



March 8, 2019

- [Important Dates](#)
- [MCA and MTAS Student Resources](#)
- [MCA and MTAS Test Administration Reminders](#)
- [Cell Phone and Device Policy Reminder](#)
- [Advisory Panelists Needed](#)
- [Minnesota Report Card Update](#)
- [New Outreach and Training Specialist](#)
- [Careers at MDE](#)
- [Testing Terminology: Acronyms of the Month](#)

---

## Important Dates

**March 22:** Testing window closes for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

**March 4–May 3:** Testing window for MTAS and Reading & Mathematics MCA

**March 4–May 10:** Testing window for Science MCA

## MCA and MTAS Student Resources

The [Purpose of Student Resources document](#) is designed to help clarify the purposes of the resources available for MCA and MTAS (MDE > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Student Resources). Teachers can use this document when making decisions about what resources their students need.

- The [student tutorial](#) is used to familiarize students and educators with the general functionality of the online test (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Test > Student Tutorial). There are three components of the tutorial—Navigation, Tools, and Item Types—each accompanied by a teacher guide.
- The [item samplers](#) are used to familiarize students and educators with how the content is presented in the test (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Test > Item Samplers). Item samplers, and their accompanying teacher guides, are available in every grade and subject for the MCA and MTAS, as well as for applicable accommodations and linguistic supports.

[Back to top](#)

## MCA and MTAS Test Administration Reminders

### Directions for Test Administration

The testing directions (both [Directions for Online Administrations](#) and [Directions for Paper Administrations](#)) have been revised for 2018–19 (PearsonAccess Next > Preparing for Testing > Testing Directions). Based on district feedback last spring, MDE revised the wording and format of the script that is read to students to make it easier for students to understand and easier for Test Monitors to use. In addition, the script was moved to the front of the document. MDE also added a Test Monitor checklist, as well as a section giving more guidance about how to appropriately answer student questions or provide assistance to students.

## Active Monitoring

Test Monitors must actively monitor students throughout the entire test administration by circulating around the room to carefully observe student behavior and ensure that all students are working independently and making progress in their tests. They cannot complete other tasks, including lesson planning, grading papers, or talking casually with other staff. If space is limited and students can potentially see other screens, the active monitoring must be heightened.

## Providing Assistance During Testing

The *Answering Questions and Providing Assistance* section of the *Directions for Online Administrations* or *Directions for Paper Administrations* provides specific guidance for what kind of help may be provided during testing. The following requirements must still be followed.

- Test Monitors may not paraphrase scripted instructions.
- Test Monitors may not define or pronounce a word on a test item, discuss a test item, or give an opinion regarding a test item.
- Test Monitors cannot give any indication that there may be a different approach or answer or help students with answers to items in any way.
- Test Monitors may not remind students of any test-taking strategies. Help of this sort should be provided prior to test administration, such as when the item samplers or student tutorial are used.
- Test Monitors may not control the pace at which students test, as the tests are not timed and students should be allowed to continue if they are making progress. For example, if you notice a student is moving quickly through the test, you can re-read any scripted instructions from this document, but it is not permissible to say, “Slow down” or “Take your time.”

## General Reminders

- Remove or cover any instructional posters or graphics, including strategies, techniques, or methods, in the testing room or on student desks.

- Ensure student test tickets, scratch paper, as well as hard-copy mathematics formula sheets and paper translated word lists (if provided) are collected from students and accounted for at the end of each test session.
- Do not use actual student tests as part of a practice session with Test Monitors or to verify technology or check any technical issues.

## MTAS Administration Reminders

The [MTAS Data Entry User Guide](#) is now available (PearsonAccess Next > Resources & Training > User Guides).

The following information is **new for 2018–19**:

- Staff no longer need to select the “Save” button before submitting scores when all MTAS scores are entered, which caused confusion last year.
  - However, it is important that staff confirm they entered a score for each task before submitting, as there is no longer a warning message or confirmation that scores for all tasks have been entered. While tasks may be left blank if they were not able to be administered to students, most tests should have scores entered for all tasks.
  - Students receive a valid score when scores for all tasks are entered.
- LCI data must be entered and saved once for each student who will take the MTAS. The LCI data entry window is open.

## Test Security Training Reminders

The *Test Security Training*, which has the *Assurance of Test Security and Non-Disclosure* embedded in the training, is required by any staff involved in any aspect of testing or handling test materials. Districts may have staff complete the training individually in the TMS, present the training to a group, or have staff review and sign the *Test Security Training Checklist* (i.e., a paper version of the training).

[Back to top](#)

## Cell Phone and Device Policy Reminder

Students may **not** use or access cell phones, wearable technology, or any other devices at any time during testing, including during breaks or when testing is completed.

- If a student has a cell phone or device out at any point while testing, the student's test has been compromised and needs to be invalidated, even if the student did not use the cell phone or device.
- Students also may not wear or access "wearable" technology (e.g., smart watches, fitness trackers) during testing if the device can electronically send or receive information. If one of these devices is worn during testing, the student's test must be invalidated because the device is visible and accessible, regardless of if it is used or not.

### Cell Phone Policy for Test Monitors

Test Monitors may use cell phones or other electronic devices **only** to alert others when assistance is needed. Test content can never be photographed or communicated, including when the Test Monitor needs to alert others of an issue. Test Monitors cannot check email or work on their cell phones, and cell phones should be silenced to reduce disruptions.

[Back to top](#)

## Advisory Panelists Needed

MDE needs qualified teachers and community members to serve on MCA advisory panels. Each advisory panel member plays an important role in developing quality tests for Minnesota's students. Please forward this information to staff in the district or to community members who may be interested in advisory panel meetings.

For more information about advisory panels and to submit or update your information to the Advisory Panel Registry, view the [Advisory Panels webpage](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Register for Advisory Panels). While teachers comprise the bulk of the advisory panel participants, bias review panels need a wide variety of community members.

[Back to top](#)

## Minnesota Report Card Update

The Minnesota Report Card was recently updated for the Science option in the subject dropdown of the Test Results and Participation and Test Achievement Levels reports. The “Students Included” option now defaults to “All tested” students, rather than only those meeting enrollment criteria because science is not included in accountability in the same way as reading and mathematics.

[Back to top](#)

## New Outreach and Training Specialist

Kendra Olsen is the new Outreach Specialist in Statewide Testing. Kendra will continue the work on the Testing 1, 2, 3 website, which has an official launch scheduled for August. Testing 1, 2, 3 focuses on improving assessment literacy and increasing the accessibility of statewide data in conjunction with local data, in order to make the data more usable and meaningful for teachers.

Before joining MDE, Kendra taught in the New York City Public Schools. She has had leadership experiences in professional development and is committed to providing more equitable educational opportunities for Minnesota students. She is excited to work at the state level supporting educators.

Kendra will present at several conferences around the state on the Testing 1, 2, 3 website as well as on the redesigned Benchmark Reports. Contact Kendra if you are interested in virtual or in-person professional development on statewide assessment data or the Testing 1, 2, 3 website at [kendra.olsen@state.mn.us](mailto:kendra.olsen@state.mn.us) or 651-582-8542.

[Back to top](#)

## Careers at MDE

The Minnesota Department of Education’s Division of Statewide Testing has an opening in the area of reading assessment. This position exists to provide direction, leadership, coordination and consultation to the Statewide Testing team and service to school districts to facilitate the

assessment of state academic standards in reading and serve as the state expert and primary resource for K-12 reading assessments.

For more information about the job opening and to apply, [Read More.](#)

If you have trouble with the link above:

1. Go to [www.mn.gov/careers](http://www.mn.gov/careers)
2. On the Job Search page enter the Job Opening ID number in the Keywords search box and click Search.
3. Click on the Job Title to view the job posting.
4. If interested, click Apply.

*Note:* If you are unable to find the job opening it may no longer be posted. For assistance, contact the Job Information Line at: 651-259-3637.

[Back to top](#)

## Testing Terminology: Acronyms of the Month

- **ALDs (Achievement Level Descriptors):** An educator resource that describes the four levels of achievement on the MCA or MTAS based on the Minnesota Academic Standards.
- **DSR/SSR (District and School Student Results):** Large data files that contains all student-level data from the assessments, including demographic information, achievement level information, and test scores.
- **Test Specifications:** Specific rules guiding the development of a test, including information from the academic standards about how strands, sub-strands, standards, and benchmarks will be assessed.

[Back to top](#)

## Statewide Testing's Mission

To design, develop, and implement a system of assessment so Minnesota students, parents, teachers, administrators, legislators and taxpayers will have access to valid and reliable data to support and improve education in Minnesota.



[Sign up to receive the Teacher Newsletter.](#)

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#) | [website](#)