

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

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## ***ACCESS and WIDA Alternate ACCESS Administration***

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

### **Indicating Test Codes for Students Who Do Not Test**

For students who will not participate in one or more domains of the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS, districts can indicate test codes (also referred to as Do Not Score codes) directly in [WIDA AMS](#) during the testing window, or they can indicate the test codes in Test WES during Posttest Editing. Detailed information about indicating test/Do Not Score codes in WIDA AMS can be found in the site’s Online Help for Test Management, which can be accessed by clicking the Help (?) icon while in the Test Management application.

Note: Certain test codes (such as “Not Enrolled” (NE)) 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](#).

## Printing Error in Paper ACCESS Booklet

WIDA/DRC has identified a printing error in the ACCESS Paper Grade 3 Tier A test booklet. Reading item number 6 on page 30 of the booklet was printed without bubbles to indicate an answer. WIDA/DRC have provided guidance that the student may circle the desired response instead. Additionally, it has been determined that the item will not be scored and will not impact student scores in any way. If district or school staff have additional questions about this printing error, they may contact the DRC help desk at [WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com](mailto:WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com) or 855-787-9615.

## Indicating EL for ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS

Only students who are indicated as English learners in enrollment data submitted to MDE are eligible to take the ACCESS or WIDA Alternate ACCESS. While districts will have the opportunity to review and update enrollment records during Posttest Editing, regular communication with your EL staff and MARSS Coordinator throughout the testing window can help ensure that your English learners’ enrollment records reported to MDE are accurate at all times. Students who take the assessment with enrollment records indicating they are not English learners will have their tests automatically invalidated at the close of the Posttest Editing window. These invalidations cannot be changed.

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## Verifying Student Information for MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA

### Test Eligibility for MCA and MTAS/Alt MCA

Students must be registered for the correct tests in PearsonAccess Next before they can be added to test sessions for MCA/Alt MCA or assigned for MTAS data entry. Information for all students enrolled in a district or school is sent nightly to Pearson in precode files throughout the testing windows.

If a student’s test eligibility does not appear in PearsonAccess Next, first verify the student’s information in Test WES under Precode Student Eligibility. Enter the student’s MARSS/SSID number to check on the following possibilities:

- If blank demographic fields appear when you enter the MARSS/SSID number, either there is an issue with the student enrollment record submitted to MDE, or the student has not been submitted to MDE. Work with your MARSS Coordinator to correct any issues and resubmit student enrollment data.
- The student record is being sent in precode for another district or school. The first column appearing in the Precode Eligibility table (at the bottom of the screen) is the district/school where the student record

is being sent in precode. If the student is dual-enrolled, verify which district or school will be testing the student and manually change where the student will be testing, as needed, by selecting “Add” on the student’s information.

- The student record has not been sent in precode to Pearson. If a student was recently submitted in enrollment information to MDE, or if a change in Precode Student Eligibility was made recently, the record may not have been sent to Pearson yet. When changes are made through a student enrollment update, the student information and test eligibility is typically available in PearsonAccess Next two business days after the data is submitted.

More information is included in the [Test WES Precode User Guide](#).

## Universal Supports and Accommodations for MCA and Alt MCA

Districts can continue to make changes to universal supports and accommodations for MCA and Alt MCA in Test WES throughout the testing window. If paper test materials are needed (such as scripts, paper tests, or braille tests), they must be ordered in PearsonAccess Next. Refer to the [Ordering Additional Test Materials](#) resource posted on the PearsonAccess Next website for more information, including the deadlines for ordering materials.

Districts must ensure that universal support/accommodation codes affecting a student’s online tests are indicated at least one business day prior to the student testing. This includes accommodated text-to-speech (MC) and pop-up translation codes (HM, SO, SP) for Mathematics MCA and Co:Writer Universal/Read&Write TestNav extensions (CR) for Science MCA.

Please note that students can only be added to a session if they are eligible for the test assigned:

- Only students with the script/human reader accommodation code (HR) for Science MCA will be eligible for Science Script test sessions.
- Only students with the AT online form accommodations (AT-S and AT-N) can be assigned to the applicable AT test form group type for Science MCA and Alt MCA.
- Only students with an accommodation code requiring data entry (for example, 18 or HC) will be eligible for Data Entry test sessions. Note: A common irregularity last spring was that these codes were not indicated ahead of time and staff were attempting to enter student responses in the incorrect form that did not match the test materials. This requires the DAC to contact Pearson to reset the student’s test.
- All other students, including those students requiring accommodated text-to-speech, pop-up translations, or Co:Writer Universal/Read&Write extensions will be eligible to be added to a regular test session (for example, Grade 07 Mathematics MCA).

Full details, including how to verify that the applicable codes appear in PearsonAccess Next, are included in the [MCA Online Testing User Guide](#) and [MTAS/Alt MCA Data Entry and Online Testing User Guide](#) posted on the PearsonAccess Next website.

## MTAS/Alt MCA in PearsonAccess Next

There are key differences in how district and school staff set up testing for Alt MCA or enter MTAS data in PearsonAccess Next:

- For the Reading and Mathematics MTAS, student scores and responses from the Data Collection Form are entered directly into PearsonAccess Next for scoring. Users with the MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrator role in PearsonAccess Next must be assigned to student tests in order to enter MTAS data. Users with the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) or Assessment Administrator (AA) user role in PearsonAccess Next can enter student data without being assigned to student tests.
- For the Science Alt MCA, student responses are entered into TestNav for scoring. While the Science Alt MCA can be administered in online, paper, or hybrid (combination of online and paper) modes, all responses must be entered into TestNav. Prior to the student or staff entering responses in TestNav, the student must be added to a test session in PearsonAccess Next.

For more information on entering MTAS data in PearsonAccess Next or creating test sessions for Alt MCA, refer to the [MTAS/Alt MCA Task Administration Manual](#) and the [MTAS/Alt MCA Data Entry and Online Testing User Guide](#).

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## *Students Moving Into or Out of the District During Testing*

Districts should attempt to test all students who are enrolled during the testing windows. If a student moves during a testing window and has not tested in their former district, the new district should test the student.

A student who moves from one district to another near the end of the testing window and has not yet taken the test should be tested if possible.

If a student moves from another state and was administered the other state's standards-based and/or English language proficiency accountability assessments, the student must be tested again in Minnesota if they are enrolled on the first day of the applicable testing window.

Refer to pages 250–251 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information about students moving during the testing window.

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## *Newly Identified English Learners*

There are no exemptions from statewide assessments for English learners who are new to Minnesota or to the country. Any student who is identified as an English learner, as determined by the district, is required to participate in ACCESS/WIDA Alternate ACCESS. A paper administration of the ACCESS is available for English

learners who have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than a year. Refer to pages 223–224 of the [Procedures Manual](#) for additional information about paper administration considerations.

New students, including students who have been identified as English learners, are also required to participate in the MCA or MTAS/Alt MCA if applicable for the student’s grade level. Thorough consideration of the available universal supports is encouraged for students who are new-to-country. Suggested supports for multilingual learners are found in Chapter 4 of the *Procedures Manual*.

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## ***On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next***

On-Demand Reports provide student scores for Reading and Mathematics MCA and MTAS within 60 minutes after testing or data entry is completed. Results in On-Demand Reports can be generated as student detail reports (as PDFs) for individual students or downloaded in a list report (as a PDF or Excel spreadsheet). Refer to the [On-Demand Reports and Export User Guide](#) for more detailed information. The only change to these reports for reading and mathematics is the removal of the 1–9 strand scale scores; only the labels (below expectations, at or near expectations, or above expectations) will appear, as is consistent with other reporting.

Note: Due to 2024–25 being the first operational administration of the Science MCA-IV and Science Alt MCA, On-Demand Reports will not be available for these assessments this year.

In order for users with the Test Monitor/Data Entry or MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrator user roles to access On-Demand Reports in PearsonAccess Next, reporting groups must be set up for them. There are three options for creating reporting groups—manually, importing/exporting a file, or directly from a test session. For more information, refer to the [Reporting Groups User Guide](#).

## **Sharing On-Demand Reports**

Districts determine whether to share On-Demand Reports for instructional purposes. Keep in mind that while there are extremely rare circumstances when a student’s results in the On-Demand Report could change, providing the information from On-Demand Reports is encouraged to provide timely information to teachers, students, and/or families. For more information, refer to *Preliminary Student-Level Results* in Chapter 11 of the [Procedures Manual](#), beginning on page 277.

While these results are encouraged to be used and shared for instructional purposes, student assessment results should not be discussed in public forums (for example, on social media), reflected in public meeting minutes (for example, school board meetings), or shared with the general public or media until the final assessment results have been released publicly. This includes any summarized results determined by the district using On-Demand Reports. For more information, refer to the *Abiding by the Embargo* section of the *Procedures Manual* beginning on page 281.

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## ***2025–26 Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information***

An updated *Parent/Guardian Participation Guide and Refusal Information* form for statewide assessments for the 2025–26 school year is now posted on the [Student Participation](#) page of the MDE website. Translated versions of this form will be coming later this spring, and information will be provided in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

This version of the form will be used for the 2025–26 school year and must be included in the 2025–26 student handbook. Only minor updates were made, mainly to update test names for new assessments that will begin to be administered (WIDA ACCESS and Reading Alternate MCA). If parents/guardians submit the updated form for this year’s test administrations, districts may accept it as documentation as the overall content of the form is the same. The 2024–25 version of the form will remain posted until the testing windows close on May 9.

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## ***Now Available: Recorded Translated MCA Testing Directions***

The *Recorded Translated Testing Directions: Online* and *Recorded Translated Testing Directions: Paper* for all three MCA subjects in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish have now been posted on the [Testing Directions](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website. These recordings can be used by Test Monitors alongside the applicable *Testing Directions* to provide translated directions to students who need this universal support. Only the portions of the directions read aloud to the student are translated. A quick guide is also available on PearsonAccess Next to provide instructions and guidance for using these recordings.

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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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## ***Upcoming Opportunities***

### **Alternate Assessment March 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 March Chat and Connect on Tuesday, March 18, from 4–5 p.m. Please [register for the Alt Assessment Chat and Connect](#). This month we will be learning about common MTAS/Alt MCA administration questions and guidelines for data entry.

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 April 15 and May 20 at 4 p.m. For more information, contact [Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us](mailto:Alt.Assessment.MDE@state.mn.us).

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## ***Tech Update***

### **ACCESS Chromebook Rendering Issues and Troubleshooting Update**

As shared on March 3, WIDA/DRC is aware of intermittent text spacing issues occurring on Chromebooks when administering the ACCESS Online and WIDA Screener. This issue may cause letters to appear spaced out or pushed together and can also cause a portion of some tables and graphics to extend beyond the visible screen.

Google has released a new version of ChromeOS that resolves these issues. Chromebooks that are updated to ChromeOS Version 133 will no longer require the workaround steps. It is hoped that an update to ChromeOS Version 132 will also resolve the issue, but until this occurs the steps previously provided are still applicable for devices that encounter the issue.

To summarize, districts using Chromebooks to complete ACCESS testing may update to Chrome OS Version 133 or continue using Chrome OS Version 132 with the workaround steps provided in the DRC memo on Jan. 27 (subject: DRC: 2024-2025 ACCESS for ELLs Online and WIDA Screener Online Chromebook Rendering Issues and Troubleshooting).

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Minnesota Department of Education

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