AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — FEB. 19, 2025

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
- Student Test Assignments for Science MCA and Alt MCA - ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administration - Now Available: Science MCA-III and MCA-IV Comparison Resource - Reporting Updates for MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA - Recording of the MTAS/Alt MCA 2025 Administration Informational Meeting Posted - PearsonAccess Next and TestNav Changes for 2025 MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrations - MDE Monitoring Test Administrations - Timelines for Providing Materials to Testing Staff	**Feb. 17:** *Start completing administration tasks in PearsonAccess Next (including entering LCI data for MTAS/Alt MCA)* **Feb. 18:** *Additional materials ordering window opened in PearsonAccess Next* **Feb. 18–20 or Feb. 25–27:** *Receive paper MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA test materials* **March 3:** *MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA testing windows open* **March 14:** *Last day to order additional paper test materials in WIDA AMS for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS* **March 21:** *End of ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window; Last day to complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS*

Student Test Assignments for Science MCA and Alt MCA

An issue has been discovered that impacts students assigned to take the Science Alternate MCA in place of the Science MCA. Students who have been assigned the Alt MCA in Test WES are currently appearing in PearsonAccess Next for both the Science Alt MCA and the Science MCA. Students incorrectly assigned to the Science MCA will be removed by Pearson on Thursday night. If DACs started setting up Science MCA test sessions and incorrectly added students who should be taking Alt MCA, they can review these sessions on Friday to verify these students have been removed.

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ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administration

ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing is well underway and will continue until March 21. Please consider the following reminder as these assessments are administered in your districts.

Common Irregularity

For the ACCESS Online, the default response mode for the Writing domain for students in grades 4–5 is to handwrite their responses in a Writing Response Booklet. Please ensure Test Administrators provide each student with a test ticket and a Writing Response Booklet as indicated in the *Online Test Administrator's Script for Grades 4–12* (a copy of which was included in the shipment of your test materials; an electronic version can be found in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#)). As a reminder:

- The Test Administrator must check that students are on the correct page of the Writing Response Booklet prior to the student clicking the "Begin the Test" button on their screen.

- After students have completed the practice tasks, the Test Administrator should ensure that students have been able to respond. As needed, instruct students to turn the pages in their Writing Response Booklets; the titles on each page of their booklets must match the titles on the screen.

Districts must ensure that all students are familiar with the test they will take. Please refer to the *Student Resources for Testing* section of Chapter 7 of the [*Procedures Manual*](#) for additional information on which resources are available and recommended for ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.

Now Available: Science MCA-III and MCA-IV Comparison Resource

As requested by District Assessment Coordinators (DACs), MDE has created and posted a document on the [Minnesota Tests page](#) of MDE's website that outlines the general test administration changes between the Science MCA-III and the new Science MCA-IV. This document will also be posted on the [District Resources page](#) in the coming days. DACs can share information from the *Comparison of the Science MCA-III and Science MCA-IV* resource with staff, as needed, as they prepare for the first administration of the Science MCA-IV this spring. A general overview of the changes to this new series of assessments can be found in Chapter 1 of the [*Procedures Manual*](#), along with references to detailed information throughout the rest of the *Procedures Manual*. If there are additional questions about the Science MCA-IV, please contact mde.testing@state.mn.us.

Reporting Updates for MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA

As the standards to which the assessments are aligned change, the assessments themselves must also change. Additionally, reports and resources to support the new assessments will also change.

As part of a continuous improvement process, MDE is redesigning existing reports and resources to ensure we are supporting assessment data needs of educators, students, families, and policymakers, while meeting state and federal requirements. With the changes that will continue across the assessment program over the next few years, the report redesign process will take multiple years to fully implement, meaning some reports and resources will not be available for the first year of the new Science MCA-IV and Alternate MCA (Alt MCA). In addition, the transition of Pearson systems from PearsonAccess Next to a new administrative system beginning in 2025–26 will also affect report availability.

The following list is a summary of changes beginning this year, with links to resources about the applicable reports on PearsonAccess Next. More detail will be provided in reporting resources released this spring and summer, as well as at the DAC Information Sessions in May (refer to the Feb. 5 *Assessment Update* for more information):

- On-Demand Reports available during the test administration will not be available for Science MCA and Alt MCA, as standard setting must first take place in order to report results for the new assessments. Reading and Mathematics MCA and MTAS On-Demand Reports are still available within 60 minutes after test submission.

- Individual Student Reports (ISRs):
  - Science ISRs will look different than past years in how information is reported for students and families. MDE will be seeking feedback on these ISRs to inform additional changes as the other subjects transition to MCA-IV and Alt MCA.
  - All three subjects will be provided as separate ISRs rather than combined as in past years. ISRs will continue to be separated as we transition to the new assessments. This will allow for a consistent format as subsequent subjects change to MCA-IV and Alt MCA in future years (reading in 2025–26 and mathematics anticipated in 2027–28).
  - PDF rosters posted to PearsonAccess Next Published Reports that would have accompanied the ISRs will no longer be provided.
  - Personalized video ISRs will be provided for reading and mathematics. For science, a generic ISR video describing changes to the new assessment will be provided.

- Benchmark Reports will only be provided for Reading and Mathematics MCA this year, but the Subscore Report will be updated to include information for Science MCA-IV.

- The Longitudinal Reports and Historical Student Data features in PearsonAccess Next will not be loaded with 2025 data. More information about future reporting features will be determined as part of the transition to the new Pearson administrative system.

Note: Reports on the MDE website will be updated to include the new data for Science MCA-IV and Alt MCA, and the District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) files, Test Results Summary, Student Assessment History Report, public Assessment Files, and Minnesota Report Card will continue to be available as in past years.

Recording of the MTAS/Alt MCA 2025 Administration Informational Meeting Posted

A recording of the MTAS/Alternate MCA 2025 Administration Informational Meeting is posted on the [Alternate Assessments page of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website](). District Assessment Coordinators are encouraged to share this link with interested staff in order to learn about the latest updates to the MTAS/Alt MCA for spring 2025. A handout of the slides and links to resources will be available to download on the webpage soon.

PearsonAccess Next and TestNav Changes for 2025 MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrations

The following changes have been made in PearsonAccess Next and TestNav in preparation for the 2025 MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA test administrations.

PearsonAccess Next

- Updated User Roles: The LMS Learner user role was added to PearsonAccess Next for DACs and AAs to manage staff who need access to the LMS. The MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrator user role was updated to include permissions for online Alt MCA test setup.

- Create/Manage Test Sessions File Import – Remove Students from Test Sessions: Students can be removed from a test session through a file import if they are in assigned or testing status.

- Assistive Technology Forms: Assistive technology online test forms are available for the Science MCA and Alt MCA that allow screen readers and non-screen reader AT devices to interact directly with the online test. Prior to creating test sessions, it is important to verify that students requiring the use of assistive technology have the applicable code (AT-S for screen readers or AT-N for non-screen reader AT devices) indicated and that it appears in PearsonAccess Next.

- Auto-Resume Test Sessions (Science Alt MCA only): For Science Alt MCA, tests are set to automatically resume in PearsonAccess after the student exits the test.

TestNav

- Desmos Calculators: Desmos calculators are now available in addition to Texas Instruments (TI) calculators for online Mathematics and Science MCAs. The calculator icons in TestNav are the same for both calculators, and students will need to hover over the buttons to identify which calculator is the TI and Desmos.

- Pop-up Translation (Math)/English Glossary (Science) Windows: Pop-up windows that include translations in Hmong, Somali, Spanish for Mathematics MCA and the new English glossary universal support for Science MCA will now open as a separate window and can be moved around the screen as needed. The pop-up window will remain open until the student closes it or moves to another question.

- Scratchpad Tool: The Scratchpad tool has been updated so that when students leave and return to a question, any drawings made within the drawing pane will be saved as a static image and students will not be able to undo or redo any individual changes previously made to the drawing. Students can add to the existing drawing image and use the Undo button and/or Clear pane (trash can) button to clear the pane entirely. This change was made to prevent the tool from overloading in the student's test when excessive drawing marks were made.

- Drag-and-Drop Item Type Functionality: Some drag-and-drop items now let students select an answer choice by clicking or touching it and then clicking or touching the correct box to drop it into, without having to drag and drop the answer choice into the correct box. When an answer choice is selected, an outline will appear around it, and the boxes into which it can be placed will be shaded in.

To familiarize yourself and students with the features above, refer to the online SRTs on the Student Readiness Tools page on PearsonAccess Next. For additional details, refer to the *MCA Online Testing User Guide*, *MCA Data Entry User Guide*, and *MTAS and Alt MCA Data Entry and Online Testing User Guide* on the User Guides page on the PearsonAccess Next website. Also, refer to the *Pearson DAC Test Administration Training*, *PearsonAccess Next: For New DACs (1–2 Years)*, and *2025 TestNav and Student Readiness Tools* trainings in the Learning Management System (LMS) (DAC catalog).

MDE Monitoring Test Administrations

ACCESS and MCA Site Visits

MDE conducts on-site monitoring visits for both the ACCESS and MCA test administrations. These visits are part of an overall strategy to improve the administration of Minnesota's statewide assessments and to verify that test security requirements are followed. Because these visits are unannounced, it is important that districts keep their posted testing calendars updated, which includes a requirement to specify the days each grade will be taking the various domains/subjects.

Starting on page 351 of the *Procedures Manual*, the *Minnesota Statewide Assessments Monitoring List* outlines the areas the monitors will observe and questions they will ask assessment staff during ACCESS and MCA site visits.

MTAS/Alt MCA Field Audits

Each year, MDE employs Field Auditors to observe MTAS/Alt MCA administrations in selected schools. The primary purpose of MTAS/Alt MCA field audits is to gather evidence to evaluate the validity and reliability of the assessment. Since the assessment is scored and/or administered by the Test Administrator, it is critical they are properly trained in MTAS/Alt MCA administration and scoring. Likewise, it is critical for test score integrity that all Test Administrators across the state are applying this training consistently.

Unlike monitoring visits for MCA or ACCESS, which are unannounced, the Field Auditors work with the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and the school to schedule the visit. MDE recently sent an email to districts to communicate the schools that have been selected. These notifications were sent to DACs, Superintendents, and Special Education Directors.

Information about how MTAS/Alt MCA field audits are scheduled is on pages 151–153 of the *Procedures Manual*, and the *MTAS Field Audit Checklist*, which outlines the areas the Field Auditors will observe and questions they will ask, starts on page 353.

Timelines for Providing Materials to Testing Staff

Accommodated Test Materials

For staff administering a braille test or a sign language interpreter administering a Mathematics or Science MCA script, District or School Assessment Coordinators should provide applicable test materials up to five business days prior to the scheduled administration. This includes the Mathematics or Science MCA script and the braille test book. The same timeline applies for a sign language interpreter for MTAS/Alt MCA (if not the Test Administrator). Staff must keep materials secure as they prepare for testing.

In addition, ensure staff administering these accommodations are provided the *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* (available on the District Resources page under the Universal Supports and Accommodations Resources expandable heading) as it provides specific test administration guidance.

MTAS/Alt MCA Test Materials

For MTAS/Alt MCA, Test Administrators need to have access to all test materials beforehand to prepare for test administration and any individual student needs (enlarging material, finding objects/manipulatives, etc.). There is no designated timeframe for when Test Administrators may have access to test materials prior to testing. Test Administrators are responsible for keeping these materials secure until testing time.

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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