TESTING 123

Updates for teachers from the MDE Statewide Testing Division

September 10, 2019

Welcome back!

As the school year takes off in full swing, we want to take a moment to wish you a great and rewarding year. Teachers are often identified as the single most important factor in determining a child's future. As the school year starts to ramp up and you may feel a bit overwhelmed, take some time each day to remember the positive impact you have in the lives of your students every day. Thank you for everything you do for our students. Have a wonderful school year!

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Final 2019 Assessment and Accountability Results Released

Assessment and accountability results were released to the public on Aug. 29, in the Minnesota Report Card. Assessment and accountability results are also available to districts in Secure Reports.

For general information about the public release or specific questions about the Minnesota Report Card, contact MDE's Communication division at mde.communications@state.mn.us or 651-582-8205.

For more information about accountability results or calculations, visit MDE's School and District Accountability page, or contact Michael Diedrich at michael.diedrich@state.mn.us or 651-582-8332 with any questions.

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Data Reports and Analytics

There are also some reports publicly available on the Data Reports and Analytics page (under the Accountability and Assessment heading).

- The Assessment and Growth files are assessment-only downloadable data files, which provide summary assessment data for all districts.

- The Subscore Report provides summarized strand or substrand data for the MCAs and summarized composite scale scores for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS. Note that MTAS does not report subscores, so it is not included in this report.

  o The Subscore Report displays graphs and tables to show results at the school, district, or state level for a selected test, year, grade, and subject (for MCA). Users may also filter the results by gender, race/ethnicity, and different student groups (e.g., English learners or students in special education).

  o While information about strands or substrands are not very useful or reliable at the student-level, looking at large groups of students may provide helpful information. As districts or schools strive to ensure equity for all their students, they often analyze and evaluate their system of instruction. If using the information in the Subscore Report as part of this process, keep in mind that this report is only one source of data and has limitations. Many factors should be considered when evaluating a system's success.

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Technical Reports for MCA and MTAS

There are a number of updated reports now available on the Technical Reports page including the following:

- **Scale Score – Percentile Rank Tables for Mathematics and Reading MCAs**: Documents that provide the scale scores that correspond to the achievement level and percentile rank.

- **Raw to Scale Score Tables for Science MCA and All Subjects for MTAS**: Documents that provide correspondence between raw score (number of questions correct) and scale score.

Reminder: New Benchmark Reports for 2019

The MCA Benchmark Reports have been redesigned and will be available for download on Monday, September 16 in *PearsonAccess Next*. A new calculation method was used to measure and report school- and district-level performance on the benchmarks assessed from the Minnesota Academic Standards.

The benchmark reports are designed to be an additional resource educators may use when looking at student data. When analyzing a benchmark report, it is important to have conversations about the full educational experience and consider other factors, such as curriculum, instructional practices, and all local assessments.

New and improved resources are available to support districts in the appropriate use and understanding of the benchmark reports:

- The *Benchmark Report Interpretive Guide* and Benchmark Report "How To" Quick Guides are available on the Additional Reporting Resources page.

- The *Benchmark Report Calculation Resource* is available on the Technical Reports page (posted under the Other Students heading at the bottom of the webpage).

- The *Benchmark Report Video Guides* are scheduled to be available in mid-September.

If you have questions about the Benchmark Reports or would like in-person or online training about using the Benchmark Reports, please contact Kendra Olsen at Kendra.Olsen@state.mn.us or 651-582-8542.

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Score Interpretation Resources

The 2019 score report resources are now updated and posted on the WIDA website, including the following:

- The *Interpretive Guide for ACCESS* explains the types of scores reported by ACCESS.

- The *Interpretive Guide for Alternate ACCESS* explains the types of scores reported by Alternate ACCESS.

- *Individual Student Score Notes* are designed to support educators as they prepare to discuss ACCESS score reports with students and families.

- [Score Report PowerPoint slides for ACCESS](#) are designed for educators to use in presentations with parents and families.

- A variety of [lesson plans](#) are available for teachers to use when talking with their students about ACCESS testing and results.

- An [infographic for using ACCESS score reports](#) is designed to provide information for educators on how to analyze ACCESS scores, communicate results, collaborate with colleagues, and take action.

Featured Resource of the Month: Formative, Interim, and Summative Assessment Videos

Summative assessments in the form of statewide tests provide *some* of the information used to determine if school systems are teaching the standards in reading, mathematics, and science. However, it is important to understand the results of statewide summative assessments are *one* of many factors that inform the design and implementation of a school or district's curricula.

The statewide assessments are sometimes used in isolation, to make high-stakes decisions (i.e., teacher performance reviews and charter school authorizer renewal decisions). **MCA assessment results should not be used alone when informing instruction or high stakes decisions.** Rather, they should be used alongside formative and interim assessment data.

These [new videos](#) were created to help educators and school leaders better understand the different types of assessments and how to best use each type to make informed decisions. Check them out on the new [Testing 1, 2, 3 site](#)!

Upcoming Opportunities

Interpreting ACCESS Score Reports for Instruction Training

Professional Development staff from the WIDA Consortium will conduct in-person trainings at three locations around the state to focus on interpreting ACCESS score reports for instruction. The training is designed for EL educators and coordinators.

The ACCESS score reports provide specific information on students' academic English language proficiency. During this training, participants will explore how the WIDA Standards and Assessment System is connected to the ACCESS score reports. Participants will examine the different types and uses

of score reports. They will also make connections between student proficiency scores and WIDA Performance Definitions in determining instructional practices.

This training is provided at no cost; lunch is not provided. Registration is limited to three people from a district or charter school. Each session will be from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., and check-in will begin at 8:30 a.m.

Date/Time	Training and Registration	Location
Tuesday, Sept. 24 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.	Register for the Interpreting ACCESS Score Reports for Instruction in North Mankato.	South Central Service Cooperative (SCSC) Conference Center 2075 Lookout Dr. North Mankato, MN 56003
Wednesday, Sept. 25 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.	Register for the Interpreting ACCESS Score Reports for Instruction at MDE.	Minnesota Department of Education Conference Center B: Room 16 1500 Hwy 36 West Roseville, MN 55113
Thursday, Sept. 26 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.	Register for the Interpreting ACCESS Score Reports for Instruction in Sartell.	College of St. Scholastica Innovation Room 137 23rd St. South Sartell, MN 56377

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

Using Learning and Motivation Theories to Coherently Link Formative Assessment, Grading Practices, and Large-Scale Assessment

In this article released by *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, the authors discuss the sociocultural theory of learning and its motivational aspects, like self-regulation and identity, and how to incorporate these ideas in classroom assessment design and grading practices. They recommend avoiding grading policies that use points or grades "to motivate" students, and instead argue for creating more opportunities for students to receive useful feedback that gives specific guidance for improvement.

"Using Learning and Motivation Theories to Coherently Link Formative Assessment, Grading Practices, and Large-Scale Assessment " by L.A. Shepard, W.R. Penuel, and J.W. Pelligrino in *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, Spring 2018.

6 Tips for Managing the Feedback Workload

In this *Edutopia* article, the author references John Hattie's work, a meta-analysis of the effects of student feedback on learning. Unsurprisingly, he affirms that giving feedback works, but acknowledges it can be a lot of work on the teacher. The author suggests six strategies for reducing the teacher workload in reference to giving students meaningful feedback:

- Recognize *when* instructional feedback is needed.

- Encourage thinking, but don't *do* the thinking for your students.

- Consider *not* giving feedback on summative assessments.

- Address individual requests for feedback from students.

- Use self-assessment or peer feedback to generate feedback from students.

- Give actionable and timely feedback in smaller ways spread out over time.

"6 Tips for Managing the Feedback Workload" by Andrew Miller in *Edutopia*, July 3, 2019.

Advice on Helping Students Develop Better Study Habits and Strategies from an Accomplished Musician

In this *Study Hacks* article, the author shares suggestions from an accomplished piano player who improved his daily practice routines by making them more efficient and effective. These same tips can be communicated to students, who often struggle with developing effective routines and habits for studying and managing homework assignments:

- *Practice what does **not** come easily*. In music, it's a "huge mistake" to play an entire piece of music from beginning to end, he says. The best musicians focus on the most difficult parts, and rarely play the whole piece from beginning to end.

- *To master a skill, master something harder*. Strong musicians create clever ways to "complicate" difficult parts of their music, by playing a difficult passage with alternative accent patterns, speed, or rhythms.

- *Systematically eliminate weakness*. Strong musicians are aware of their weaknesses, and develop targeted practicing techniques to improve them.

- *Create beauty, don't avoid ugliness*. Strong musicians have an image of how an exemplar performance will sound, feel, and look before they even begin. They play a piece of music in relentless pursuit of this mental image. Less-accomplished musicians perform with a reactive mindset, "fixing problems as they go along," until they make it to the end of the piece.

"[Flow is the Opiate of the Mediocre: Advice on Getting Better from an Accomplished Piano Player](#)" by Cal Newport in *Study Hacks*, December 23, 2011.

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.