

# TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

December 18, 2020

## Quick Links

- [Remote Assessment Administration Pilot](#)
- [Reporting Student Gender](#)
- [Featured Resource of the Month: Benchmark ALDs Training Module](#)
- [Important Ideas and Research in School Assessment and Data](#)

## ***Remote Assessment Administration Pilot***

The following article was provided in the Nov. 6 Superintendent Mail and is included here for educator awareness:

Given the current landscape of virtual, in-person, and hybrid approaches that districts and schools are implementing, there is a need for assessment solutions that reliably and equitably support statewide assessment delivery in a variety of learning scenarios.

We are conducting a feasibility study on different approaches for remote test administration, including a pilot of remote proctoring software to learn more about the student experience during a remotely proctored assessment. The study is scheduled to occur in **November and December**.

The study will combine TestNav test delivery (which students currently use) along with remote proctoring software utilizing a Chrome extension (which is not available on iPads). The software will use audio and video monitoring during the student's test. All recorded audio and video will be treated as Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and stored securely, using zero-knowledge encryption. No student data leave devices until they are encrypted. Only authorized school, state or research personnel will have access to student data.

[Back to Top](#)

## ***Reporting Student Gender***

For the past year and a half, MDE has been exploring the possibility of expanding the way in which student gender is collected and reported in MARSS, including an option to designate a gender other than male or female. In August, the Executive Team at MDE determined to move ahead with the decision to revise the data collection systems, giving schools greater flexibility in reporting student gender identity. This is a multi-year process, and the first public reporting of this information is scheduled to be available in early 2023.

View the *Gender Identity Data Collection and Reporting* document on the [Safe and Supportive webpage](#) to learn more about this decision.

[Back to Top](#)

## ***Featured Resource of the Month: Benchmark ALDs Training Module***

As previously announced, the Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors (Benchmark ALDs) are a new resource designed to aid educators in understanding and using the ALDs in their schools and classrooms. A Benchmark ALD training module is now available on the [Success Criteria page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website](#) (under the Benchmark Achievement Level Descriptors expandable heading).

The Benchmark ALDs describe some of the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) of students who scored in each of the four achievement levels on the MCA-III for Mathematics and Reading in grades 3–8 and high school. The purpose of the Benchmark ALDs are to:

- Promote equity for all students by outlining the grade-level learning outcomes demonstrated by students across four achievement levels aligned to the Minnesota Academic Standards in Reading and Mathematics.
- Support teachers in analysis of the depth of their curriculum, instruction, and classroom assessments.

Contact [testing123@state.mn.us](mailto:testing123@state.mn.us) for any questions about the Benchmark ALDs.

Note: If the above link does not work for you, try a different web browser. Some districts have reported issues when trying to access Testing 1, 2, 3 using Google Chrome.

[Back to Top](#)

## ***Important Ideas and Research in School Assessment and Data***

This section of the newsletter is designed to keep educators well-informed on current research and best practices to improve teaching, leadership, and learning in relation to data and assessment in the classroom.

### **Is Teacher Use of Formative Assessment Practices Associated with Student Use of Self-Regulated Learning Strategies?**

A new *Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) West* study examined survey results from more than 1,200 teachers and 24,000 students in three Arizona school districts. The survey was about teacher formative assessment practices and student learning activities.

Interesting findings include the following:

- Teachers often provided students with individual feedback, but less often created opportunities for students to give feedback to each other. Students frequently tracked their own progress but less often asked for feedback.
- Teachers who used more formative assessment practices saw more students using self-regulated learning strategies. This correlation was stronger in elementary schools and in STEM classrooms.
- The practice of facilitating peer feedback and self-assessment resulted in a higher number of self-regulated learning strategies used by students in comparison to the other used formative assessment practices.

[The association between teachers' use of formative assessment practices and students' use of self-regulated learning strategies.](#) Makkonen, R., & Jaquet, K. (2020). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West.

## Formative and Summative Assessment in a Hybrid Classroom

In this *Edutopia* article, a secondary English teacher outlines strategies for assessment that have worked for her in a hybrid teaching model. While she admits that the hybrid model of learning can lead to challenges with assessment, she also says it has pushed her to try new approaches that have “increased engagement, encouraged critical thinking, and provided students an opportunity to showcase their strengths.”

Strategies and tips outlined for formative assessment include:

- Design class discussions that focus on what is most important to learn.
- Keep a running list of students who speak in discussion to ensure every student engages.
- Use Google Docs to provide students individual feedback on writing and track long-term progress.
- Create opportunities for in-person and remote students to collaborate and check their own understanding by asking students to submit responses to open-ended questions, links, and photos on Padlet or Google Jamboard.

Strategies shared for summative assessment in a hybrid learning model include:

- Avoid asking questions that are easy to find the answer on the internet or for students to share with others. For example, rather than asking about the plot in the novel she prompts them to “make connections, explain themes, or make comparisons to another book.”
- Give students choice by providing multiple options for responding to an extended response question.
- Utilize a variety of assessment types or formats like hexagonal thinking and video response.
- Provide specific and targeted feedback to individual students and designate time in class for students to review and submit reflections regarding the assessment and their feedback.

[“Formative and Summative Assessment in a Hybrid Classroom”](#) by Kasey Short in *Edutopia*, November 23, 2020.

## Assessment in Play-Based Kindergarten

In this *American Educational Research Journal* article, kindergarten teachers face a dilemma as they focus on how to gather accurate assessment data on student learning while honoring their commitment to play-based classroom pedagogy. The authors claim assessment of student learning in a kindergarten class should have four characteristics:

- Assessment takes place continuously.
- Teachers assess learning through conversations, observation, and individual testing.

- Teachers measure students’ progress on academic standards *and* developmental targets.
- There’s a commitment to child-centered and developmentally appropriate practices.

By observing 20 kindergarten classrooms, the researchers noticed that teachers were using these types of assessments:

- Embedded – Assessments take place in the context of play to measure academic and developmental learning. The child and teacher are actively engaged in play
- Observational – The teacher unobtrusively observes during child-initiated play, taking anecdotal notes, using a checklist, or taking photos or videos, usually to measure developmental learning.
- Withdrawal – The teacher takes a child aside and conducts a formal assessment such as a running record or test of letter recognition, letter-sound association, or sight-words.

The authors say the teachers they observed felt more pressure to measure academic learning. “Based on the pathways the teachers used to implement and assess kindergarten curriculum, there appears to be an emphasis on academic learning. It may be time to pause and reflect on our curricular priorities...and assessments that best support them.”

[“A Model for Assessment in Play-Based Kindergarten Education”](#) by Angela Pyle, Erica Danniels, Hanna Wickstrom, and Christopher DeLuca in *American Educational Research Journal*, December 2020 (Vol. 57, #6, pp. 2251-2292).

[Back to Top](#)



### *Statewide Student Assessment and Data Analytics*

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