TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

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ACCESS for ELLs Test Administration Trainings

Professional Development staff from the WIDA Consortium will conduct the following in-person, ACCESS for ELLs test administration trainings. These face-to-face trainings allow participants to get their questions answered and reflect on the test preparation and administration process as a group. *Note: These trainings do not replace the required ACCESS for ELLs Training Courses on the WIDA Secure Portal.*

- **ACCESS for ELLs Test Coordinator Training** is intended for District or School Assessment Coordinators or EL Coordinators who will set up user accounts, prepare for online testing and test management, verify that all Test Administrators have been appropriately trained, and serve as the "how-to" resource for Test Administrators in their districts and schools.

- **Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs Test Administrator Training** is intended for educators who will administer the Kindergarten ACCESS for the first time this year. The Kindergarten ACCESS is a one-on-one paper administration.

These trainings are provided at no cost. Lunch is not provided.

Each training is a half-day session, and space for each session is limited. If space is no longer available for your preferred date and time, you will need to select another date or time. Registration is limited to three people from a district or charter school in any session.

DATE	TRAINING AND REGISTRATION	LOCATION
Tuesday, Dec. 3	ACCESS for ELLs: Test Coordinators (8:30 a.m.–noon) Register for the Dec. 3 ACCESS Test Coordinator training in Mankato. Kindergarten ACCESS: Test Administrators (1–4 p.m.) Register for the Dec. 3 Kindergarten ACCESS training in Mankato.	South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) Conference Center 2075 Lookout Drive North Mankato, MN 56003
Wednesday, Dec. 4	ACCESS for ELLs: Test Coordinators (8:30 a.m.–noon) Register for the Dec. 4 ACCESS Test Coordinator training. Kindergarten ACCESS: Test Administrators (1–4 p.m.) Register for the Dec. 4 Kindergarten ACCESS training.	Minnesota Department of Education Conference Center A: Room 13 1500 Hwy 36 West Roseville, MN 55113
Thursday, Dec. 5	ACCESS for ELLs: Test Coordinators (8:30 a.m.–noon) Register for the Dec. 5 ACCESS Test Coordinator morning training. ACCESS for ELLs: Test Coordinators (1–4:30 p.m.) Register for the Dec. 5 ACCESS Test Coordinator afternoon training.	Minnesota Department of Education Conference Center A: Rooms 13 1500 Hwy 36 West Roseville, MN 55113

Student Resources

MDE requires districts to ensure that all students are familiar with the test they will be taking. Students should be able to successfully navigate the test, use the applicable tools, and respond to different item types. Each district determines which resources will be used and how they will be used. MDE does not require all students to use all resources; districts must determine the resources to use, which may vary by school, grade, or student.

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

Districts should use the *QuickStart Guide for Preparing Students for ACCESS Online* (available on the Preparing Students for ACCESS for ELLs page), as they consider which student resources will be used to prepare students for ACCESS. This guide provides information about the purpose of each resource, the links to the resources, as well as additional guidance for EL teachers.

As districts consider what resources to use with students for ACCESS, they should become familiar with the resources below, which are available on the. Districts can start by downloading the *QuickStart Guide for Preparing Students for ACCESS Online* for more information about the purpose of each resource.

- The **test demo** is available for each grade-level cluster to show students how to navigate different features of the test. WIDA recommends that students watch the test demo before taking the practice test.

- The **practice test** can be used to familiarize students with the ACCESS test format. These items are very easy, but will help students become familiar with the test environment.

- For students who have experience taking the ACCESS, the **sample items** are recommended. These items can be used to familiarize students with the content and grade-level appropriate language development expectations, and they are representative of the item difficulty a student will experience on the actual test. WIDA also advises using the previous year's ACCESS score report to focus on domains where students may need additional support.

Similar to ACCESS, there is a *QuickStart Guide for Preparing to Administer Alternate ACCESS for ELLs* (available on the [Preparing to Administer Alternate ACCESS for ELLs page](#)).

MCA and MTAS

The [*Purposes of Student Resources*](#) document helps clarify the purposes of the resources available for MCA and MTAS.

- The [student tutorial](#) is used to familiarize students and educators with the general functionality of the online test. There are three components of the tutorial—Navigation, Tools, and Item Types—each accompanied by a teacher guide. The Item Types component has already been updated for 2019–20, and the other components will be available by January.

- The [item samplers](#) are used to familiarize students and educators with how the content is presented in the test. Item samplers are available in every grade and subject for the MCA and MTAS, as well as for applicable accommodations and linguistic supports.

Seeking Parent Feedback for ISR Change

During the 2019 legislative session, there was a legislative change that removed the requirement for reporting progress scores for grade 3–8 on the MCAs. This change requires a modification to the Individual Student Reports (ISRs), as the section with progress scores on page 3 will be removed. MDE is seeking feedback from parents on the proposed redesign of the layout to page 3 of the ISR. The changes include adding text about how families should use the results and how to understand the results from year to year. The student's performance history will still be included, but presented in a different format.

If your district has any parent groups or parent meetings coming up in November, MDE would be interested in either presenting the proposed draft to the group for feedback or doing a webinar to show the changes. Please contact Kate Beattie at kate.beattie@state.mn.us if you are interested in having a parent group provide feedback.

MathBits Article: (Mis)Understanding Scale Scores on the MCA

The Minnesota Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) released an article in September titled [(Mis)Understanding Scale Scores on the MCA](#). The article clarifies how student scale scores are calculated, and how they should (and should not) be used when comparing performance from year to year. This is a very helpful resource for better understanding how to interpret a student's MCA score, and for reference when discussing with parents, who may ask questions about their child's scores.

Featured Resource of the Month

Released MCA Questions

Did you know there is a database of publicly released test questions (items) and passages from past math and reading MCAs? These released items can be helpful to educators to better understand how content from the Minnesota Academic Standards is assessed on the MCA. With each test item, there is also released data and rationales, which can help in lesson planning to better understand misconceptions and anticipate student mistakes. More information about the released items and how to use them effectively can be found on Testing 1, 2, 3 (testing123.education.mn.gov > Plan and Teach > Released MCA Questions).

Example: **Grade 3 Mathematics Released MCA Item**

The table shows the cost of apples.

Apple Prices

Pounds of Apples	Price
2	$4
4	$8
6	$12
?	$18

Ben paid $18 for apples at the grocery store.

How many pounds of apples did Ben buy?

- A. 7
- B. 8
- C. 9
- D. 12

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 related to assessment and data use in the classroom. In each issue, 2–4 articles will be featured that have relevant ideas to improve teaching, leadership, and learning.

5 Questions PLCs Should Ask to Promote Equity

In this article in *The Learning Professional*, the authors suggest five questions to help professional learning teams focus their work on improving equitable outcomes in teaching and learning:

• *Where are we going?* Learning goals can be well-framed and clear, but also contain low expectations – for example, a fifth-grade team planning lessons based on third-grade expectations. When this happens, the authors argue that students don't work up to their potential and achievement gaps persist.

• *Where are we now?* "When teams discuss the current performance levels of their students," the authors say, "they are often confronted with the reality that some students have not had equitable opportunities to learn to grade-level standards, and they are called on to accept responsibility to close the gap."

• *How do we move learning forward?* The authors claim "some well-meaning teachers end up using ineffective approaches, like assigning worksheets or doing all the work for students." Teacher team members must be vulnerable with each other and share effective practices – including pedagogy that is culturally relevant.

• *What did we learn today?* This includes analyzing students' academic progress by using frequent checks for understanding, and teacher reflection on what's working, what reteaching is necessary, and how instruction can be improved.

• *Who benefited and who did not?* The authors believe it's important for PLCs to break down assessment data by student subgroups.

"5 questions PLCs should ask to promote equity" by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, and John Almarode in *The Learning Professional*, October 2019 (Vol. 40, #5, pp. 44-47).

Quote of the Month

"The fact that students can do something successfully at the end of a lesson does not mean that they will be able to do it in two weeks' time. But if they *can't* do it at the end of the lesson, it is highly unlikely they will be able to do it in two weeks' time."

Dylan William

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.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION