m1 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Assessment Update

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—JANUARY 20, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
- Pretest Editing in Test WES - Additional Materials Ordering Reminders for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS - ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Irregularities - TMS Updates and Resources - Test Security Training: Options and Documentation - Test Security Training Translated Versions - Changes in Linguistic Supports - Alternate Assessment: ARC Process for 2020–21 - Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence: Webinar Series Continuing - Upcoming Opportunities	*Jan. 22:* Deadline in Test WES for changes affecting initial test materials shipment for MCA/MTAS, ISR delivery confirmation, and MCA/MTAS test material delivery options *Jan. 25–April 16:* ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window

Pretest Editing in Test WES

DACs need to complete the following Pretest Editing tasks in Test WES by this Friday, Jan. 22.

- On the District Confirmations page, confirm that your district delivered all individual student reports (ISRs) to families no later than Dec. 1. Note: Even if you had no ISRs for 2019–20 due to COVID-19, you should still select the confirmation.

- On the District Options page, select the appropriate options for MCA and MTAS test materials delivery:

  o Request materials be shipped to the district (default) or individual schools.

  o Request materials be delivered on either Feb. 23–24 (default) or March 2–3.

- o Receive MTAS test materials automatically (default), or, if your district has historically received more MTAS materials than needed, you can choose to order MTAS materials during the additional orders window.
- The following changes can be made throughout the testing window; however, in order to receive paper test materials in the initial shipment automatically, any changes must be made by Jan. 22:
  - o Enter accommodation codes to receive MCA paper test materials.
  - o Change test assignments to receive MTAS test materials.

Additional Materials Ordering Reminders for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS

As districts place additional orders for ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS materials, remember that additional materials orders should not be placed at the site level in WIDA AMS. District test coordinators should use the **District-level Additional Orders Only** site to place their orders. Additional guidance on placing additional orders can be found in *Tips for Placing Your Additional Materials Order*, which is available in the WIDA Secure Portal Download Library, under the ACCESS for ELLs heading.

Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS Additional Materials

While districts may need to order more Kindergarten and Alternate ACCESS test materials this year (i.e., to minimize sharing of materials), please consider how many materials in addition to the materials sent in initial orders are required when placing additional orders. Guidance for adapting materials for easier cleaning is included in the *2020–21 Minnesota Assessments Guidance during COVID-19* and should be followed whenever possible. MDE will follow up with districts if alerted by DRC about large quantities of material requests.

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Irregularities

The *ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Irregularities* is now available on the WIDA Minnesota page under the Resources and Requirements heading within the Manuals, Guides and Test Materials expandable tab. This document outlines some situations or misadministrations that may occur during ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing and require action by the district, MDE, or DRC. While not an exhaustive list, examples of possible test administration situations or misadministrations and the likely outcomes are included for reference.

TMS Updates and Resources

The Training Management System (TMS) was updated so that trainings posted to multiple tabs, categories, and courses (e.g., *Test Security Training*) now show as completed across all locations when completed once in TMS. Training completions will be reflected on the individual user's dashboard and transcript, as well as district- and school-level reports. Please contact the Pearson help desk at 888-817-8659 or submit a Pearson help desk request if you have questions.

The TMS also features a new information banner noting that some trainings include information and images for typical test administrations and do not account for health and safety guidelines required for this year. Please contact MDE at mde.testing@state.mn.us if you have questions about the health and safety guidelines for this year.

The following TMS infographics are also available on Training page:

- The *TMS: Tips and Tricks for School Staff* infographic provides school staff information on creating and editing their TMS account, as well as tracking completed trainings.
- **New for 2020–21:** The *TMS: Admin Feature Tips for District and School Assessment Coordinators* infographic provides district and school assessment coordinators information about viewing reports and documenting trainings completed as a group in the TMS. It also outlines common questions from users and provides troubleshooting tips.

TMS Admin Feature Now Available

The TMS Admin Feature for viewing school/district level reports and documenting trainings completed as a group is available again, as of this afternoon, for DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) users.

Test Security Training: Options and Documentation

The DAC is responsible for ensuring all applicable staff complete *Test Security Training*, received guidance for district-specific policies and procedures, and complete test-specific trainings prior to testing. Though training requirements vary by role and test, the *Test Security Training* is required for all individuals who are associated with any aspect of test administration or test content.

The *2020–21 Procedures Manual* provides additional information about each of the options for how the *Test Security Training* may be completed (i.e., viewing the training online, viewing the training as a group, or completing the checklist), as well as the required documentation for each. See pages 153–155 for detailed information. MDE recommends that DACs review this information when determining the training plan for their district.

Test Security Checklist Translated Versions

Translated versions of the *Test Security Checklist* in Hmong, Somali, and Spanish are available on the Policies and Procedures page in order to provide to staff who need the checklist available in another language.

Changes in Linguistic Supports

As communicated in a previous *Assessment Update* and at the DAC Test Administration Training, accommodated text-to-speech (MC) and the script (MS) are no longer available as linguistic supports for English learners on the Mathematics and Science MCAs (unless the student also has an IEP or 504 plan that specifies it). English learners who need read-aloud support should use the standard text-to-speech that is available for all students.

This decision was made in consultation with national experts, local experts, and EL educators, and is based on the cognitive load required to process the additional information embedded in accommodated text-to-speech or the script. Additional information is available in *MCA Linguistic Supports Change: Removal of Accommodated Text-to-Speech and Script*, which is posted on the Policies and Procedures page. The standard text-to-speech provides read-aloud support without increasing the cognitive load, especially for students at lower levels of language proficiency.

Note: If you have already indicated the MC or MS code in Pretest Editing intended as a linguistic support, you will need to remove those codes in Test WES.

Alternate Assessment: ARC Process for 2020–21

District leaders (Special Ed Directors, DACs, and Superintendents/Directors) were contacted in January 2020 to respond to the Assurance, Rationale and Context (ARC) process for the 2019–20 school year. About 92% of districts responded, and results will be included in a report to the U. S. Department of Education (USDOE) to meet the requirements of MDE's action plan outlined in August 2019. This report will be available on the MDE website when complete. If a district was not able to respond in 2019–20, MDE will be reaching out in the next few weeks to assist in the completion of this process.

For 2020–21, MDE will again contact district leaders with details about how to participate in this year's process. This communication will go out on **Jan. 25**; **this is an updated date from what was originally communicated**. The deadline to respond will be March 5. Only the assurance step will need to be completed.

For more information about the federal requirements and the work Minnesota has done pertaining to alternate assessment participation, refer to the *Overview of the 1 Percent Cap and Alternate Assessment Participation in Minnesota* on the Minnesota Tests webpage.

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence: Webinar Series Continuing

MDE did a series of webinars about evidence-led teaching and learning in the fall, and we have now scheduled webinars on additional topics based on feedback received from educators. These webinars are for any teacher or school leader who wants to center instruction on evidence of student learning or would like to sharpen their data and assessment skills.

Registration is required for each WebEx session, using the links below. Participants will earn one continuing education unit (CEU) for each session. All sessions will be recorded and posted on Testing 1, 2, 3 for future reference.

- **Session 6**: *Where can student data from MDE be accessed by teachers?*
    - **Participants will gain**: An overview of the types of student data relevant to educators that is publicly available, knowledge of how to access and use the data when making decisions, and a framework to use when discussing student data with colleagues.
    - **Presenters**: Kat Edwards and Kendra Olsen
    - **Date**: Thursday, Jan. 28, 4–5 p.m.
    - Register for Session 6: *Where can student data from MDE be accessed by teachers?*
- **Session 7**: *How can results from Minnesota Assessments be accessed and used by teachers?*
    - **Participants will gain**: An overview of the types of assessment data publicly available and how to access, how to interpret and filter assessment data by student group or grade level using the Minnesota Report Card, and a comparison of the various reports that MDE generates.
    - **Presenters**: Kat Edwards and Kendra Olsen
    - **Date**: Thursday, Feb. 25th, 4–5 pm
    - Register for Session 7: *How can results from Minnesota Assessments be accessed and used by teachers?*

Upcoming Opportunities

Science Alternate MCA Test Specifications: Public Review

Following the 2019 revisions to the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Science, the Science Alternate MCA (formerly MTAS) will begin assessing these standards in the spring of 2024 for students with significant cognitive disabilities. In collaboration with a committee of Minnesota educators, MDE has drafted the test specifications for the Science Alternate MCA to assist with the development of the new assessments. In addition to test

specifications, the document includes extended benchmarks, which are based on the new Minnesota science benchmarks but reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity.

Members of the public are encouraged to review the proposed test specifications and provide feedback through the [Science Alternate MCA Test Specifications Feedback Survey](). The survey will be open until Jan. 24.

Feedback from multiple perspectives, including science and special education teachers, is important in creating the best assessment possible for Minnesota students with significant cognitive disabilities. Please share this information with applicable district staff.

Note: The link to the survey, as well as a copy of the survey questions (in the *Science Alternate Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment Test Specifications* document), are available on the [Test Specification page]().

Reading MCA Test Specifications: Public Review

Following the 2020 revisions to the Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards in Reading, the Reading MCA will begin assessing these standards in the spring of 2025. In collaboration with a committee of Minnesota educators, MDE has drafted the test specifications for the Reading MCA to assist with the development of the new assessments.

Members of the public are encouraged to review the proposed test specifications and provide feedback through the [Reading MCA Test Specifications Feedback Survey](). The survey will be open until Feb. 10.

Feedback from multiple perspectives, including reading, English language learner, and special education teachers, is important in creating the best assessment possible for Minnesota students. Please share this information with applicable district staff.

Note: The link to the survey, as well as a copy of the survey questions, are available on the [Test Specifications page]().

WIDA Educator Feedback Requested

Please share the following information with educators in your district. WIDA is looking for Minnesota educators who are interested in participating in WIDA test development events this spring. These events will be held virtually, and WIDA will be offering an honorarium to compensate participants for their time and feedback.

Interested educators should complete the brief [Interest Survey]() by Thursday, Jan. 28. Participants will be selected based on experience, expertise, and representation of regions; some events require participants to have content-area expertise. If selected, WIDA will contact educators with event details and next steps. Contact Sonia Upton at Sonia.Upton@wisc.edu or Joy Pfeiffer at jcpfeiffer2@wisc.edu for questions or more information about specific events available.

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Minnesota Department of Education

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