

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — JAN. 22, 2025

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS • MTAS/Alt MCA Trainings in the Learning Management System • Alternate MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) • Science Alt MCA Early Stopping Rule • Science MCA Translated and Glossed Word Lists Now Available • Amplification Devices and Assistive Technology Devices (AT-O) • District Monitoring of Test Administration • Test Security Reminder • Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE 	<p>Nov. 25–May 1: Complete Pretest Editing in Test WES</p> <p>Jan. 6–March 21: Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS</p> <p>Jan. 27–March 21: ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window</p>

Preparing for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS Irregularities

The *ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Irregularities* document is available on the [Minnesota page](#) of the WIDA website, under the Manuals, Guides and Test Materials expandable header. This resource outlines situations or misadministrations that may occur during ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing and the typical responses that may be required from the district, MDE, and/or DRC.

Student Resources for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Districts should develop a plan to determine what student resources are most applicable to prepare their students for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS test administration. More information can be found on the [Student Resources page](#). Note: Students in grades 4–12 who will be taking the ACCESS Online but handwriting their responses should be familiar with receiving the prompt online and handwriting their answers in Writing Response Booklets.

Newly Enrolled Students

Districts must add newly enrolled or newly identified English learners directly into WIDA AMS. When adding students, ensure all student information entered matches enrollment information in MARSS, including student MARSS/SSID numbers in the field labeled State Student ID. To decrease discrepancies in Test WES during Posttest Editing, ensure the correct date of birth and gender information are entered. All student data entered into WIDA AMS must match their district enrollment data exactly. If a student's data is not entered correctly and the resulting discrepancy is not resolved during Posttest Editing, that student may not receive a score. Note that WIDA AMS does not require you to enter complete student information and cannot flag any incorrectly entered information.

If a student needs to use paper test materials but did not receive a preprinted label, a District/School label must be used and the student's demographic information indicated on the test booklet in pencil. Both the front and back of the test booklet contain several student demographic information fields, but not all data fields are required. To avoid test discrepancies in Posttest Editing and to ensure students receive their scores, all student data entered on the test booklet must match their district enrollment exactly. Refer to *Verifying and Correcting Student Information for Testing* in Chapter 8 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information.

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MTAS/Alt MCA Trainings in the Learning Management System

The *MTAS/Alt MCA Administration Overview* training and the *MTAS/Alt MCA Administration and Scoring Practice* training will be posted to the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) on Monday, Jan. 27. These trainings are required for staff who will be administering the MTAS and/or the Alt MCA to students during the standards-based accountability assessment window.

Both trainings have been updated to include information on the new Science Alt MCA, as well as updated information on the Reading and Mathematics MTAS. Although experienced MTAS Test Administrators (those with 3 years or more of experience) can skip over certain portions of the trainings regarding MTAS administration, all alternate assessment Test Administrators will need to complete both trainings prior to administering the MTAS and/or the Alt MCA to students.

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Alternate MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs)

The Alternate MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) for the 2024–25 school year are available to help Test Administrators and students prepare for online, paper, or hybrid administrations of the Alt MCA. Both paper and online Alt MCA SRTs are available on [PearsonAccess Next](#). Educators can use the SRTs to familiarize themselves with the Alt MCA test environment and then simulate the test for students using the online and paper practice questions.

Included in the online Alt MCA SRT is an overview video and a sample test that provides students and Test Administrators opportunities to interact with the navigation, sample test content, tools, and test settings to prepare students for an online administration of the Alt MCA in TestNav. Students and educators will watch the overview video and then select the Online Form button to open the sample test to interact with the online test form. Note: No login information is needed for the online Alt MCA SRTs.

The paper Alt MCA SRT has paper materials that can be viewed or printed. These materials can be used to make administration mode and other assessment decisions for students, prepare Test Administrators for administering the assessment in each administration mode, and prepare students by interacting with the online test form and paper materials.

Supplemental information for the Alt MCA SRT is also available, which provides detailed information about all test functionalities.

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Science Alt MCA Early Stopping Rule

When administering a Science Alt MCA, Test Administrators are expected to follow the script from beginning to end for all students. It is important that each student has an opportunity to attempt the assessment, even if the Test Administrator believes the student will not respond. Careful consideration should be given to using the most accessible presentation and response modes for the student.

The early stopping rule can be used for a very small percentage of students who have no consistent, observable system of expressive communication to communicate responses to participate in assessments. For the Science Alt MCA only, the early stopping rule can be applied so they do not have to take the entire test. Students who would be eligible to use the early stopping rule are students who:

- Use gestures (for example, waving, nodding and shaking head), looking, pointing, and/or vocalizations to communicate intentionally but does not yet use symbols or sign language.
- Communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc., but does not yet use symbols or sign language.

If a student is unable to respond to an item, record a response of No Response. After indicating No Response for the three items of the first task on the test, decide whether the student should continue testing after a break or

on another day. Administer the next three items of the second task. If the student has No Response indicated after the administration of the first six items, testing can be stopped.

If the early stopping rule is engaged after No Response is indicated for the first six items, Test Administrators still need to note responses to three survey questions at the end of the test without indicating responses for any additional items. After answering these three survey questions, then the test can be submitted. Contact MDE for guidance if the early stopping rule was intended, but responses for additional items were inadvertently indicated in the online form.

The early stopping rule should not be applied based on a student's behavior, frustration level, or knowledge of the content. The test can be paused as needed, and students can continue testing at a later time that same day or in the following days. Use of the early stopping rule for the Alt MCA results in a complete test.

The early stopping rule is only available for the Science Alt MCA. The early stopping rule is not available for Reading and Mathematics MTAS and the entire test must be completed for those assessments.

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Science MCA Translated and Glossed Word Lists Now Available

The Science MCA translated and glossed word lists are now posted on the [Translated and Glossed Word Lists page](#) of the PearsonAccess Next website. These word lists are a universal support that allow students to access the meaning of unfamiliar words in test items. The glossed word lists provide concise definitions or explanations of terms in English, and the terms are translated in the following languages: Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Karen, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The *Guidance for Using Science Translated and Glossed Word Lists* provides instructions for using and printing the lists and is also available on the Translated and Glossed Word Lists page.

Note: Translated and glossed word lists are not intended as a replacement for dictionaries or other resources. The words selected for these lists represent academic vocabulary frequently found in grade-appropriate science texts; however, the lists are not exhaustive, and students may still encounter unfamiliar terms in the test. Refer to Chapter 4 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information about this support.

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Amplification Devices and Assistive Technology Devices (AT-O)

Amplification devices such as hearing aids (both wired and wireless) are permitted as an accessibility support on statewide assessments. The use of amplification devices does not require any documentation or accommodation code to be indicated to be available for the student during testing. If the device has Bluetooth capabilities, the Test Monitor must confirm that the audio is connected only to the testing device if testing online. Refer to page 90 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for more information about amplification devices.

The other assistive technology devices (AT-O) accommodation is intended to address forms of assistive technology used for testing. Note: This accommodation does not include the use of an AT device that interacts

directly with an assistive technology online test form for the new Science MCA and Alt MCA; those are separate accommodations indicated with AT-S or AT-N in Test WES.

The following are examples of other AT devices that are applicable in the AT-O accommodation:

- Use of a device in place of physical scratch paper.
- Use of a device in place of a calculator application.
- Use of an electronic notetaker for braille to store information with the use of a braille keyboard and/or standard keyboard.

Refer to pages 133–134 of the *Procedures Manual* for additional information about the AT-O accommodation.

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District Monitoring of Test Administration

MDE requires District and School Assessment Coordinators (or any of their designated, trained staff) to conduct random, unannounced observations of testing rooms to confirm adherence to state and district policies and procedures by Test Administrators, Test Monitors, and other staff. This monitoring is in addition to the active monitoring being done by the Test Administrator/Test Monitor in the testing room and is meant to simulate the site visits conducted by MDE at a district- and school-level. This requirement applies to both ACCESS and MCA administrations. Similar observations can be conducted for other aspects of test administration, like inventorying and organizing secure test materials, distributing test materials on the day of testing, and preparing technology for online testing.

Districts can use the *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* in Appendix C of the [Procedures Manual](#), or develop their own list as long as it includes all of the components provided in Appendix C. It is up to the district to determine how many schools and testing rooms to observe.

Monitoring of individual administrations (Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, and MTAS/Alt MCA) is not required, but districts should consider including them in applicable portions of their monitoring.

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Test Security Reminder

Districts must follow the policies and procedures for statewide assessments as documented in each district's written *District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments* (previously titled *District Test Security Procedure*). This procedure must be finalized prior to the administration of statewide assessments.

Some of the most common security violations that were observed by MDE monitoring visits during statewide assessment administrations last spring included:

- Online assessment calendar does not reflect actual testing schedule.

- Test directions not followed exactly as scripted.
- Test content not covered if a student had to temporarily leave the room.
- Not enough space in between students who are testing.

Some of the more common violations that were reported to MDE by districts as an Assessment Security Record included:

- Staff not completing all required training prior to being involved in testing.
- Failure to keep testing materials secure at all times.
- Impermissible assistance by a staff member.
- Student completing an assessment on a personal device and/or outside of a secure testing location.

All of these common security violations are preventable by developing policies and procedures for maintaining test security and training district and school staff involved in test administration. Refer to *Required District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments* beginning on page 140 of the [Procedures Manual](#) and the *District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments Template* posted on the [Policies and Procedures page](#) of PearsonAccess Next.

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Student Data Privacy When Communicating with MDE

When emailing MDE with a question about a specific student's test or situation, only use the MARSS/SSID number. For student privacy, do not send student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) such as names or dates of birth in the email, including in screenshots or attachments.

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ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

education.mn.gov > District, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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