



Arc Guide to Minnesota State Testing for Students Receiving Special Education

Minnesota public school districts are required to put state standards into place so all students have access to high-quality academic content and instruction. The federal government's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires that state testing measure curriculum and daily instruction to be sure it meets academic standards and ensure all students are getting an equitable education. Academic standards identify expected learning for each subject and grade.

The **Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)** and the alternate assessment, **Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)**, are statewide tests that help districts measure student progress toward Minnesota's academic standards and meet the requirements of the ESSA.

- Reading: MCA/MTAS - grades 3 through 8, and grade 10
- Mathematics: MCA/MTAS - grades 3 through 8, and grade 11
- Science: MCA/MTAS - grades 5, 8, and once in high school

Students do not pass or fail the MCAs or MTAS and scores will not be used to determine progress to the next grade but will help determine if a student is making adequate yearly progress.

Students receive a score that falls within an achievement level:

- Exceeds Achievement/Alternate Achievement Standards
- Meets Achievement/Alternate Achievement Standards
- Partially Meets Achievement/Alternate Achievement Standards
- Does Not Meet Achievement/Alternate Achievement Standards

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs)

Most students, including students receiving special education services, take the MCAs, with or without accommodations. This is an on-line test that measures a student's reading, math and science skills against Minnesota academic standards. Students enrolled in public schools are required to participate in statewide assessments and take tests on reading, mathematics and science.



Minnesota Test of Academic Standards (MTAS)

Some students with a disability are not able to achieve grade-level standards. Students who receive special education services and meet eligibility requirements may take the MTAS. MTAS tasks and questions are easier and less in number, tests may be read and symbols or objects may be used. The MTAS is administered by the student's teacher or a district employee in a one-on-one setting. Annually, the IEP team must determine whether a student participates in MCA or MTAS assessment.

“Opt Out” Option for State Testing

Parents/guardians have the right to not have their students participate in state-required testing. The Minnesota Department of Education has a form to complete if they refuse to have their student participate. This form includes an area to note the reason for the refusal to participate. Contact your district for more information about this option.

English Language Proficiency Assessments

The law requires English Language Proficiency Assessments be administered to all English Language Learners (ELLs). The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessments are intended to measure progress for English learners toward meeting Minnesota's standards for English language development. Most English learners will take the ACCESS for ELLs, but English learners who receive special education services and meet the participation guidelines may take the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

Grade 8 Enrollment 2012-2013 and later

- Districts must provide students the opportunity to participate in a national college entrance exam (SAT, ACT) during the school day. All students must be offered the opportunity but are not required to participate. If state funding for college entrance exam fees is available, a district must reimburse the registration fee for a student in grade 11 or 12 who is eligible for a free or reduced-price meal one time. The exam can be at the student's high school or at another exam location.

Ask your child's teacher if they have sample tests available or where and how to access them.



For more information on statewide testing see:

<http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/hiddencontent/bwrl/mdl5/>

[~edisp/mde059689.pdf](http://education.state.mn.us/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/hiddencontent/bwrl/mdl5/~edisp/mde059689.pdf)

For more information on accommodations see:

<https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/Teleconferences/tele16/MNmanualOfAccommodationsPDF.pdf>

For more information on sample tests see:

<http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/>

For further information or advocacy services, contact The Arc Minnesota at 952-920-0855 or toll-free at 833.450.1494 or visit www.arcminnesota.org. (Please note: *This document is not legal advice, and should not be construed as such. Thus, no information herein should replace the sound advice of an attorney.*)

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