

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — SEPT. 25, 2024

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Procedures Manual for 2024-25</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Register for New DAC Orientation</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Changes to Statewide Assessments</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">MDE Seeking Public Feedback on Science MCA-IV and Alternate MCA Performance Level Descriptors – Deadline Friday (repeat)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Upcoming Opportunities</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>No later than Oct. 1:</b> Post district testing calendar to website</p> <p><b>Oct. 8:</b> Embargoed final school, district, and state summary results available in Test Results Summary in Secure Reports (WIDA Alternate ACCESS only)</p> <p><b>Oct. 9:</b> Deadline to request a late score entry or request a rescore for MCA and MTAS</p>

## ***Procedures Manual for 2024–25***

The *2024–25 Procedures Manual for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* will be posted on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of PearsonAccess Next on Wednesday, Oct. 2. The *Procedures Manual* has been prepared for DACs, administrators, and others with a role in administering statewide assessments. It provides MDE’s policies and procedures for implementing statewide assessments and using the results in your district or charter school.

There are a variety of ways to use the manual:

- Keep an electronic copy on your computer and make frequent use of the Find function (Ctrl + F, Command + F).
- Review the “What’s New” list in Chapter 1 and use the “New!” and “Info!” symbols to search for information that is new or clarified for this year.
- Refer to the *Important Dates* in the front of the manual to schedule testing in your district and make sure you do not miss an important task.
- Use the “jump to” feature in the table of contents to go to specific chapters or sections.

For new DACs, MDE will discuss how to use the *Procedures Manual* as a reference and suggest ways to break up the content throughout the school year during New DAC Orientation.

When DACs have questions or need clarification about anything in the *Procedures Manual*, they can contact MDE at [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us).

Also, the *Guidance for Universal Supports and Accommodations for Minnesota Statewide Assessments* will be posted to the [District Resources](#) page later in Oct., along with a stand-alone version of an infographic summarizing the available universal supports and accommodations for the MCAs. These are companion documents to Chapter 4 of the *Procedures Manual*. While much of the information is the same between the *Guidance* and Chapter 4, it allows some text to be more specific to each audience (district/school staff and DACs, respectively).

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## Register for New DAC Orientation

In October, MDE and Pearson will present the New DAC Orientation, which will provide an overview of the various roles and responsibilities of a District Assessment Coordinator (DAC), the statewide assessments administered in Minnesota, relevant MDE and WIDA systems, available resources, and upcoming training opportunities. Pearson will provide information on their systems and available resources. While this training is specifically designed for new DACs, experienced DACs are also welcome to attend.

MDE is offering this training in three formats: an all-day, in-person training event in Northeast Minneapolis, a two-part series of live virtual trainings on back-to-back days, and pre-recorded trainings that will be posted in the Learning Management System (LMS). Please note that there are space limitations for the Oct. 10 in-person training, so early registration is suggested.

To prepare for the orientation, new DACs are encouraged to review the *New District Assessment Coordinators: Getting Access* document. This can be found under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable header on the [District Resources](#) page on the MDE Statewide Testing website.

Registration links are in the following table. Please note: MDE aims to deliver our presentations in a way that will be accessible for our participants. If you anticipate needing accommodations, please contact [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us). MDE requests a two-week advance notice to provide accommodations and a 48-hour notice to cancel them. If the request comes within two weeks of the event, MDE will still make an effort to provide the accommodation.

FORMAT	DATE AND TIME	REGISTRATION LINK
Virtual  (must attend both sessions)	Session 1: Tuesday, Oct. 8 9–11 a.m.  Session 2: Wednesday, Oct. 9 9–11 a.m.	<a href="#">Register for Virtual Trainings</a>

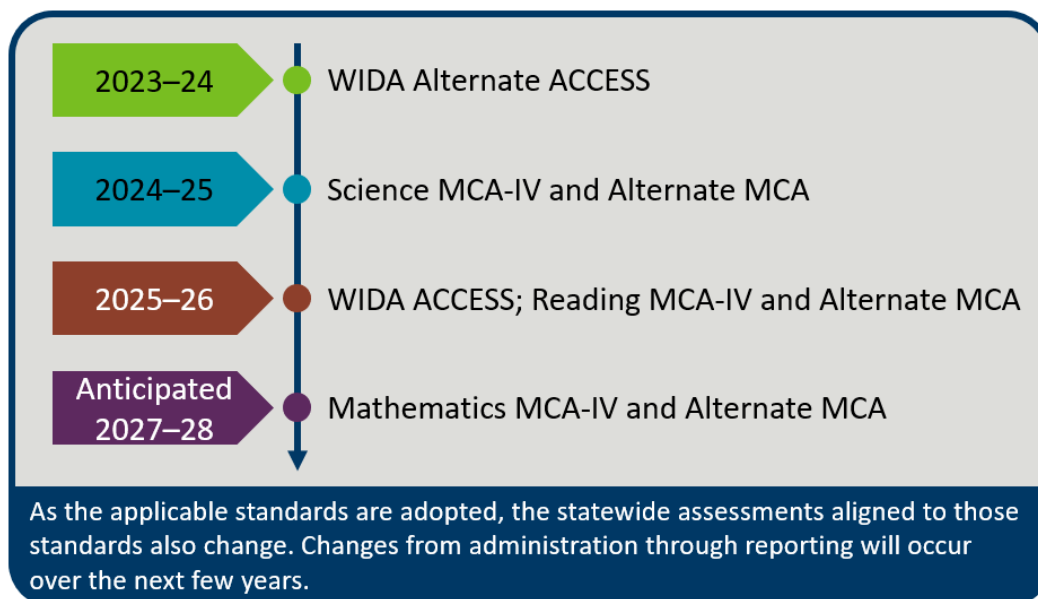
FORMAT	DATE AND TIME	REGISTRATION LINK
In-Person	Thursday, Oct. 10 9 a.m.–3:30 p.m.  Delta Hotels by Marriott Minneapolis Northeast 1330 Industrial Boulevard Northeast Minneapolis, MN 55413	<a href="#">Register for In-Person Training</a>

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## Changes to Statewide Assessments

As the standards to which the assessments are aligned change, the assessments themselves must also change. The Minnesota statewide assessment program will continue to undergo changes over the next few years, as outlined by the graphic below. 2024–25 is the first year of a new Science MCA aligned to revised academic standards, as well as the new Science Alternate MCA (Alt MCA) that is replacing the MTAS. The new science assessments will be aligned to the [2019 Minnesota Academic Standards in science](#).

While this article previews some key changes, detailed information will be provided in the forthcoming [2024–25 Procedures Manual](#), to be posted on Oct 2.



Key changes for the administration of the new Science MCA include new accommodations and supports available. With new assessments, MDE seeks to continuously improve the supports, tools, and accommodations available. As a result, some accommodations and supports will only be available for the Science MCA, as they

are developed along with the new assessment. As new assessments in reading and mathematics are developed, those accommodations and supports will be communicated ahead of their first administration.

The Science Alt MCA is a newly designed alternate assessment that provides additional administration options. It can be administered in online, paper, or hybrid (any combination of online and paper) formats to meet student needs. There will also be new test materials available to support Alt MCA administrations and new administration policies, including an early stopping rule. More details will be available in MTAS/Alt MCA resources, which will begin to be posted in early Oct.

Due to 2024–25 being the first operational administration of these assessments, final reporting will be delayed, and preliminary On-Demand Reports will not be available for these assessments this year. In addition, because these will be new assessments measuring different standards, results from the new series of assessments cannot be compared to previous years.

## Initial Release of the MCA/Alt MCA Student Readiness Tools (SRTs)

The initial release of Student Readiness Tools (SRTs) for the 2024–25 school year are now available on the [Student Readiness Tools](#) page of PearsonAccess Next. Note: You may need to refresh the page and/or clear your browser's cache to see the updated resources on PearsonAccess Next.

The SRTs are designed to help students prepare for the online or paper MCA/Alt MCA they will be taking. The online and paper SRTs are reviewed and updated regularly based on feedback from educators and students and changes to the assessment and available tools and supports.

The initial release includes the following updates for 2024–25, with additional updates to be released throughout the fall for Alt MCA and paper SRTs. Additional updates for online SRTs will be released in Dec.

- Desmos online calculators, which are in addition to existing TI calculators for the Mathematics and Science MCA. Refer to the *Calculator Options for Mathematics MCAs in Spring 2025* article below for more information.
- Revised Science MCA paper test materials, including:
  - Phenomena Book, which will be provided automatically with the Science MCA paper test book to make it easier for students to access phenomena information alongside the items included in the test book.
  - Revised 18-point large print test book available in late Oct. with improved format to maximize the layout of the content on a 8.5" x 11" page size, making the materials more manageable for students. The 24-point large print test book will not be available for the MCA-IV series.
  - Revised script format and updated language to remove directional text and provides a comprehensive read-aloud experience for students. The science script will be available with the Dec. release.
- The majority of Alt MCA paper materials are currently available, with the online Alt SRTs available in early Oct.

The following updates will be available in a Dec. online SRT release:

- Online versions of mathematics tables for the Mathematics MCA. Refer to the *Calculator Options for Mathematics MCAs in Spring 2025* article below for more information.
- English glossary for online Science MCA
- Co-Writer: Universal and Read&Write extensions for online Science MCA constructed response items
- Ruler tool for grade 3 Mathematics MCA
- Assistive technology forms (screen reader and non-screen reader versions) for online Science MCA and Alt MCA

No login information is needed for the online SRTs. Students select their grade level to review videos and practice activities to learn how to navigate within the test, use the tools, and answer question types.

The paper SRTs are available for students taking an MCA paper test. The paper SRTs help students learn to handle the paper test books and how to write their answers to different types of questions. All 12-point paper SRTs will be available on PearsonAccess Next on Sept. 27. Paper test materials such as large print (18- and 24-point) and mathematics scripts will be released throughout fall 2024 and braille materials will be available winter 2025.

Educator guides for both the online and paper SRTs are available. Supplemental information for the online SRT tutorials is also available, which provides detailed information about all functionality.

## Minnesota Questions Tool (MQT) for Educators

In addition to using the SRT to ensure students are familiar with the test they will be taking, the best way to prepare students for the content of the MCA is to provide instruction that addresses the K–12 standards and benchmarks.

The released or sample questions in the [Minnesota Questions Tool \(MQT\)](#) are intended to support educators in understanding how the academic standards are assessed on the MCA and MTAS/Alternate MCA, to help identify student misconceptions, and to provide examples of questions that assess student understanding at different DOK (Depth of Knowledge) levels. In the MQT, all Science MCA and Alt MCA items are aligned to the 2019 Minnesota Academic Standards. For Reading and Mathematics MCA, the items are released to the current Minnesota Academic Standards being assessed (2010 for reading, 2007 for mathematics).

## Calculator Options for Mathematics MCAs in Spring 2025

The Mathematics MCA has both an addition and expansion to the calculators available online.

The Desmos calculators have been added as options in TestNav for students taking the Mathematics and Science MCAs. Because of the content being assessed within the MCA, the test version of the calculator available in

TestNav will be different than the standard Desmos app. The test version of Desmos is available as a stand-alone calculator on PearsonAccess Next and in the [Student Readiness Tools \(SRTs\)](#).

Desmos will add Minnesota-specific details to their [Desmos testing website](#) at the start of the 2024–25 school year, including the differences between the test version and the standard version of Desmos. In addition, the [Desmos practice website](#) will be updated to include Minnesota under the “Choose Assessment” link, as well as adding Minnesota to the Desmos Test Mode app.

Note: Using a separate device to access the Desmos app is not allowed except in specific MDE-approved circumstances as an accommodation for students with an IEP or 504 plan.

Students will still be able to use the current TI calculator options: basic, scientific, and graphing. Desmos calculators will follow the same format as the TI calculators: four-function, scientific, and graphing.

The online Mathematics MCA calculator options will also include an electronic version of the hundreds chart and multiplication table. All students in grades 3 through 11 will have the mathematics tables available for all questions where a calculator is allowed. If a student with an IEP or 504 plan typically takes the paper version of the MCA in order to use the hundreds chart or multiplication table, this decision should be reevaluated to determine if that is still necessary or if the student can take the online version of the test. Students with an IEP or 504 plan who will be taking a paper version of the MCA can continue to use paper versions of the tables as needed. Note: The online mathematics tables will be available in the December release of the online SRT.

For more information about these changes, refer to the [Calculators and Mathematics Tables page](#) of PearsonAccess Next. You may need to refresh the page and/or clear your cache to see the revised Calculators and Mathematics Tables page.

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## ***MDE Seeking Public Feedback on Science MCA-IV and Alternate MCA Performance Level Descriptors – Deadline Friday (repeat)***

Please share this information with your science educators and special education teachers who work with students with significant cognitive disabilities.

MDE is currently finalizing the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs), previously named Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs), that describe learning of the grade-level expectations set by benchmarks or extended benchmarks in the Minnesota Academic Standards. The PLDs are used to describe what it means to be proficient on the Science MCA-IV and Science Alternate MCA (Alt MCA) following the first administration in Spring 2025 and Reading Alt MCA following the first administration in Spring 2026. The Reading MCA-IV PLDs will be available in a future public review.

As part of the drafting process, MDE is holding a public review period to collect feedback from district staff and community members on the latest draft of the Science MCA/Alt MCA PLDs as well as the Reading Alt MCA PLDs.

This feedback will ensure that multiple perspectives throughout Minnesota are considered in the development of the final version of the documents.

- View the draft Science MCA-IV Performance Level Descriptors and the feedback survey on the [Statewide Testing page](#) of the MDE website.
- View the draft Science and Reading Alt MCA Performance Level Descriptors and the feedback survey on the [Alternate Assessments page](#) of the Testing 1, 2, 3 website.

MDE will be taking feedback until this Friday, Sept. 27. If you have any questions, contact [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us).

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## *Upcoming Opportunities*

### October WIDA and DRC Webinars

WIDA and DRC will be hosting the following webinars in October:

- ACCESS Software Updates and Tech Readiness Checklist, Oct. 1, 1–2 p.m.
- ACCESS Technology Installations Part 1, Oct. 8, 1–2 p.m.
- ACCESS Technology Installations Part 2, Oct. 10, 1–2 p.m.

More information, including the webinar link, can be found in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) on the Webinars page. The recordings for WIDA Webinars are posted on the Webinars page within a week of the presentation.

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#### ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

Minnesota Department of Education

[education.mn.gov](http://education.mn.gov) > District, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing

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