AN UPDATE FROM STATEWIDE STUDENT ASSESSMENT AND DATA ANALYTICS—NOVEMBER 18, 2020

QUICK LINKS	IMPORTANT DATES
[Clarification for Statewide Testing](#) [Preparing for the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Testing Window](#) [Pretest Editing in Test WES for MCA/MTAS Preparation](#) [Delivery of Individual Student Reports (ISRs) Reminder](#) [What's New and Changed for 2020–21](#) [Update to DAC Training Dates](#) [User Account Management in PearsonAccess Next](#) [DAC Accounts in PearsonAccess Next](#) [Upcoming WIDA Webinars](#) [Update for Reading MTAS: Symbol Format Presentation Pages and Response Option Cards](#) [Upcoming Opportunities](#)	*Nov. 23–Dec. 11:* In WIDA AMS, districts indicate the number of online testers taking ACCESS in grades 1–12, and order test materials for paper ACCESS materials *Nov. 30:* Pretest Editing opens in Test WES *Dec. 16:* Deadline to submit MARSS updates for ELs to be sent in precode for loading students into WIDA AMS and printing student labels

Clarification for Statewide Testing

Statewide assessments (ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS and MCA/MTAS) are required by both federal and state statute. As explained in a recent letter from Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos to Chief State School Officers (including MDE) regarding statewide assessments, the U.S. Department of Education does not anticipate granting waivers to states this year, as they did in the 2019–20 school year.

Regardless of the learning mode of a district or an individual student, districts should prepare and plan to administer all required statewide assessments for the 2020–21 school year. For ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, MTAS, and many MCA accommodations, the assessments must be administered with the student and the test

monitor in the same location. For MCA, including some accommodations, the assessments can be administered with the student and the Test Administrator in the same location or in different locations. Administration and reporting details are being finalized and will be provided during the District Assessment Coordinators (DAC) Test Administration Training and the weekly *Assessment Update*.

This fall, MDE is conducting action research to accommodate statewide assessments administered remotely in school years beyond 2020–21. The results will be shared as they are available.

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Preparing for the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Testing Window

WIDA AMS Tasks

DACs will need to complete the following tasks in WIDA AMS from Nov. 23–Dec. 11 for each of their schools. **It is very important that districts complete this information by Dec. 11.** As indicated above, districts will be administering the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS in person; therefore, MDE strongly recommends completing this information during this initial window, rather than waiting to order test materials during additional orders. All grades 1–5 writing test materials are based on these indications, and entering the information now ensures you receive all the materials needed.

The grades 1–12 ACCESS is administered online; Kindergarten ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS are paper-based administrations.

- Indicate the number of online testers for each grade band.

- Indicate the number of kindergarten testers. Note: During additional orders, consider ordering an extra kit or two, knowing that the kindergarten materials are shared, and having a few extras may help with health and safety logistics. However, be mindful in the number of additional kits you are ordering.

- Indicate the quantities of large print, braille, or paper test booklets needed.

- Indicate the quantities of Alternate ACCESS test booklets needed.

For more information, please refer to the [WIDA AMS User Guide](#) [Log in is required > under Key Resources] or the [Ordering Materials tutorial](#) [Log in is required].

Important Dates for the Precode File

In December, MDE will send the student precode file for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS to DRC. This file is used to load student information in WIDA AMS for online testing and to create student labels for all paper test materials (i.e., Kindergarten ACCESS, Alternate ACCESS, accommodations, and applicable booklets for the writing domain). It is important to ensure that all English Learners (ELs) are indicated correctly in MARSS, since MARSS is the source that MDE pulls the information from for the precode file.

Districts need to confirm that accurate MARSS information has been submitted to MDE by Dec. 16. Note: This date may be earlier if your district uses a student information service provider for submitting MARSS. If this is

the case, check with your provider for their timeline in order for MARSS information to be submitted to MDE by Dec. 16.

Pretest Editing in Test WES for MCA/MTAS Preparation

Test WES is a secure MDE system where authorized personnel (generally DACs) complete a variety of activities related to assessment, including verifying student eligibility for testing, entering students who are not enrolled in MARSS for testing, performing pretest edits, entering Test Security Notifications, and completing posttest edits on test-related information. Beginning Nov. 30, DACs can start working on Pretest Editing tasks in Test WES to ensure students are loaded for their appropriate assessment (MCA or MTAS), and that the appropriate paper test materials will be shipped to the district or schools.

DACs must also enter important information under the District Options and District Confirmations screens in Test WES, such as verifying ISRs from 2020 have been delivered and indicating information about the shipment of test materials. Note: Even if you had no ISRs for 2019–20 due to COVID-19, you should still select the confirmation.

Resources

An updated *Pretest Editing User Guide*, with step-by-step instructions and screenshots, is available on the Test WES webpage, and a recorded training will be posted in the Training Management System (TMS) on Friday, Nov. 20. The training will be available on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under the MDE Recorded Webinars category. Note: MDE recommends downloading the user guide first to help you follow along while watching the training. This training is one of the prerequisites for the Dec. 1 Q&A webinar; see the DAC Q&A Webinars in December article below for more information.

Updates and Notes Regarding Pretest Editing for 2020–21

The *Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide* provides information on how to complete tasks for Pretest Editing for typical spring test administrations.

The following items are new or of note for Pretest Editing for 2020–21:

- As you are collecting information on linguistic supports from staff, know that accommodated text-to-speech and the script are no longer available as linguistic supports for English learners on the Mathematics and Science MCAs; English learners who need read-aloud support should use the standard text-to-speech that is automatically available in the test (i.e., no code needs to be indicated in Pretest Editing). Ensure you are not entering these codes unless an English learner has an IEP or 504 plan that requires these accommodations. Refer to Chapter 4 of the *Procedures Manual* for more information.

- On the District Options page, districts will be able to choose whether or not to receive paper copies of Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for MCA and MTAS. If districts select not to receive paper copies, they will need to provide electronic ISRs to families in a secure manner (i.e., through a secure parent portal).

- Students who were unable to take the High School Science MCA in 2019–20 will not take the assessment in 2020–21 (or any other year), unless they are retaking their life science/biology coursework. The user guide has detailed information on page 22 in regards to how the Send Indicator will appear based on test codes entered in 2019–20.

Delivery of Individual Student Reports (ISRs) Reminder

As announced in September, **districts that received 2020 Individual Student Reports (ISRs) are required to distribute ISRs to families by Dec. 1**. In the past, the deadline was "by fall conferences." However, with the additional challenges facing districts this year, MDE has set a specific date for this requirement instead. Districts may determine how to distribute ISRs following best practices for data privacy.

Note: Not every district received ISRs this year because fewer students took statewide assessments in the spring.

What's New and Changed for 2020–21

One helpful resource for DACs each year as they prepare for statewide assessments is the "New for 2020–21" list in Chapter 1 of the *Procedures Manual*. This list provides a summary of the changes for the year, organized by topic (e.g., assessments and training).

The symbol indicating something is "new" has been updated this year and will now be designated with a NEW! symbol. The "New for 2020–21" section in Chapter 1 summarizes the changes, but it is important to read them in the context of the other information in the manual to understand the changes; chapter references are included to aid in this review.

Though not included in the list in Chapter 1, the INFO! symbol (which has also been updated this year) is used to indicate clarifications of existing policies and procedures throughout the manual. These clarifications must be read within the chapters to fully illustrate what has changed.

The primary reason the new and clarification symbols were updated for this year's manual was in order to make them searchable. Use the Find function (Ctrl+F, Command+F) to search for either "new!" or "info!" throughout the manual. Tip: Using the exclamation (!) with the word will narrow results only to symbols.

Reminder: This year's *Procedures Manual* provides policy and procedure information for a typical school year and test administration; it does not reflect any possible changes or considerations due to COVID-19.

Update to DAC Training Dates

MDE is updating the following DAC training dates as follows:

- December New DAC Q&A webinar:

  - Moving to Dec. 15 (previously Dec. 8)

  - Added Chapter 8 to prerequisites

- Test Administration Training for all DACs

  - Updated date: Jan. 12, 8:30–11:30 a.m. (previously planned for Dec. 15–17)

- January New DAC Q&A Webinar:

  - Canceled; combined with December New DAC Q&A Webinar

MDE's first priority is to provide DACs with the most up-to-date information possible. Many decisions about spring test administrations are still being made, and may not all be finalized and approved by mid-December. Moving the DAC Test Administration Training allows us to ensure that we are providing the most up-to-date guidance to DACs.

Typically, the DAC Test Administrations Training covers what is new or changed from previous years. We will address the most critical of these changes, but will prioritize providing guidance pertaining to test administration requirements during COVID and multiple learning models. Refer to the previous article, *[What's New and Changed for 2020–21](#)*, for more information about where to review information from the *Procedures Manual* about new or changed policies and procedures.

Additional changes or sessions are reflected in an updated *MDE District Assessment Coordinator Webinars and Trainings* document, which is available on [District Resources page](#) under the District Assessment Coordinator Resources expandable heading.

Note: Pearson will also be adjusting DAC training dates; additional information will be provided in an upcoming *Assessment Update*.

DAC Q&A Webinars in December

There are two new DAC Q&A webinars in December; the links to add questions for the webinars will be provided in a future *Assessment Update*:

- Tuesday, Dec. 1, from 2–3 p.m. [Register for the New DAC Q&A Webinar](#).

  - This Q&A webinar will focus on Pretest Editing.

  - Prerequisites are:

    - Chapter 4 (General Supports, Linguistic Supports, and Accommodations for Minnesota Assessments) from the *[Procedures Manual](#)*

- The Pretest Editing recorded online training, which will be posted in the Training Management System (TMS) by this Friday, Nov. 20. The training will be available on the District Assessment Coordinator tab, under the MDE Recorded Webinars category.

- Tuesday, Dec. 15, from 2–3 p.m. Register for the New DAC Q&A Webinar.

  o As noted above, this Q&A webinar has been moved from Dec. 8 and will focus on preparing for test administration.

  o Prerequisites are the following chapters from the *Procedures Manual*:

    - Chapter 6 (Overview of Test Administration)

    - Chapter 7 (Before Test Administration)

    - Chapter 8 (Test Administration)

User Account Management in PearsonAccess Next

District Assessment Coordinators (DACs) must annually review their users to ensure accounts in PearsonAccess Next are up to date. DAC and Assessment Administrator (AA) users can create, edit, delete and enable other user accounts, as well as reset passwords, in PearsonAccess Next. User accounts can be created and maintained either manually or through a file export/import. For more information, refer to the *PearsonAccess Next User Accounts Guide*.

Note the following important information regarding PearsonAccess Next accounts:

- For security purposes, passwords automatically expire every 180 days.

  o Users should follow the instructions in the auto-generated emails to reset their password or select Forgot Password.

  o DACs and AAs can reset other user passwords.

- User accounts are disabled after 240 days of activity.

  o By spring testing each year, most accounts have been disabled, as users generally do not log in between test administrations. Users who did not log in to PearsonAccess Next during the spring 2020 test administrations due to the shortened window may find that their accounts have already been disabled and/or deleted. See bullet below for more information about deleted accounts.

  o Disabled accounts can be enabled either manually or through a file export/import. Once enabled, users must reset their password and log in to activate their account.

  o For active user accounts that will become disabled by spring testing, consider encouraging users to reset their passwords, or, as a DAC, you can reset user passwords in PearsonAccess Next. Note: Users must sign-in to PearsonAccess Next to ensure their accounts are enabled when spring testing starts.

- User accounts are deleted after 390 day of inactivity.

  - Deleted accounts can only be restored manually in PearsonAccess Next.

  - Once restored, most deleted accounts need to be enabled.

  - Once enabled, users must reset their password and log in to activate their account.

A high-level overview of these tasks, including a proposed timeline for user management activities, is available in the *User Account Management in PearsonAccess Next* infographic.

Additionally, the *User Management in PearsonAccess Next* video training is available in the Training Management System (TMS) on the District Assessment Coordinator tab under the Pearson Video Trainings category. This video training goes through process of creating, editing, deleting, enabling, and restoring accounts, both manually and through a file upload.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Pearson help desk with any questions at 888-817-8659 or submit a Pearson help desk request.

DAC Accounts in PearsonAccess Next

If your district has a new DAC, it is important to update the contact information in MDE-ORG as soon as possible. Once Pearson receives DAC and Alternate DAC contact information from MDE-ORG, they use it to create DAC accounts in PearsonAccess Next within 1–2 business days.

If your DAC account was created or updated in MDE-ORG more than three days ago and you did not receive an automatically generated email from PearsonAccess Next System Message with instructions for logging in to your account, contact Pearson at 888-817-8659 or submit a Pearson help desk request.

Note: While the Training Management System (TMS) is not directly linked to PearsonAccess Next, having a DAC user role provides access to the "Admin" feature in the TMS, which includes the ability to view completed trainings and document group trainings for all users in their district or school. From January to March, PearsonAccess Next account information for DACs is added to the TMS every week. For the rest of year, DAC PearsonAccess Next account information is added to the TMS every two weeks.

Upcoming WIDA Webinars

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test for New Test Administrators

WIDA will host the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test for New Test Administrators* webinar on Tuesday, Dec. 1, from 1–2 p.m. Join the *Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Test for New Test Administrators* webinar on Dec. 1. This webinar is designed for Alternate ACCESS Test Administrators and will provide an overview of the following:

- Scheduling

- Basics of administration

- Review of training resources

Managing Test Sessions

WIDA will host the *Managing Test Sessions* webinar on Tuesday, Dec. 8, from 1–2 p.m. Join the *Managing Test Sessions* webinar on Dec. 8. This webinar is designed for DACs and will include information on the following:

- Creating test sessions

- Printing test tickets

- Managing test sessions

WIDA Webinar Schedule

The *2020-21 ACCESS and Screener Webinar Calendar* document is a list of all of WIDA's planned webinars (with registration links) and is available on the ACCESS Webinars page. WIDA also posts recordings of their webinars on the ACCESS Webinars page for those who are unable to attend the live events.

Update for Reading MTAS: Symbol Format Presentation Pages and Response Option Cards

Starting in spring 2023, symbolated materials for Reading MTAS will no longer be available. If you have a student who uses these materials, you will want to discuss how reading will be administered and any adaptations needed with the IEP team in preparation for the 2023 MTAS administration.

For spring 2021 and spring 2022, if a student uses symbolated materials during instruction, the symbol format Presentation Pages and Response Option Cards may still be ordered by the District or School Assessment Coordinator during additional orders. These materials are ordered and packaged together as a kit. To see examples of the symbol format, refer to the MTAS Item Samplers page.

Upcoming Opportunities

Webinar: Science MCA-IV and Constructed-Response Question Types

The Science MCA-IV, which is based on the 2019 Minnesota Academic Standards in Science, will first be administered in spring 2024. To prepare for this new assessment, MDE is investigating whether constructed response (open-ended) question types are appropriate for assessing students on these standards. This webinar

will explain why we are exploring constructed response questions. We will also give an overview of the timeline for including them on the MCA-IV, as well as the steps needed to determine the appropriateness of these questions on the new assessments.

There were two scheduled presentations. One was presented today and a second one will be on Dec. 1. [Register for Dec. 1 Science MCA-IV webinar](); this webinar is scheduled for 4–4:30 p.m.

Please share this webinar link with district staff who may be interested in assessment of the science standards and this spring's field testing during the operational administration.

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