TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

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2020–21 Statewide Assessment Results Reporting Updates

The following article was shared with superintendents and school leaders on April 22.

Earlier this month, Minnesota submitted a waiver for the accountability sections of its Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan in response to an opportunity from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). On Wednesday, April 21, we received notification from ED that our waiver has been approved. Under this waiver, Minnesota will still collect and report data on student learning. However, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on data collection and usability, data collected during the 2020–21 school year will not be used for accountability purposes.

This means that for the next round of identification of schools for support and improvement under ESSA, which under the waiver will now be delayed until fall 2022, we will use statewide assessment results from only the 2018–19 and 2021–22 school years. For graduation and attendance data, we will use data from 2017–18 and 2020–21.

New Resources for Assessment Results

Before the release of secure data, MDE will be providing a *2021 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance* document that will provide guidance for districts with information on using 2021 results appropriately and in context.

In addition, MDE is developing a series of one-page resources to accompany each part of the data release to provide additional support to district staff in using the results. These resources are intended to provide information about how to use the results, as well as specific contexts to consider for this year. The first resource about preliminary results is now available on the Testing 1, 2, 3 website. Additional resources for the DSR/SSR files, Test Results Summary, and public reporting will be provided ahead of their respective releases.

2020-21 Results Release Timeline

The information below was shared with superintendents and school leaders on May 10.

Preliminary results for MCA and MTAS are available within an hour of the assessment being completed. All assessment results are under embargo until public release. The public release of assessment results will be the week of August 30. **The exact date and timeline, including media release, will be shared with schools closer to the release date**.

- Wednesday, July 14: District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files available for district download. These files provide embargoed final individual student results.

- Friday, Aug. 6: Test Results Summary provides embargoed summary results.

- Thursday, Aug. 26: Individual Student Reports (ISRs) arrive in districts

- Week of Aug. 30: Media receives access to embargoed accountability downloadable data file including state, all districts, and all school-level data; Public release of assessment and accountability results, including school recognition, in Data Center; Assessment results available in PearsonAccess Next (MCA/MTAS) and WIDA AMS (ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS)

Embargoed Final Individual Student Results

Final assessment results will be available in the District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files on July 14; these results will be under embargo until the public release of assessment results the week of August 30. **The exact date will be shared with schools closer to the release date**. During the embargo, districts can use final assessment results to prepare for questions from the media and local stakeholders. It is up to the district to determine whether or not to share embargoed assessment data with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes; however, preliminary or 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 assessment results have been released publicly.

Embargoed Summary Results

On Friday, August 6, embargoed assessment results will be available in Test Results Summary on the Secure Reports page. All assessment results are under embargo until the week of August 30. **The exact date will be shared with schools closer to the release date**. During the embargo, districts can use the final assessment results to prepare for questions from the media and local stakeholders. They may share the results with district teachers and staff for planning or instructional purposes, but they may not share the results publicly.

The Test Results Summary reports include final summary data for MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, and Alternate ACCESS.

Final Student Reports Delivery

Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for both MCA/MTAS and ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are scheduled to arrive in districts Thursday, August 26. Districts may prepare the ISRs for mailing or download a zipped file into their student information systems, but the ISRs cannot be mailed or uploaded prior to the public release date.

Final 2020-21 Public Assessment Results Release

Assessment results will be released to the public of the week of August 30—**the exact date will be shared with schools closer to the release date**—in the [Minnesota Report Card](#).

Preliminary Student-Level Results for MCA and MTAS

As mentioned above, a new resource about using preliminary results is available on [Testing 1, 2, 3](#). Each district is responsible for determining how preliminary results will be shared with teachers, students, and/or families. Contact your district assessment coordinator (DAC) with questions about accessing preliminary results.

- On-Demand reports provide preliminary student scores for MCA and MTAS within 60 minutes after testing. On-demand reports can be generated as student detail reports (as PDFs) for individual students or downloaded as a list report (as a PDF or Excel spreadsheet). Your results may be organized differently depending on how your district has determined to share them with you.

- Preliminary student assessment results can be shared with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes. However, it is important to use and share these results in context, especially this year; for example, how did changes in the instructional schedule and learning mode affect student learning? It is recommended to wait until summarized test results are available this summer, if using them as part of decision-making.

- Preliminary assessment results should not be discussed in public forums (e.g., on social media), reflected in public meeting minutes (e.g., school board meetings), or shared with the general public or media until the final assessment results have been released publicly.

MCA/MTAS Reminders

Longer Testing Window

As announced in March, the MCA and MTAS testing windows have been extended through **Friday, May 21**. This extension applies to all subjects of MTAS and MCA (online and data entry), and allows for more flexibility in scheduling testing, while balancing the need to receive results prior to the start of the next school year.

Common Misadministrations

In order to prevent students logging in (starting or resuming their test) with the wrong test ticket, remind Test Administrators to distribute the correct test tickets and be sure each student verifies they are logging in with the correct information. This check is part of the *Script to Read to Students* included in the [*Testing Directions*](#), which is required to be read before students begin testing.

Cell Phone and Device Policy Reminder

Students may **not** use or access cell phones, wearable technology, or other devices at any time during testing, including during breaks or when testing is completed. District and School Assessment Coordinators must develop and train staff on school-specific policies and procedures, including the cell phone and device policy, prior to test administration.

Note: Use of a device is allowed if it is used as a medical monitor, as long as the use is officially documented by a medical professional. The Test Monitor must ensure the device is not accessed for other purposes.

Reporting Suspected Item and Translation Errors and Technical Issues

If a student points out a test item that appears to have an error for MCA and MTAS, the Test Monitor or Test Administrator should instruct the student to continue the test and note the grade, subject, item number, section number (Science MCA only), student MARSS/SSID number, and information on how the online test was accessed (i.e., device and/or operating system). This same process is used if a student points out a translation that appears to be incorrect in paper translated word lists or the online pop-up translations. Following the test session, the Test Monitor should notify the District or School Assessment Coordinator about test items or translations that may have an error.

If a technical issue occurs and a student receives an error message in an online test, the Test Monitor should write down the error message and number along with the student and test information specified above. If the technical issue prevents the student from responding to the item, the student should exit the test. For technical issues, the Test Monitor should contact district technology staff following the district's procedure, as needed, and provide information to the District or School Assessment Coordinator following the test session.

For all suspected item/translation errors or technical issues, the DAC contacts MDE or the service provider and gives the information collected by the Test Administrator or Test Monitor.

The content of the item itself should never be referenced, captured as an image, emailed within the school or district, or sent in a communication with MDE or the service provider because doing so is a security violation.

Minnesota Report Card Update

A filter has been added in the MCA/MTAS achievement panes of the Minnesota Report Card for foster care. When the foster care filter is selected in the achievement panes, no other filters can be selected to ensure student privacy protections. This includes race/ethnicity, gender, English learner, special education, free/reduced-priced meals, migrant status, active-duty parent, homeless, or limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) status.

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

Minnesota will launch the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten on July 1. WIDA made supporting materials and training resources available in the WIDA Secure Portal on March 30. Minnesota educators who currently have WIDA Screener permissions will also have access to the Kindergarten Screener materials at that time. Staff who do not have the new screener tile in the WIDA Secure Portal can work with their DAC to request access to the new screener materials and resources.

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is a free, paper-based English language proficiency (ELP) tool used for initial identification of English learner status. Starting on July 1, certified test administrators in Minnesota can administer this new ELP screener.

Note: The Kindergarten W-APT and MODEL will continue to be available at least through 2021–22. Check the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten page in the future for the phase-out schedule.

Contact mde.el@state.mn.us for any questions about the screener or other questions about identification of ELs.

MDE Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment Division

You may have noticed a change in our team's name in presentations and email signatures. Over the past several months, Governor Walz' Due North Plan has guided discussions about how MDE can lead change to our education system so every child in Minnesota receives a high-quality education. In order to better achieve our goals, some internal changes have been made to align our department to the values, direction, and expectations.

The Academic Standards and Instruction, and the Statewide Student Assessment and Data Analytics divisions were combined to align to the first two corollary questions in *Learning by Doing* (DuFour, Dufour, Eaker, Many, Mattos, 2010):

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will we know if they know it?

This also solidifies that standards and assessment are intertwined for student learning and is intended to communicate the tie between academic standards and assessments.

Featured Resource: New Interpret Scores Page on Testing 1, 2, 3

After students complete the statewide assessments each spring, final results are provided to schools, districts, and the public organized in a variety of different reports. As the testing window for MCA and MTAS closes on May 21st, many educators have begun reviewing preliminary results and have questions regarding individual scores.

The redesigned Interpret Statewide Assessment Scores page on Testing 1, 2, 3 outlines how the assessments are scored and how to interpret individual student scores. It is important to keep in mind the following when looking at results:

- Statewide assessments are one part of a balanced comprehensive assessment system that works in coordination to provide information about student learning of the standards.

- The MCA is designed to measure a snapshot of student learning of the MN Academic Standards in Math, Reading, and Science.

- The results should be used at a summarized level to examine equitable learning opportunities for students to learn grade-level standards.

- Individual student results should be considered in the context of additional, more fine-grained evidence of student learning like projects and classroom assessments when making decisions.

Important Ideas and Research

Using Data to Support Students Virtually: How Time and Schoolwide Data Tools Can Help Educators Better Understand Student Progress

In this blog post, reflections from a middle-school math teacher and team leader are shared about how additional dedicated time and formalized schoolwide data tools have impacted the way data was used during the pandemic.

Before the pandemic, Caylah Green says specific school-based teams had access to private data trackers and goals that were often used in siloes, which allowed educators only to see part of the story about where students were at. During the pandemic, however, she says her school "focused on streamlining data collection and creating protected time to dig into the data to make sure teachers have the information they need to support students."

"Using Data to Support Students Virtually" by Caylah Green, *Data Quality Campaign: Teacher Data Literacy Week*; April 28, 2021.

Enduring Practices from Remote Teaching

In this *Edutopia* article, a California English teacher says there may be a silver lining from this challenging year: insights and ideas that should be kept to improve instruction and increase student learning beyond the pandemic:

- *A virtual agenda* – Instead of writing the daily schedule and assignments on the board, Pack has been creating a digital agenda for a unit that outlines each day's lesson, a rationale for each activity, relevant hyperlinks, and homework. This constantly updated agenda, lets students see how the unit is progressing, provides talking points for teacher-student conferences, and supports self-paced learning.
- *Re-create the zoom chat* – The way the chat function has been used in remote instruction – soliciting quick feedback, checking for understanding, engaging quieter students, doing one-on-one check-ins, and a space for "parking lot" ideas – can definitely be incorporated in regular classes. This can be done with tools like Mentimeter and Google Docs, or low-tech whiteboards and chart paper.
- *Mindful breaks* – "Remote learning has made breaks nonnegotiable," says Pack, "and there's no reason why we should abandon those benefits…" During longer blocks of in-person instruction, breaks are a must, with student input on when they take place. Pack recommends not taking breaks in the first 20 minutes of a class, and giving students accountability tasks to complete before and after breaks.
- *Split whole-group discussions in half* – Zoom classes have made it possible for teachers to have two simultaneous discussions, which gives each student more air-time and takes conversations to a deeper level. Pack suggests modifying this process with in-person classes by assigning half the class a quiet independent task while the other half has a discussion, then flipping the groups.
- *Soliciting student feedback* – Many teachers have used polls and surveys to check in with students on pacing, learning modalities, and homework load – and to get a sense of their morale and mental health. This practice certainly should continue with in-person instruction, she says, fostering mutual understanding and student voice and choice.

"Enduring Practices from Remote Learning" by Samantha Pack in *Edutopia*, April 2, 2021.

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