

AN UPDATE FROM ACADEMIC STANDARDS, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT — SEPT. 18, 2024

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embargoed WIDA Alternate ACCESS Student Results in Secure Reports • Updated District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments Template • Translated ISR Quick Guides • Reimbursements for College Entrance Exams • District Assessment Coordinator Trainings and Q&A Sessions (2024–25) (repeat) • New DAC Orientation – Save the Date • Opportunities for MTAS/ALT MCA Test Administrators and Special Education Staff (repeat) • MDE Employment Opportunity: Health Education Specialist (repeat) 	<p>Sept. 24: Embargoed final student results available in District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) files in Secure Reports (WIDA Alternate ACCESS only)</p> <p>No later than Oct. 1: Post district testing calendar to website</p> <p>Oct. 8: Embargoed final school, district, and state summary results available in Test Results Summary in Secure Reports (WIDA Alternate ACCESS only)</p> <p>Oct. 9: Deadline to request a late score entry or request a rescore for MCA and MTAS</p>

Embargoed WIDA Alternate ACCESS Student Results in Secure Reports

Final student-level WIDA Alternate ACCESS results are scheduled to be available in the [District and School Student Results](#) (DSR and SSR) files on Sept. 24. These results will be under embargo until the public release of assessment results on Oct. 22. It is up to the district to determine whether to share embargoed assessment data with students, families, and staff for instructional purposes. Preliminary or embargoed results cannot, however, be discussed in public forums, reflected in public meeting minutes (such as school board meetings), or shared with the general public or media until the final assessment results have been released publicly.

Please keep the following points in mind as you review your WIDA Alternate ACCESS results:

- The 2023–24 WIDA Alternate ACCESS is a completely updated assessment. As such, scores from the 2023–24 WIDA Alternate cannot be compared to prior year scores on the Alternate ACCESS.

- WIDA Alternate ACCESS will not be included in accountability for 2023–24. The Progress Toward English Language Proficiency accountability indicator requires two years of scores to determine growth. Last year’s scores are not based on the standards assessed by the new assessment; therefore, last year’s scores cannot be used to determine progress.
- While two years of results on the new scale are needed to look at growth, three or more years are needed to see trends in language development.
- Use the new [Alternate Proficiency Level Descriptors](#) and guidance in the [Interpretive Guide for Score Reports](#) to:
 - Identify student strengths
 - Determine appropriate student supports
 - Look ahead at the next proficiency level to set language goals

Additional Resources

The following resources are available to support districts with using and understanding the results:

- Chapter 11 of the [Procedures Manual](#) provides guidelines for using the assessment data and abiding by the embargo.
- The *2023–24 District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) User Guide* is posted on the [Assessment Secure Reports](#) page. It provides information on the content and file format of the DSR and SSR files, as well as how to access them in Secure Reports.
- The *Statewide Assessments: Using District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) Files* is a one-page resource that provides information for district staff about using the DSR/SSR files. This resource is posted on the [District Resources](#) page (under the Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable heading).
- The New DAC Reporting Training 1: Secure Systems, Reporting Stages, and DSR/SSR Files is posted in the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#).

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Updated District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments Template

Each year, districts are required to have written District Policies and Procedures for Statewide Assessments that address how test security policies and procedures will be implemented. Note: This procedure has been renamed for clarity (previously titled Test Security Procedure). Districts may create their own procedure or use the template available on the [Policies and Procedures](#) page of the PearsonAccess Next website. The template has been updated with minor language clarifications, including adding references to the new Alternate MCA.

The MDE Test Security and Data Integrity (TSDI) team will select a sampling of districts and review their district policies and procedures beginning in October. The TSDI team will then provide feedback and may recommend changes and/or require action. Districts are randomly selected, and DACs at selected districts will be contacted in mid-October with a request for a copy of their District Policies and Procedures. Even if your district is not contacted for an MDE review, ensure your district policies and procedures is in place before testing begins for 2024–25.

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Translated ISR Quick Guides

Translated versions of the MCA and MTAS *Individual Student Report Quick Guides* will be available in early Oct. on the Translated Documents section of the [Students and Families Statewide Testing page](#) of the MDE website. English versions of the Quick Guides can currently be found on the [District Resources page](#) under the Test Score Interpretation Resources expandable header.

The division of Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment strives to translate as many parent and guardian resources as possible into the ten most populous languages spoken by Minnesota students. The current languages are Spanish, Somali, Hmong, Karen, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Russian, Oromo (Afan Oromo, Oromiffa), and Amharic. This data is from 2020–21 and is reevaluated every five years. Note that some resources are translated into the top three languages (Spanish, Somali, and Hmong) only.

Information about the availability of translated MCA and MTAS *Individual Student Report Quick Guides* will be provided in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

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Reimbursements for College Entrance Exams

MDE issued reimbursements to districts based on the requests entered by the Sept. 6 deadline in the Graduation Requirements Records (GRR) system. The payment is identified with “ACT/SAT REIM,” followed by the date (2024-09-11), and a unique number (e.g., N0000039).

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District Assessment Coordinator Trainings and Q&A Sessions (2024–25) (repeat)

The *District Assessment Coordinator Trainings and Q&A Sessions* document has been updated and is posted on the [District Resources](#) page of the MDE website (under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading). This document provides dates and times for MDE trainings and Q&A sessions for DACs for planning purposes.

For the 2024–25 year, MDE will be offering a combination of in-person and virtual training sessions, with some trainings only offered virtually. All DACs, new and experienced, are invited and welcome to attend all events; however, some of the events are designed specifically to support new DACs in their role. Detailed information, links to prerequisites, and registration information will be provided prior to the event in the weekly *Assessment Update*. In addition, information about WIDA/Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) and Pearson trainings will be provided in the *Assessment Update*.

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New DAC Orientation – Save the Date

MDE and Pearson will host New DAC Orientation in October. This training will provide an overview of the various roles and responsibilities of a District Assessment Coordinator (DAC), the statewide assessments administered in Minnesota, statewide assessment systems, available resources, and training opportunities for the 2024–25 year. While this training is specifically designed for new DACs, experienced DACs are also welcome to attend.

New DAC Orientation will be offered in three formats: a two-part virtual training sessions spread over two days (9–11 a.m. on Tues., Oct. 8, and Wed., Oct. 9), an all-day in-person training event in Northeast Minneapolis (9 a.m.–3:30 p.m. on Thurs. Oct. 10), and a pre-recorded training that will be posted on Fri., Oct. 11 in the [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#).

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

Registration links for the virtual and in-person New DAC Orientation trainings will be provided in the Sept. 25 *Assessment Update*.

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Opportunities for MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrators and Special Education Staff (repeat)

Please share the following opportunities with MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrators and Special Education staff in your district.

Science Alternate MCA Kickoff Meetings

This fall, MDE will be hosting regional in-person and online Science Alternate Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (Alt MCA) Kickoff Meetings focusing on:

- The preparation and administration for Spring 2025 Science Alt MCA operational assessment
- Tools for making decisions about student administration formats (online, paper or hybrid)

- Revised Learner Characteristics Inventory
- Revised *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Requirements*
- Diving into the test design and extended benchmarks aligned to the Alt MCA
- In-person sessions will include interactive activities to engage with the Alt MCA materials

These kickoff meetings will focus on one-on-one administration activities and are geared for MTAS/Alt MCA Test Administrators. However, District Assessment Coordinators (DACs), Special Education Directors/Coordinators, and any district staff involved in administering alternate assessments are also welcome to attend. MTAS/Alt MCA information meetings will also be offered in January to focus on providing updates for the upcoming Spring 2025 administration.

Sessions	Location
Tuesday, Oct. 1 9 a.m.–Noon or 1–4 p.m.	Pine Room South Central Service Cooperative Conference Center 2075 Lookout Drive, North Mankato, MN 56003
Thursday, Oct. 10 9 a.m.–Noon or 1–4 p.m.	Hobson Memorial Union Crying Wolf Room Bemidji State University 1500 Birchmont Drive NE, Bemidji, MN 56601
Monday, Oct. 21 9 a.m.–Noon or 1–4 p.m.	Lower level Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) 400 Stinson Blvd NE, Minneapolis, MN 55413
Thursday, Nov. 7 2–5 p.m.	Zoom (a recording will be available at a later date)

[Register for one session.](#)

These are 3-hour meetings; morning and afternoon sessions will be offered at each in-person location and will cover the same topics. There is no cost to attendees for these sessions, and educators will be provided continuing education units.

Note: Registration is required and limited to 40 participants for each in-person session.

Alternate Assessment Chat and Connect Series

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 first session of the year on Tuesday, Oct. 15 from 4–5 p.m. Please [register for the Alt Assessment Chat and Connect](#). This month we will be discussing the MTAS eligibility guidelines for choosing assessments for students and planning for assessment during IEP meetings and showing the newly released Science Alternate MCA Online Demo.

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 Alternate Assessment Chat and Connect dates for this year are: Oct. 15, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Feb. 18, 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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MDE Employment Opportunity: Health Education Specialist (repeat)

The Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment Division is looking for an Education Consultant 3 – Health Education Specialist to join the Academic Standards team. This position will provide direction, leadership, and strengthen capacity of school districts and to the Academic Standards, Instruction and Assessment team so that all students can meet state academic standards and are prepared for postsecondary and career success. Additionally, the Health Education Specialist will facilitate the development, implementation, and support of the statewide academic standards in health and serve as the state expert and primary resource for K–12 health education.

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 79742, and the posting is open until Sept. 23. Visit the [State of Minnesota Careers](#) website for more information and to apply.

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Minnesota Department of Education

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

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