

## Testing Security Protocol

### ■ **For Testing Materials:**

- Testing monitors trained in the respective test they will be monitoring.
  - This is required online.
- Materials will arrive in District Office, signed.
- DAC will be notified and DAC will go pick up testing materials from District Office
  - Testing materials will be taken to HS Office and locked in Principal's Office
- Materials will be sorted only in the HS Office by DAC
- On testing day, materials will be brought directly to the testing location(s) and turned over to the test monitors. This will be signed out on.
- Once testing session is complete for the particular period, materials will be counted and gathered by the DAC.
- Materials will be brought to the Principal's office
  - Materials will be counted, sorted, and packaged in boxes
  - Materials returned to respective testing centers.

### ■ **For Online Testing:**

- Monitors will go through online training for respective tests they will be monitoring
- All login information will be handled by the DAC and distributed to respective monitors 15-20 minutes prior to the testing session.
- Technology concerns will be handled by the IT Department.
  - Caching will take place in local storage.
- Monitors will go through test instructions after handing out individual login information.
- Once logged in, students will have to wait until DAC or Test Monitor ok's their entry to the test.
- Students must complete tests section by section. Once they are in to a section, they must finish it. Tests will be resumed only once, unless there are other difficulties. Tests must be completed within the week they were started.
- DAC or Test Monitor will close the test

### ■ **For any breaches:**

- Immediate contact of the DAC will be made.
- Testing monitor will secure the testing area until the DAC arrives.
- Any breach/security paperwork will be completed and turned in to the DAC.
- DAC will turn this information in to MDE-Testing asap.

In both cases, initial test results will be made available by the DAC/Principal, but login access isn't allowed. This access will be made available once the results are posted in August/September.

Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.31, subdivision 4a requires the commissioner to create and publish a form for parents and guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. Your student's district may require additional information.



### Parent/Guardian Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Assessments

To opt out of statewide assessments, this form must be completed by the parent/guardian and returned to the student's school.

To best support school district planning, please submit this form to the student's school no later than January 15 of the academic school year. For students who enroll after a statewide testing window begins, please submit the form within two weeks of enrollment. Parents/guardians are required to submit a refusal form **each year** they wish to opt the student out of statewide assessments.

Date \_\_\_\_\_ (This form is **only** applicable for the 20\_\_ to 20\_\_ school year.)

Student's Legal First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Legal Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Legal Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student's Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Student's District/School \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Please initial to indicate you have received information about statewide testing.**

\_\_\_\_\_ I received information on statewide assessments and choose to opt my student out. MDE provides a *Parent/Guardian Guide to Statewide Testing* on the [MDE website](#) (Students and Families > Statewide Testing).

Reason for refusal:

Please indicate the statewide assessment(s) you are opting the student out of this school year:

\_\_\_\_\_ MCA/MTAS Reading

\_\_\_\_\_ MCA/MTAS Science

\_\_\_\_\_ MCA/MTAS Mathematics

\_\_\_\_\_ ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

**I understand that by signing this form I may lose valuable information about how well my student is progressing academically. In addition, opting out may impact the school, district, and state's efforts to equitably distribute resources and support student learning.**

Parent/Guardian Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

To be completed by school or district staff

Student ID or MARSS Number \_\_\_\_\_

This document provides some basic information to help parents/guardians make informed decisions that benefit their child and their school and community.

### **Why statewide testing?**

Minnesota values its educational system and the professionalism of its educators. Minnesota educators created the academic standards which are rigorous and prepare our students for career and college.

The statewide assessments are how we as a state measure that the academic standards are being aligned to curriculum and daily instruction in our schools, ensuring all students are being provided an equitable education. Statewide assessment results are another tool to monitor that we are providing our children with the education that will ensure a strong workforce and knowledgeable citizens.

## **Academic Standards and Assessments**

### **What are academic standards?**

The Minnesota K–12 Academic Standards are the statewide expectations for student achievement. They identify the knowledge and skills that all students must achieve in a content area by the end of a grade. School districts determine how students will meet the standards by developing courses and curriculum.

### **What is the relationship between academic statewide assessments and the academic standards?**

The statewide assessments in mathematics, reading, and science are used to measure whether students, and their school and district, are meeting the academic standards. Statewide assessments are one measure of how well students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction. It is also a measure of how well schools and districts are doing in aligning their curriculum and teaching the standards.

#### **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)**

- Based on the Minnesota Academic Standards
- Given annually in grades 3–8 and in high school in reading and mathematics; given annually in grades 5, 8, and in high school for science
- Majority of students take the MCA
- MTAS is an option for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

#### **ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for English Learners**

- Based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards
- Given annually to English learners in grades K–12 in reading, writing, listening, and speaking
- Majority of English learners take ACCESS for ELLs
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is an option for English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities

## How much time is spent on statewide testing?

Statewide assessments are taken one time each year; the majority of students test online. On average, the amount of time spent taking statewide assessments is **less than one percent of instructional time** in a school year. The assessments are not timed and students can continue working as long as they need.

## When do students take the assessments?

Each school sets their testing schedule within the state testing window. Contact your student's school for information on specific testing days.

- The MCA and MTAS testing window begins in March and ends in May.
- The ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs testing window begins at the end of January and ends in March.

## Why are these assessments effective?

Minnesota believes that in order to effectively measure what students are learning, testing needs to be more than answering multiple choice questions.

- To answer questions, students may need to type in answers, drag and drop images and words, or manipulate a graph or information.
- The Reading and Mathematics MCA are adaptive, which means the answers a student provides determine the next questions the student will answer.
- The Science MCA incorporates simulations, which require students to perform experiments in order to answer questions.

All of these provide students the opportunity to apply critical thinking needed for success in college and careers and show what they know and can do.

Because test content represents the standards as completely as possible, preparing for and taking the assessments uses the very same knowledge, processes, and strategies that are used in the best classrooms.

## When do I receive my student's results?

Each summer, Individual Student Reports are sent to school districts and are provided to families no later than fall conferences. The reports can be used to see your child's progress and help guide future instruction.

## What if I choose not to have my student participate?

Minnesota Statutes require MDE to publish a form for parents/guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state-required standardized assessments. The form to meet this legislative requirement is available on the MDE website at the link below. Your student's district may require additional information.

## Where do I get more information?

Find detailed information on statewide testing for students and families on the [Statewide Testing page of MDE's website](#) (education.state.mn.us > Students and Families > Statewide Testing).

## Why does participation matter?

A statewide assessment is just one measure of your student's achievement, but your student's participation is important to understand how effectively the education at your student's school is aligned to the academic standards.

- Educators and policy makers use information from assessments to make decisions about resources and support provided.
- Parents and the general public use assessment information to compare schools and make decisions about where to purchase a home or to enroll their children.

A school's accountability calculations will be negatively impacted if fewer than 95% of the students participate.

*The strong connection to the standards means that "teaching to the test" is really a focus on the academic standards that are already part of daily instruction.*

## Questions and Answers about the ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

### What are the ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs?

The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are English language proficiency assessments used to meet federal and state legislative requirements. These assessments are used to monitor English learners' progress as they develop academic language skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

### Why do we give these tests?

ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs scores provide valuable information about English language development to families and schools. Families can use proficiency level scores and descriptions to understand the progress their child is making and to engage with schools to support their child's learning.

Teachers and schools can use the scores to monitor student progress in acquiring English, plan instruction, and evaluate their language development programs. Schools also use these scores to determine if a student is ready to exit an English language program.

School- and district-level test results are used in federal and state accountability measurements.

### Who must take these tests?

All English learners in grades K–12 in public schools are required to participate annually in an English language proficiency assessment. With very few exceptions, all English learners take the ACCESS for ELLs.

Students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 plan may be eligible for accommodations. Paper accommodations include large print and braille test booklets.

Some students with significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible to take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs instead of the ACCESS for ELLs. [See the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Guidelines](#). (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests.)

### How are tests administered?

Most students take the ACCESS for ELLs on computer, but there are exceptions depending upon grade and domain (reading, writing, listening, or speaking).

Teachers work one-on-one with students to administer the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs using paper materials.

## **How can students prepare for the tests?**

Students do not need to study for the ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Teachers will provide an opportunity for students to practice taking the test using sample test questions so students are familiar with what they need to do on the day of testing.

## **What does it take to pass the tests?**

Students do not pass or fail the ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. Since the tests measure an English learner's ability to understand and produce English language, each student receives a language proficiency score from 1–6.

## **What skills are assessed by the ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs?**

The ACCESS for ELLs measures English language proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking based on the WIDA English Language Development (ELD) Standards. [View the WIDA English Language Development Standards](#) (Go to WIDA > Standards & Instruction > English Language Development (ELD) Standards).

The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs measures reading, writing, listening and speaking skills based on Alternate Model Performance Indicators (AMPIS). [View the AMPIS](#) (Go to WIDA > Assessment > Alternate ACCESS for ELLs).

## **How can I see the ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs results for my child, school, and district?**

Your school will receive an individual student report for your child and will provide this information to you. This report shows your child's performance on the assessment and includes scores for each language domain as well as composite scores.

School and district results are available in the Minnesota Report Card section of the Data Center on the MDE website. [Go to the Minnesota Report Card section of the MDE website](#). (Go to Data Center > Minnesota Report Card.)

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*For more information, contact:*

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[mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us)

Minnesota Department of Education  
1500 Highway 36 West  
Roseville, MN 55113-4266  
<http://education.state.mn.us>

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## Questions and Answers about the MTAS in Reading, Mathematics, and Science

### What is the MTAS?

The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is part of the Minnesota assessment program.

The MTAS measures reading, mathematics, and science skills that are linked to the general education curriculum. These skills represent high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities, but tasks to measure these skills are considerably less difficult than the items on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA).

### What is the purpose of the MTAS?

The MTAS is one of the tests used to meet federal and state legislative requirements that may be taken in place of the MCA.

Schools are responsible for meeting the educational needs of all students. Some students are unable to achieve grade-level proficiency due to their disability, and the MTAS helps ensure that schools provide access to reading, mathematics, and science instruction that is linked to the Minnesota Academic Standards at the student's grade level to the extent appropriate.

Your child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) may indicate a need for specialized instruction in both functional and academic skills. The MTAS is designed to measure student progress on academic skills.

### Who must take this test?

All students in public schools are required to participate in the statewide assessment program. Tests are provided for specific grades in reading (3–8 and 10), mathematics (3–8 and 11), and science (5, 8, and once in high school).

The MTAS may be appropriate for certain students with IEPs who have the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students may take the MTAS in reading, mathematics, and/or science instead of the MCA. The IEP team is responsible for determining how the student participates in statewide testing.

The *MTAS Eligibility Requirements* help IEP teams determine who should take the MTAS. [See the \*MTAS Eligibility Requirements on the MDE website for more information.\*](#) (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests.)

## **What does it take to pass the test?**

Students do not pass or fail the MTAS, and it will not be used to determine whether your child can progress to the next grade. Each student receives a score that falls in one of four achievement levels—Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards, Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards, Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards, and Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

## **What is the format of the test?**

The MTAS is a performance assessment that is administered by the student's teacher (or another school district employee) in a one-on-one setting. The performance tasks are clearly academic and measure your child's skills in reading, mathematics, and science. Tasks on the MTAS are significantly less complex than test questions on the MCA. Tasks may be read aloud and presented with pictures, symbols, and/or objects to make them accessible to students who need such supports. Students may respond in a variety of ways (such as speaking, pointing, or using eye gaze) to show what they know on tasks.

## **What skills are measured on the MTAS?**

The MTAS test specifications for reading, mathematics, and science provide very specific information about the skills that are assessed on the MTAS. [View the test specifications on the MDE website](#). (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Test Specifications.)

Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and the types of questions that are on the test. [Go to the Item Samplers page on the MDE website for information on accessing the item samplers and student tutorials](#). (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Item Samplers.)

### ***Reading***

The Reading MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of short fiction and nonfiction passages. Passages and tasks may be accompanied by pictures, symbols, and/or objects. Students taking the Reading MTAS may listen to passages, read the passages along with the teacher, or read the passages independently.

### ***Mathematics***

The Mathematics MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of computational skills and mathematical reasoning. The tasks may be supported with line drawings, pictures, and/or objects (such as shapes) that help the student understand what he or she is being asked to do.

### ***Science***

The Science MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of scientific ideas and processes. The performance tasks may be supported with line drawings, pictures, and/or objects (such as tools) to help the student understand what he or she is being asked to do.



## How can I see the MTAS results for my child, school, and district?

Your school will receive an individual student report for your child and will provide this information to you. This report shows your child's scores for specific skill areas within each subject and the overall score in each subject, and indicates your child's achievement level on the MTAS. The school may use this information to help evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and the IEP team may also choose to use this information as one measure of educational progress.

School and district results are available in the Minnesota Report Card section of the Data Center on the MDE website. [Go to the Minnesota Report Card section of the MDE website](#) (Go to Data Center > Minnesota Report Card.)

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## Test Preparation Suggestions for Parents and Teachers

The following suggestions for parents and teachers will help students get ready for statewide assessments.

### General Preparation

- Students should take courses that address the Minnesota Academic Standards. Most schools also make appropriate educational opportunities available to students who are at risk for not succeeding on statewide assessments.
- Share your enthusiasm and interest in reading, mathematics, and science with your children.
- Provide students with a study area at home.
- Encourage students to practice good study habits. Students should set aside time every day for homework.
- Make sure students have had the opportunity to become familiar with the format of the test.
  - Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and the types of questions that are on the test.
  - Student tutorials for online tests provide information on using the online tools and describe navigation and item types.
  - [Go to the Item Samplers page on the MDE website for information on accessing the item samplers and student tutorials.](#) (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Item Samplers.)
- Ensure students get a good night's sleep and eat a nutritious breakfast before taking a test.
- Encourage students to answer all test questions.

### Reading Tests

- Read to students and encourage them to read to you.
- Have students try crossword puzzles and other word puzzles.
- Encourage students to read daily news stories and general interest magazine articles.
- Discuss current events and stories you read.

### Mathematics Tests

- Encourage students to use mathematics every day. They can practice by creating a grocery budget, explaining charts and graphs from newspaper and magazine articles, dividing food portions, using rulers to measure objects, measuring a recipe, or adding prices on a shopping trip.

- Play games that involve numbers or computation.
- Encourage students to connect what they are learning in mathematics class to their hobbies, other classes, and everyday life.

## Science Tests

- Use science articles from news publications to show that science is an ongoing, active process.
- Have students use inquiry skills by participating in science competitions, fairs, and other activities.
- Explore science outside the classroom – nature centers, zoos, and science museums.

## Using a Calculator

Talk to your child's classroom teacher to find out how calculators are typically used in the classroom. Students cannot share calculators with other students during the Minnesota assessments or use any calculator manuals. Your child's school has more information about when and how a calculator may be used for testing.

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