

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — FEB. 5, 2025

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WIDA AMS: Tasks and Resources • Student Readiness Tools (SRT) Braille Order Form • Assistive Technology (AT) Online Forms Updates • Save the Date: DAC Information Sessions in May • Reviewing User Accounts in PearsonAccess Next • Verify District Testing Calendar (repeat) • MTAS/Alt MCA Trainings in the Learning Management System • MDE Employment Opportunity: Ed-Fi Technical Support Coordinator • Upcoming Opportunities 	<p>Nov. 25–May 1: <i>Complete Pretest Editing in Test WES</i></p> <p>Jan. 6–March 21: <i>Complete administration tasks in WIDA AMS</i></p> <p>Jan. 27–March 21: <i>ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS testing window</i></p> <p>Feb. 17: <i>Start completing administration tasks in PearsonAccess Next</i></p>

WIDA AMS: Tasks and Resources

Manually Adding Students

When districts need to manually add an English learner into WIDA AMS (for example, a newly enrolled student), ensure that all manually entered student information exactly matches student enrollment data submitted to MDE—including the student’s date of birth and gender—to avoid discrepancies in Test WES during Posttest Editing. For more information, consult the Student Management section of the *WIDA AMS User Guide*, which is located on the [WIDA AMS](#) website. No login is required to access technical and test administration materials.

If the student will need to use a Writing Response Booklet or a paper test booklet, a District/School label must be used and the student’s demographic information must be indicated on the booklet in pencil. Not all fields are

required for Minnesota; use the list of student demographic information fields found under *Verifying and Correcting Student Information for Testing* in Chapter 8 of the [Procedures Manual](#). Ensure that all hand-bubbled information is accurate and matches the student’s enrollment data exactly. If there are errors in the student’s hand-bubbled information, it may result in a split ACCESS record with no cumulative score. Confirm that there are no additional markings or bubbled information (such as Do Not Score codes) on the test booklet that may affect how the test booklet is scanned or scored.

Additional Materials Orders

As a member of the WIDA consortium, WIDA requires member states to limit the number of additional materials orders to reduce waste and shipping costs. WIDA and MDE request that districts place **only one** additional materials order per year. Note: Materials that are only available in additional materials orders, such as the human reader script, are not included in the count of additional materials orders. WIDA/DRC automatically includes a 15 percent overage of paper materials with each initial order of over 10 tests. As explained in Chapter 7 of the [Procedures Manual](#), DACs should use both the district-level and all school-level overages before placing additional materials orders. MDE will follow up with DACs when multiple additional materials orders are placed in WIDA AMS.

When placing additional materials orders, use the “District-Level Additional Orders Only Site-WWW” in the school drop-down. All additional orders should come from the district only; please do not select a school name in the drop-down menu when ordering. For more information, consult the Materials Menu section of the *WIDA AMS User Guide*.

Indicating Test Codes and Accommodations

For students who need an accommodation or test code (referred to as Do Not Score codes in WIDA AMS), districts indicate those in WIDA AMS during the testing window. For more information on accommodations, consult the Student Management section of the *WIDA AMS User Guide*. For more information on test codes, consult the Test Management section of the *WIDA AMS User Guide*. Note: Certain test codes (such as Not Enrolled (NE) and Medical Excuse (ME)) can only be indicated during Posttest Editing in Test WES; for more information, refer to the *Test Codes* section in Chapter 9 of the [Procedures Manual](#).

Monitoring Test Administration across the District

To monitor the status and progress of testing across schools, DACs can use Reporting Services in [WIDA AMS](#). The Student Status report displays the test status for each registered student. The Test Status report includes daily and weekly online test status and percentage complete. Detailed information is available in the *WIDA AMS User Guide*.

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Student Readiness Tools (SRT) Braille Order Form

The [Braille Student Readiness Tools Order Form](#) is now available on PearsonAccess Next. Districts must fill out this order form to request braille versions of the Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) for MCA (all subjects) and the Science Alt MCA. Braille SRTs should be ordered on a student-need basis and can be used by multiple students. Requests should be made only for currently enrolled students requiring braille; additional materials should not be ordered for district sample purposes.

Note: Districts are encouraged to submit order forms with all braille SRT selections that will be needed by students. If braille SRTs requested in your order are not yet available, Pearson will document district requests and will ship remaining materials as soon as available.

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Assistive Technology (AT) Online Forms Updates

Assistive technology (AT) online test forms are available beginning this year for the Science MCA and Science Alt MCA. Two versions of the AT online forms are available: one for screen readers and one for non-screen reader devices. These separate TestNav forms allow AT devices to interact directly with the online test in order to maintain, increase, or improve the functional capabilities of a student with disabilities.

AT Accommodation Codes Update for Science MCA

This article provides important updates and guidance on the indication of AT online form accommodation codes (AT-S and AT-N) for the Science MCA. These codes must be indicated in [Test WES](#) during Pretest Editing to make these specific online forms available to students.

- If a student requires the use of the HR (script/human reader) accommodation with AT-N, indicate only AT-N in Test WES and then order a script during the additional orders window.
 - If both HR and AT-N are indicated in Test WES, the student is assigned the Science Script test form and will not be able to use their AT with the online test.
 - Note: HR cannot be indicated for the AT-S form as it is expected that the screen reader is providing the read-aloud support.
- If a student requires the use of braille materials with either AT online form, indicate only AT-S or AT-N in Test WES and then order braille materials during the additional orders window.
 - If a paper test book (12, 18, BC, or BU) accommodation code is indicated with AT-S or AT-N in Test WES, a Data Entry test form will be assigned to the student and the student will not be able to use their AT with the online test.
 - Note: Students may use braille test materials with either AT form, as both forms contain the same content.

DACs will be able to order additional testing materials in PearsonAccess Next beginning on Feb. 18.

Guidelines for Using AT Online Forms

Prior to testing, it's important to confirm the student's AT device is compatible with TestNav. The District or School Assessment Coordinator will need access to the [PearsonAccess Next Training Center](#). In the Training Center, DACs can create sample students with an AT accommodation and provide a testing ticket to the teacher and student to log in to TestNav and confirm the AT device(s) the student will use during testing are compatible with TestNav.

The [Guidelines for Using Assistive Technology \(AT\) Online Forms](#) is available on PearsonAccess Next to assist district and school staff in determining if and how AT may be used by students with an AT online form. These guidelines also provide step-by-step instructions for creating sample students in the Training Center and providing a testing ticket to the teacher and student.

Contact the Pearson help desk with any questions at 888-817-8659 or [submit a Pearson help desk request online](#).

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Save the Date: DAC Information Sessions in May

MDE will host two optional virtual information sessions in May to share relevant information with District Assessment Coordinators (DACs). In these sessions, MDE will overview the vision for statewide assessments, discuss reporting changes with the new series of assessments, forecast changes for the Reading MCA-IV, Reading Alternate MCA, and WIDA ACCESS for 2025–26, and provide an overview of Pearson system changes. There will also be opportunities to ask questions.

Save the date for one of the two virtual sessions:

- May 12, 1–3 p.m.
- May 14, 9–11 a.m.

All DACs are welcome to join these sessions. Information sessions will not be recorded nor will CEUs be provided as these are considered additional supports rather than training events. Registration links will be provided in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

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Reviewing User Accounts in PearsonAccess Next

District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) must annually review users in PearsonAccess Next within their districts to ensure accounts are up to date. DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) users can create and restore

accounts in PearsonAccess Next. User accounts can be created and maintained either manually or through a file export/import. Instructions are available in the [PearsonAccess Next User Accounts Guide](#).

Please note:

- For security purposes, passwords automatically expire every 180 days. Users should follow the instructions in the auto-generated emails to reset their password or use the [Forgot Password feature](#).
- User accounts are disabled after 365 days of inactivity. Disabled accounts can be enabled by DACs or AAs either manually or through a file export/import.
- User accounts are deleted after 550 days of inactivity. Deleted accounts can be restored manually or through a file export/import in PearsonAccess Next by the DAC or AA.

Contact the Pearson help desk with any questions at 888-817-8659 or submit a [Pearson help desk request online](#).

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Verify District Testing Calendar (repeat)

Districts are required to post a comprehensive testing calendar on the district website by Oct. 1. MDE recommends that District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) verify that specific testing schedules by grade and subject are indicated on the calendars by Jan. 1. Minor changes can continue to be made to ensure calendars are accurate, but keep in mind that some districts and schools may not be able to immediately publish updated calendars due to internal policies and procedures.

MDE reviews testing calendars and will communicate directly with the DAC if MDE determines a district's calendar is not available or is incomplete. Detailed information on the core requirements for district testing calendars can be found in the [Procedures Manual](#) starting on page 158.

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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 are posted in the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#). 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.

MDE Employment Opportunity: Ed-Fi Technical Support Coordinator

The Data Practices and Analytics division is currently seeking an Ed-Fi Technical Support Coordinator to provide technical support and resources to Local Education Agencies (LEA) and MDE staff in the transition to Ed-Fi, a data standard and technology that transports student level data.

If you are interested (or know someone who may be interested) in a new and challenging opportunity, consult the position description and application instructions on the State of Minnesota Careers website. The Job ID is 80646, and the posting is open until Feb. 24. Visit the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website for more information and to apply.

Upcoming Opportunities

February Q&A Session: Precode, Preliminary Results, and General Test Administration (repeat)

MDE will host a virtual Q&A session for District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) on Feb. 11, from 2–3 p.m. that will focus on precode, preliminary results, and general test administration. New and experienced DACs are welcome to attend. [Register for the February Q&A Session](#). Details for joining are provided once participants register. Please note that registration will close 24 hours in advance of the Q&A session.

The prerequisites for the February Q&A session are the *Understanding Student Precode* training, which is posted in the [Learning Management System](#) (LMS), and the following sections from Chapter 11 of the [Procedures Manual](#): *Use of Results from Service Provider Systems* and *Abiding by the Embargo*.

MDE collects questions from DACs prior to the event to help prepare and find relevant resources to share. After reading the chapters, [submit questions for the February DAC Q&A Session](#). Q&A Sessions will not be recorded nor will CEUs be provided as these are considered additional supports rather than training events.

Alternate Assessment February Chat and Connect

The Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment Division will host a series of virtual Chat and Connect sessions for MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrators and special education staff. This will be an informal time for you to ask any questions around alternate assessment, share your feedback, and connect with other special education staff from across the state.

Join us via Zoom for the February Chat and Connect on Tuesday, Feb. 18, from 4–5 p.m. Please [register for the Alt Assessment Chat and Connect](#). This month we will be discussing the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI), MTAS/Alt MCA 2025 updates to plan for the spring administration, and a Field Audit overview.

We will be meeting the third Tuesday of each month during the school year. You only need to register once to join any of the monthly Chat and Connects that work for you. The upcoming Alternate Assessment Chat and Connect dates for this year are March 18, April 15, and May 20 at 4 p.m. For more information, contact Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us.

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