.

2.   **Use in Minnesota:** Demonstrated use in Minnesota as indicated by self-reported submissions in compliance with Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.12.

3.   **Criteria for Administration:** The screening tool can be administered by a wide range of staff following standardized administration procedures. Specific licensure such as reading specialist, speech-language pathologist, school psychologist, etc., is not required.

4.   **Adequate Validity, Reliability, and Classification Accuracy:** The screening tool must have adequate evidence of classification accuracy. In addition, the tool must demonstrate adequate validity or reliability as reported by the vendor or a national organization providing annual review of assessment instruments (e.g., Center on Response to Intervention).

5.   **Norming Population Defined:** The screening tool manual includes an explanation of the population used to norm the screening tool. Districts are encouraged to review this information to determine if the norming population matches their student population.

6.   **Timeline of Review:** Revision of the MDE list is completed annually to add any additional screening tools using this process. This review will begin in October of each year. Results will be finalized by January of the following year.

7.   Process Review: This process will be reviewed annually.

Statewide Testing Participation for Students with IEPs or 504 Plans

The current reauthorization of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that students with disabilities participate in the statewide assessments that are designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students. IEP teams or 504 plan teams determine the appropriate manner for students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments.

Students with disabilities may participate in statewide assessments in these ways:

With or without accommodations. IEP and 504 plan teams determine which accommodations, if any, and general supports are appropriate for students with disabilities. Accommodations are documented in the IEP or 504 plan and must be provided based on individual need, as long as they do not invalidate the assessment. General supports are features or practices available for all students that may replace the need for an accommodation, depending on the student's disability; general supports may also be provided along with linguistic supports and accommodations.

•   **English language proficiency accountability assessments:** IEP and 504 plan teams use the Accessibility and Accommodations Manual when considering the needs of each student for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS. In addition, information about general supports and accommodations specific to Minnesota are included in Chapter 4 of the Procedures Manual.

•   **Standards-based accountability assessments:** IEP and 504 plan teams use the general supports and accommodation information in Chapter 4 of the Procedures Manual when considering the needs of each student for MCA and MTAS.

By taking an alternate assessment for which they are eligible. Only students with IEPs are eligible for alternate assessments. The IEP team documents the decision to administer an alternate assessment in the student's IEP.

•   **English language proficiency accountability assessments:** For English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team, in conjunction with EL staff, determines if the Alternate ACCESS is the most appropriate English language proficiency accountability assessment in place of the ACCESS, using the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Decision Tree.

•   **Standards-based accountability assessments:** For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements, the IEP team may determine that MTAS is the most appropriate measure of academic skills in one or more subject areas in place of the MCA. Access the Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS).

Please make sure that relevant EL and Special Education staff are aware of the available resources and either know how to access them or are provided them for reference when making decisions about student participation and accommodations.

Inclusion of American Sign Language (ASL) in English Learner Identification Process

The following article was shared with superintendents and school leaders on Oct. 1.

Beginning with the 2021–22 school year, American Sign Language (ASL) will be included as a valid home language in the English learner (EL) identification process and subsequent state EL funding and English language development (ELD) service. MDE will change the student accounting reporting system (MARSS) in order to include ASL as an allowable language code for EL identification. ASL users identified as ELs will be included in the Oct. 1 EL enrollment count. ASL users should be screened for English language development needs using statewide EL identification procedures. ASL users identified as ELs should receive English language development services as appropriate. ASL users identified as ELs will take ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS annually. MDE will provide guidance to school districts regarding identification and service of ASL users identified as ELs. MARSS coordinators will be notified via email when the MARSS edit has been updated. The update will allow ASL users who are identified as needing EL services to be reported without causing an error.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us if there are questions about EL identification and service. Contact Mary.Cashman-Bakken@state.mn.us with questions about working with students who use ASL. Contact MARSS@state.mn.us with questions regarding MARSS reporting.

NAEP 2022 Update

Approximately 180 Minnesota schools have been selected for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2022, which will include assessments in mathematics, reading, civics, and U.S. history in grades 4 and 8. The assessments will be administered within selected schools Jan. 24–March 4, 2022. Selected districts and schools have been notified. If you have any questions or concerns about NAEP, please contact Jenny Cain, NAEP State Coordinator, at Jennifer.cain@state.mn.us

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