m1 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Assessment Update

AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—JANUARY 27, 2021

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
- ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window - FAQ about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for Families - MTAS Test Assignments and Assignment of Score Entry Users - Reporting Groups in PearsonAccess Next: Updated Timeframe - TestNav Changes - Alternate Assessment: ARC Process for 2020–21 - SIS and Data Warehouse Preliminary Data Extracts - WIDA Webinar: Monitoring Test Completion for Test Coordinators - Odds and Ends - Upcoming Opportunities	*Jan. 25–April 16:* ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing window *Feb. 1–12:* ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS accountability window *Feb. 1:* Begin assignment of MTAS Score Entry users in PearsonAccess Next

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Testing Window

The testing window for the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS opened on Monday, Jan. 25 and will be open until April 16. Below are a few reminders for testing:

- MDE recommends that districts wait to start administering ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS until the week of Feb. 8; although not required, this allows additional time for any possible changes at the federal level.

- Districts must make sure they are prepared to administer the online grades 1–12 ACCESS using the available technology resources, and Technology Coordinators should confirm they have downloaded the COS-SD to replace the retired TSM as the online content caching solution. See the *COS-SD Technology Readiness Checklist for WIDA Online Assessments* for more information [Log in required].

- Districts will need to manually add any newly enrolled or newly identified English learners directly into WIDA AMS. When adding students, ensure all student information entered matches MARSS; though not required in WIDA AMS, be sure to enter the date of birth and gender information to decrease discrepancies in Test WES during Posttest Editing.

- Paper test materials were recently delivered to districts, and the additional orders window is now open.

  o 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.

  o 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.

For any questions about technology preparation, manually adding students in WIDA AMS, or ordering additional test materials, contact the DRC help desk at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com or 855-787-9615.

DRC System Status Webpage

The [DRC System Status webpage](#) provides real-time updates on operations of WIDA AMS and INSIGHT. DACs, Technology Coordinators, and other district staff can subscribe (by selecting the button in the upper right corner of the webpage) to receive email updates when the status of any system changes. Because some states in the WIDA consortium began testing in December and some states will end testing in May, email updates will be sent to subscribers even outside of the Minnesota ACCESS testing window.

FAQ about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for Families

Translations of the frequently asked questions document MDE prepared (*ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs during COVID-19 Pandemic*) have been posted on the [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources](#) page under Multilingual Learners. Districts can provide this document to families for more information as part of their communication about ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS testing.

MTAS Test Assignments and Assignment of Score Entry Users

In the initial file sent to Pearson last week, MDE noted there were fewer MTAS tests assigned compared to previous years. With the unique nature of last year's testing window, the majority of students defaulted to MCA for their test assignment. Confirm that the students who will be taking MTAS in your district have the MTAS assigned. Directions for updating test assignments are on page 13 of the *Pretest Editing User Guide*.

For students taking the Science MTAS, remember that the Test Group must be changed from Reading/Math to Science on the Precode Search and Edit screen in order to update their science test assignments; see page 10 of the *Pretest Editing User Guide* for instructions on changing the test group.

Note: Since the initial file has been already been sent to Pearson based on indications districts made by Jan. 22, any MTAS test materials the district will need based on new changes to test assignments will need to be ordered in PearsonAccess Next when additional orders open on Feb. 23.

Begin Assignment of MTAS Score Entry Users in PearsonAccess Next

On Monday, Feb. 1, District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and Assessment Administrator (AA) users can begin assigning students with MTAS test assignments to staff with the MTAS Score Entry user role in PearsonAccess Next, as needed. Before MTAS Score Entry users can enter MTAS data, the student tests must be assigned to them. Because the *MTAS Score Entry User Guide* will not be available until mid-February, the following steps may be used to assign MTAS Score Entry users if you wish to start on this task before the user guide is available:

- Login to PearsonAccess Next and select the MTAS 2021 test administration.
- Under Testing, select Student Tests.
- Search for the student test(s) that need to be assigned to user(s).
  - To view all students with eligibility, select the dropdown menu next to Search and select the checkbox next to Show all results.
  - To search for an individual student's test, enter the student's last name or MARSS/SSID number in the filter and then select Search.
- Select the checkbox next to the individual student test(s). Then, select the dropdown menu to the right of the Start button and select Manage Teacher Assignments.
- Assign student test(s) to users with the MTAS Score Entry user role.
  - To assign a user individually to a student test, under the Authorized Users column on the right for each student test, begin entering the username. Select the username from the list.
  - To assign a user in bulk to student tests, select the checkbox next to the student test(s) or the top left checkbox to select all student tests. Under the Authorized Users field on the top left, begin

entering the user's username. Select the user's username from the list and select Assign to selected student tests.

- Select Save and Exit Tasks.

Reporting Groups in PearsonAccess Next: Updated Timeframe

District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) and Assessment Administrators (AAs) will be able to begin creating reporting groups in PearsonAccess Next in late February or early March. This timeframe has been pushed back to better align with when users can start creating test sessions in PearsonAccess Next. Historically, most districts do not create reporting groups until after the start of the test administration, but this timeframe is different than what is communicated in the *Procedures Manual*. In addition, new reporting group functionality will allow users to create a reporting group directly from a test session so this updated timeframe will better align those tasks. The exact date will be communicated in a future *Assessment Update*.

TestNav Changes

A brief overview of some changes to TestNav are described below; these changes have been automatically implemented and will appear in student tests this spring. More detail will be included in Pearson's *TestNav and Item Samplers: For New DACs and Educators (1–2 years)* training, which will be a recorded webinar and available in the Training Management System by mid-February.

- New and updated tools: Students can practice using the following new and updated tools in the *Tools Tutorial* (which will be available on Jan. 29) or the MCA online item samplers, which will be available on Jan. 29.

    o The white noise accessibility tool has been added to the user dropdown menu. This tool allows students to listen to background noise in order to help reduce ambient sound and focus on the test. There are three white noise sounds for students to choose from: waves, white noise, and wind. Headphones are required if students choose to use this tool.

    o The text-to-speech tool has been updated to include Jump Back and Skip Ahead buttons that let students easily jump back or skip ahead in the read aloud.

    o The highlighter tool has been updated to include a Listen button, which allows students to hear text-to-speech for all highlighted word(s) in the sentence(s).

- A battery indicator icon will display in the gray bar at the top of the screen in TestNav for most student testing devices. Students can hover over the icon to show the battery charge percentage. A message will

appear if the battery charge falls below 20%, alerting students to plug in their device. Note: The battery indicator is not currently available on iOS devices.

- For Science MCA, some scenarios include a video player. Within the video player, closed captioning is available for students who need it. The functionality has been updated so that once a student turns on closed captioning, it will remain on for all subsequent videos in the test. In the past, students had to turn on closed captioning for every animation video in the test.

Note: For the new item types and formats being field-tested in the Science MCA this year, a separate student tutorial and teacher guide will be available in late February.

Alternate Assessment: ARC Process for 2020–21

MDE contacted district leaders with details about how to participate in this year's process on Jan. 25. The deadline to respond will be March 5. Only the assurance step will need to be completed this year.

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* and this year's ARC process and documents on the MTAS Participation webpage.

SIS and Data Warehouse Preliminary Data Extracts

For the spring 2021 test administration, Student Information System (SIS) and data warehouse vendors have the opportunity to receive regularly scheduled extracts of preliminary test result data for the MCA and MTAS from Pearson during the testing window, and/or receive final MCA and MTAS data from MDE. This allows vendors to load data directly into their system for districts who enter into a data-sharing agreement with their associated vendor and MDE.

A data-sharing agreement is required between the district and the SIS or data warehouse vendor, and is filed with MDE. The vendor will provide the agreement to the districts. A scan of the signed data-sharing agreement must be on file with MDE by Jan. 31.

The data-sharing agreement includes the option of receiving preliminary data, final data, or both. A separate data-sharing agreement will be needed if a district has different vendors for preliminary and final data.

Authorizing SIS and Data Warehouse Vendors in PearsonAccess Next

Districts are now able to indicate the vendor(s) they work with that will be participating in preliminary data extracts. Districts must have a signed data-sharing agreement with their participating vendor(s) to indicate this. Districts must select the vendor(s) by school in PearsonAccess Next.

For more information about how to select vendor(s), districts may use the *Selecting Student Information System (SIS)/Data Warehouse Vendor Quick Guide*, which will be available in February from your SIS or Data Warehouse vendor.

WIDA Webinar: Monitoring Test Completion for Test Coordinators

WIDA will host the *Monitoring Test Completion for Test Coordinators* webinar on Tuesday, Feb. 2, from 1–2pm. Join the *Monitoring Test Completion for Test Coordinators* webinar on Feb. 2. This webinar is designed for District Assessment Coordinators will include information on the following:

- Student status reports
- Daily cumulative student status report
- Online testing statistics

Odds and Ends

DRC Planned Outage

A planned system outage affecting WIDA AMS will take place Saturday, Feb. 6 from 11 p.m. to Sunday, Feb. 7 at 11 a.m.

Upcoming Opportunities

Reading MCA-IV 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 Specification page.

Teaching and Learning Led by Evidence: Webinar Series

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?* Thursday, Jan. 28, 4–5 p.m.

- **Session 7**: *How can results from Minnesota Assessments be accessed and used by teachers?* Thursday, Feb. 25, 4–5 p.m.

STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS

Minnesota Department of Education

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

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