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Dear Educator,

The state tests administered each year measure student achievement on Minnesota’s Academic Standards and on the Minnesota Standards for English Language Development, developed by the WIDA Consortium. We have developed this Minnesota Assessment Interpretive Guide to help educators understand the results from these tests.

The guide contains information on how to read the reports and interpret the data from these tests. Once you have become familiar with that information, you will be in a position to better gauge the effectiveness of your school’s curriculum and instruction. You will also have some individual student information that can guide your students’ instruction.

We encourage you to use this guide to inform parents, students, and other interested persons in your community about how the Minnesota Assessment System supports all students in their learning of the knowledge and skills specified in the Minnesota Academic Standards and the Minnesota Standards for English Language Development.

Minnesota believes all students can learn and strives to set high standards for student performance.

State of Minnesota
Department of Education
Minnesota has developed an assessment system to measure student proficiency on the Minnesota Academic Standards, developed by Minnesota educators, and on the Minnesota Standards for English Language Development, developed by the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium. This system comprises standardized, criterion-referenced tests that provide individual and aggregate data on student performance aligned to grade-level standards.

The Minnesota Assessments have multiple uses:
- School and district results are used for school and district accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).
- Individual student reports inform parents and students of progress in achieving the grade-level Minnesota Academic Standards and/or the Minnesota Standards for English language development.
- Individual student and aggregate summary results are available to help schools and districts make instructional and policy decisions.
- The assessments administered in high school may also be used to meet graduation assessment requirements.

Many measures of learning are necessary to derive an understanding of a student’s strengths and weaknesses. Each performance measure in a comprehensive assessment system requires that users know what the data mean and how to use the data to make effective decisions.

This Interpretive Guide is intended to help educators understand the results of the Minnesota Assessments. The guide provides basic information about each assessment, describes each available report, and suggests ways to use the results. The major topics of this guide are:
- The purpose of the Minnesota Assessments
- Overview of data sites and resources
- Types of score reports
- Interpretation of scores and achievement levels
- Achievement level descriptors
- Descriptions of specific reports
- Contact information

Minnesota is part of the WIDA Consortium. As a member of this consortium, Minnesota districts administer the ACCESS for ELLs assessment to English learners in grades K–12. “ACCESS for ELLs” stands for Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners. In addition, the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is available in grades 1–12 for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities. The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs fulfill the Title III requirement of the ESEA. The purpose of these assessments is to measure students’ achievement on the Minnesota Standards for English Language Development, developed by the WIDA Consortium.

Information about reports for ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is not included in this guide; for more information, please refer to the “Interpretive Guide for Score Reports” on the WIDA website. View the WIDA website (http://www.wida.us/assessment/ACCESS/). In addition, please refer to the Data Sites and Resources section later in this manual about how to find ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs results on the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) website.

References to additional information on the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us) exist throughout this manual. American Institutes for Research (AIR) was the 2013–2014 administration service provider for the Title I and GRAD assessments. Pearson will be the administration service provider for the Title I and GRAD assessments beginning in 2014-2015.
No single assessment can comprehensively measure a student’s learning in a school or environment. Results on the Minnesota Assessments are only a subset of the data that schools and districts can use to determine how well students have acquired the knowledge and skills on the Minnesota Academic Standards and Minnesota Standards for English Language Development and how well the school is teaching them.

**PURPOSE OF THE MINNESOTA ASSESSMENTS**

**Title I Assessments**

**Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in Reading, Mathematics, and Science**
In 2014, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) was administered to students in reading in grades 3–8 and 10, mathematics in grades 3–8 and 11, and science in grades 5, 8, and high school. The purpose of the MCA is to measure Minnesota students’ achievement on the Minnesota Academic Standards. The MCA results inform curriculum decisions at the district level; inform instruction at the classroom level; and, in reading and mathematics, demonstrate student academic progress from year to year.

The Reading and Mathematics MCA are the primary assessments Minnesota uses for ESEA accountability. All students are required to take these tests or a designated replacement, such as the Reading and Mathematics MCA-Modified for persistently low-performing students or the Reading and Mathematics Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) for students with significant cognitive disabilities. The test results are used to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) and Multiple Measurement Ratings (MMR) for Minnesota schools and districts. MCA results can be used to compare schools and districts across the state. Science MCA participation (or Science MTAS, for eligible students) is required under ESEA but is not included in AYP or MMR calculations at this time.

**Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment-Modified (MCA-Modified) in Reading and Mathematics**
The MCA-Modified is an alternate assessment in reading and mathematics in grades 5–8, reading in grade 10, and mathematics in grade 11 based on the same academic standards as the MCA but with modified achievement standards. The MCA-Modified is positioned between the MCA and the MTAS. Participation is limited to persistently low-performing students receiving special education services whose IEP team determines that they meet eligibility requirements for the MCA-Modified.

**Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) in Reading, Mathematics, and Science**
The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is an alternate assessment in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8, reading in grade 10, mathematics in grade 11, and science in grades 5, 8, and high school that is based on alternate achievement standards. The MTAS is part of a statewide program that measures the extent to which students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general education curriculum on standards that have been reduced in breadth, depth, and complexity.

The MTAS is a performance-based assessment where performance tasks in reading, mathematics, and science are administered to students in a one-on-one setting. Test administrators score performance tasks using a script and task-specific scoring rubric.

**Graduation Assessment Requirements**
In order to be eligible for a diploma from a Minnesota public high school, all students must fulfill graduation assessment requirements in writing, reading, and mathematics. Based on the revisions to Minnesota Statute 120B.30, the graduation assessment requirements have changed, and students have several options available to meet the graduation assessment requirements. Passing the GRAD assessments is still one of the options available for students enrolled in grade 8 through 2011–2012, but it is not the only option. Additional information about the graduation routes available
due to the legislative changes is available on the MDE website. View the Minnesota Tests section of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/TestAdmin/MNTests/index.html).

Note: this Interpretive Guide only provides information on the Title I high school reports and the GRAD retest reports. This Interpretive Guide does not provide a full or final report on progress towards meeting the graduation assessment requirements.

**Test Specifications**

Test specifications are specific rules and characteristics that guide the development of a test’s content and format. They indicate which strands, sub-strands, standards, and benchmarks will be assessed on the test and in what proportions. View test specifications for the Title I and GRAD assessments on the Test Specifications section of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Testing/TestSpec/index.html).

**DATA SITES AND RESOURCES**

**MDE Data Center**

There are two sections of the Data Center on the MDE website where educators can analyze test results and create, view, and download reports that meet their needs. The Minnesota Report Card is open to the public and allows the user to view and analyze data for any public school or district in the state. The only restriction is that data are suppressed when a data set consists of fewer than 10 students. To access the Minnesota Report Card section, go to the MDE website, choose “Data Center,” and then choose “Minnesota Report Card.” Information about how to use this section of the website is included on the Minnesota Report Card pages.

The Secure Reports section is only open to educators who have obtained permission to access secured reports from their superintendents. This section allows users to download student-level information through the District Student Results (DSR) or School Student Results (SSR) files, as well as test results summary information for each test. To access the Secure Reports section, go to the MDE website, choose “Data Center,” choose “Secure Reports,” and then choose the applicable report from the list under “Assessment Secure Reports.” A user guide for Assessment Secure Reports is available on the MDE website. View the user guide on the Assessment Secure Reports Data Submissions page of MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/DataSubLogin/SecureRep/index.html).

**Test Vendor Systems for Online Reporting**

Through October 31, 2014, authorized users can continue to view preliminary student test data for the 2014 administrations of the Title I and GRAD assessments in AIR’s Online Reporting System (accessed through the Minnesota Assessments portal). View the Minnesota Assessments portal to access the Online Reporting System (http://www.mnstateassessments.org/).


Please note that data available online in any test vendor system should not be considered as official for accountability purposes; official accountability data are provided to districts by MDE. Districts can use the information in the test vendor online systems for instructional purposes or to inform about graduation assessment requirement status and may share score information with students and families. However, only the data provided by MDE should be used for official student record-keeping.

**Lexile Website**

The Reading MCA individual student reports include predicted Lexile score ranges. The Lexile© Framework is a system that helps match readers with literature appropriate for their reading skills. When reading a book within the predicted Lexile range, the reader should comprehend enough of the text to make sense of it, while still being challenged enough to maintain interest and learn. View the Lexile website for more information about the Lexile Framework (http://www.lexile.com/).
Score reports are generated for each district and school. The following table lists the types of reports that are available for final results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Name</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Results Files</td>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>Blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District (DSR)</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School (SSR)</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Files</td>
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<td>Blank</td>
<td>Blank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Reports Shipment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Copy</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Results Labels (optional for Title I)</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See the Data Sites and Resources section for more information about student results files and summary files that are available through the Secure Reports section of the MDE website; the student reports are described in detail later in this manual. Schools’ student reports shipments are packaged by school and delivered to the districts for distribution. Preliminary results information is available online in test vendor systems as described in the Data Sites and Resources section.

**INTERPRETING SCORES AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS**

The following types of information are available on the summary files:
- Percent of students proficient
- Percent of students at each achievement level
- Average scale scores (for the total test)
- Average sub-scores (for strands, sub-strands, and extended standards)

For each of these scores, you can compare the results for your school and district to those for schools and districts of interest to you or to the state through the Minnesota Report Card, Data Reports and Analytics, or Secure Reports sections of the Data Center section of the MDE website. For example:
- Compare average sub-scores. If the number of possible points for a particular sub-score is small, be cautious when interpreting small differences. Use differences in average sub-scores to guide further investigation of the curriculum and instruction at the school or district level.
- Compare different perspectives, such as average scale scores and percent proficient. For example, your district or school may have a lower average scale score than the state, but the percent of students who are proficient may be greater than the state.
- Look at the distribution of your students’ scale scores and sub-scores. Averages can be strongly influenced by students with very high or very low scores.

The distribution of an entire group’s scores may help you better understand the strengths and weaknesses of your students, especially when the sub-scores’ distributions are included. The District and School Student Results (DSR and SSR) files give you the data electronically, which makes it easier to see a distribution of scores. For more information, refer to the Data Sites and Resources section of this manual.
The average sub-scores for MCA-III assessments are reported on a standardized 1 to 9 scale that is intended to facilitate comparison of strand performance across strands and years. On other tests (MCA-Modified and MTAS), sub-scores are reported as raw score points earned, and schools and districts can only be appropriately compared within a particular year for those assessments. Such comparisons can tell an organization about its strengths or areas needing improvement relative to other schools or districts. Sub-scores based on raw score points are not equated for differences in difficulty for a given year; one strand or sub-strand may have items that are more difficult than others. Thus, direct comparisons between different sub-scores or across multiple years may be misleading. Be cautious when making comparisons between strands or sub-strands.

Trend data are available for the Minnesota Assessments. However, please use caution when interpreting trend data because assessments change when academic standards are revised. For example, a new baseline for grades 3–8 mathematics was set in 2011, for science in 2012, for reading in 2013, and for grade 11 mathematics in 2014. For this reason, comparisons between the percentages of students who scored proficient should be made only when keeping in mind the standards measured from one year to the next.

**Development of the Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs)**
The Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs) give descriptive information about what typical students are expected to know of the Minnesota Academic Standards.

The ALDs were developed focusing on the content of the Minnesota Academic Standards. Preliminary drafts of the ALDs were provided for the standard setting panels as they began their work to determine cut scores for each of the achievement levels. After standard setting, minor adjustments were made to more accurately reflect the skills demonstrated by students at each of the achievement level score ranges. [View the full ALDs on the MDE website](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Testing/AchievLevDesc/index.html).

Performance definitions are the equivalent of the ALDs for the ACCESS for ELLs and the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency assessments. These descriptors assist families, teachers, and administrators with the interpretation of the proficiency levels reported on a six point scale. In addition to performance definitions, “Can Do” descriptions are available for the levels of performance on the ACCESS for ELLs. Both the performance definitions and the Can Do statements can be found in the documents listed in the Downloads and Products section of the Can Do Descriptors page of the website. [View the CAN Do descriptors page](http://wida.us/standards/CAN_DOs/). Performance definitions for the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs are available in the Alternate ACCESS for ELL’s section of the WIDA website under Downloads and Products. [View the Performance Definitions on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs page](http://wida.us/assessment/alternateaccess.aspx).

**How to Use the ALDs**
The ALDs can be used to communicate with parents, students, and the public about the basic skills and knowledge expected of the typical student at each achievement level. The ALDs give concrete meaning to a scale score and its associated achievement level. They can be used as examples when talking with others about student performance. The ALDs may be used as a tool to inform parents of the performance expectations for their child and to suggest changes in skills and knowledge as a student moves from one achievement level to a higher level.

The ALDs can also be used by educators in instructional planning. The ALDs can help teachers develop curriculum maps to reflect the building of skills on each of the benchmarks. Teachers may also find the ALDs useful as they develop their school improvement plans. If a school uses Minnesota assessment data with formative assessment to group students for instruction, the ALDs may be used to provide some cursory information about the skills and knowledge that need emphasis to move the students to the next achievement level. If a student is involved in supplemental services related to his or her performance on an assessment, then a service provider might use the ALDs to identify the scaffolding of skills needed to help the student reach proficiency on skills measured in previous grades so that the student can be successful in his or her current grade.

When using any of the Minnesota ALDs, it is important to remember that the performance of an individual student at an achievement level may vary from the descriptors.
MCA

Scale Score
The raw score totals for Science MCA are converted to a scale score specific to each test subject and grade. For all grades of Mathematics MCA and all grades of the Reading MCA, the scale score is not based on the raw score total; it is based on the specific pattern of correct and incorrect responses given by the student. Use the scale score to determine how the student did on the test. Each year, the test is equated for difficulty with the previous year’s test. This means the scale score has equivalent meaning and provides a valid comparison from year to year for a given grade and subject (provided that the academic standards being assessed remain unchanged).

For each Reading, Mathematics and Science MCA, the scale score can range from G01 to G99, with “G” standing for “Grade.” The first digit (i.e., 3–8) or first two digits (i.e., 10 or 11) represent the student’s grade when tested. The last two digits of the number identify the position of the score on the grade scale. For example, a student in grade 4 could earn a scale score between 401 and 499, while a student in grade 11 could earn a scale score between 1101 and 1199. Note: Although the high school Science MCA can be administered in any grade (9–12) depending on coursework completion, grade 10 is used to represent the grade for the high school scores.

For the grade 11 Mathematics MCA, please note that the 2014 scale score should not be directly compared to scores from previous years, because this test is new and based on the 2007 revised reading academic standards. Grades 3–8 Mathematics MCA scores can only be compared to 2011, 2012, and 2013 scale scores, because 2011 was the first year that those assessments were based on the 2007 revised mathematics academic standards. Grades 5, 8 and high school Science MCA scores can be compared to 2012 and 2013 scale scores because 2012 was the first year of the assessment based on the 2009 revised science academic standards. Grades 3–8 and 10 Reading MCA scores can only be compared to 2013 scale scores because 2013 was the first year that those assessments were based on the 2010 revised reading academic standards.

For assessments that convert raw scores to scale scores (Science MCA), more than one raw score point may be assigned the same scale score, except at the cut scores for each achievement level or at the maximum possible score of G99. Specific details regarding the raw score to scale score relationship are reported on the Technical Reports section of the MDE website. View the Technical Reports section of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/TestAdmin/MNTests/TechRep/index.html).
Achievement Levels
There are four achievement levels for the MCA:

- Exceeds the Standards (E)
- Meets the Standards (M)
- Partially Meets the Standards (P)
- Does Not Meet the Standards (D)

Students are assigned an achievement level based on their scale score. For the MCAs, the diagram to the right illustrates the commissioner-approved cut scores used to assign achievement levels. The cut scores for levels Partially Meets the Standards (P) and Meets the Standards (M) are G40 and G50, respectively. The cut score for level Exceeds the Standards (E) varies by grade and subject.

Sub-Scores
The sub-scores for the mathematics, reading and science strands are the scale scores (reported on a 1 to 9 scale score metric) earned by the student for each strand.

For more information on sub-scores, reference the applicable test specifications on the MDE website. View the Test Specifications page of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/Testing/TestSpec/index.html).

Mathematics Sub-Scores
The Mathematics MCA sub-scores represent the four mathematics strands from the Mathematics Standard of the 2007 Minnesota Academic Standards. The strands are outlined in the test specifications.

- **Number & Operation** (grades 3–8, only): understanding meanings of numbers and operations and how they relate to each other, computing fluently, and making reasonable estimates
- **Algebra**: models to understand, represent, and analyze patterns, relations, and functions
- **Geometry & Measurement**: analyzing characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and developing mathematical arguments about geometric relationships; understanding the units, systems, and processes of measurement
- **Data Analysis** (grades 3–5) and **Data Analysis & Probability** (grades 6–8 and 11): organizing and displaying relevant data to answer questions; understanding and applying basic concepts of probability

Reading Sub-Scores
The Reading MCA sub-scores reflect the sub-strands of Literature and Informational Text from the 2010 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts, which are outlined in the test specifications. All the reading reports—grades 3–8 and 10—have the same sub-score categories.

- **Literature**: use strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate fiction (such as short stories, fables, poetry, and drama).
- **Informational Text**: use strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate nonfiction (such as expository and persuasive text, and literary nonfiction).

The ten reading standards are organized under four skill domains. The skill domains are Key Ideas and Details (standards 1-3), Craft and Structure (standards 4-6), Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (standards 7-9), and Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity (standard 10). Seven of the ten reading standards are assessed on the Reading MCA-III. Standards 7, 9, and 10 are best assessed using classroom measures and are not assessed in the MCA-III.

Science Sub-Scores
The Science MCA sub-scores are for the four strands in grades 5 and 8 and two strands in high school from the Science Standards of the 2009 Minnesota Academic Standards and are outlined in the test specifications.
Grade 5 Strands

- **Nature of Science & Engineering**: conducting controlled scientific investigations, constructing explanations based on evidence, identifying engineering solutions to problems
- **Physical Science**: describing and experimenting with the properties of matter, light, heat, sound, electricity, magnetism, and force and motion
- **Earth & Space Science**: modeling the positions of Earth, the Sun and the Moon, describing how weathering and erosion shape Earth’s surface and how water moves through the water cycle
- **Life Science**: identifying structures and functions of organisms and relationships among organisms, and understanding individual differences give advantages in survival

Grade 8 Strands

- **Nature of Science & Engineering**: understanding how humans affect scientific investigations, designing and conducting investigations, communicating results, and refining engineering solutions
- **Physical Science**: differentiating between physical and chemical changes, understanding properties of waves and force and motion of an object, and describing changes in energy
- **Earth & Space Science**: understanding how forces affect motions of objects in the universe, describing weather patterns, and understanding the processes that occur on Earth
- **Life Science**: identifying changes in energy within an ecosystem, understanding cell processes and genetic variation, and describing the effect of humans on ecosystems

High School Strands

- **Nature of Science & Engineering**: analyzing risks and benefits of engineering solutions accurately communicating scientific results, and testing hypotheses
- **Life Science**: describing cell functions and processes, understanding relationships of organisms in an ecosystem, and the role of DNA and variation in evolution

CAUTION – Use care when interpreting:

- **Data involving few students or test items**: The more students taking the test or more test items measuring the concepts, the more confident you can be of the results.
- **Sub-scores**: The difficulty of a strand or sub-strand and points possible will likely vary by grade, subject, and year.

MCA-Modified

Scale Score
The raw score totals for Mathematics and Reading MCA-Modified are converted to a scale score for each test subject and grade. This scale score represents how the student performed on the test. Each year, the test is equated for difficulty with the previous year’s test, which means the scale score permits a valid comparison of achievement from year to year for a given grade and subject (provided that the academic standards being assessed have not changed).

Achievement Levels
There are four achievement levels for the MCA-Modified:
- Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards (E)
- Meets the Modified Achievement Standards (M)
- Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards (P)
- Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards (D)
Students are assigned an achievement level based on their scale score. The cut scores for levels Partially Meets the Standards (P) and Meets the Standards (M) for all grades and subjects are 190 and 200, respectively. The cut score for level Exceeds the Standards (E) varies by grade and subject.

Specific details regarding the raw score to scale score relationship are reported on the Technical Reports section of the MDE website. View the Technical Reports section of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/TestAdmin/MNTests/TechRep/index.html).

Sub-Scores
The sub-scores are the raw score points earned by the student on the mathematics strands and the reading sub-strands. The number of possible points for each sub-score varies by grade, subject, and year. The school, district, and state averages of these sub-scores are available on the MDE website under Data Center under Data Reports and Analytics under “Subscore Report”.

Mathematics Sub-Scores
The Mathematics MCA-Modified sub-scores represent the four mathematics strands from the Mathematics Standard of the 2007 Minnesota Academic Standards. The strands are outlined in the test specifications.

- **Number & Operation** (grades 5–8): understanding meanings of numbers and operations and how they relate to each other, computing fluently, and making reasonable estimates
- **Algebra**: models to understand, represent, and analyze patterns, relations, and functions
- **Geometry & Measurement**: analyzing characteristics and properties of two- and three-dimensional geometric shapes and developing mathematical arguments about geometric relationships; understanding the units, systems, and processes of measurement
- **Data Analysis** (grade 5) and **Data Analysis & Probability** (grades 6–8 and 11): organizing and displaying relevant data to answer questions; understanding and applying basic concepts of probability

The grades 5–8 mathematics reports have the same four sub-score categories. The grade 11 report has only three sub-scores; Algebra, Geometry & Measurement, and Data Analysis & Probability.

Reading Sub-Scores
The Reading MCA-Modified sub-scores reflect the sub-strands of Literature and Informational Text from the 2010 Minnesota Academic Standards in Language Arts, which are outlined in the test specifications. All the reading reports—grades 5–8 and 10—have the same sub-score categories.

Reading sub-strands:

- **Literature**: use strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate fiction (such as short stories, fables, poetry, and drama).
- **Informational Text**: use strategies to analyze, interpret, and evaluate nonfiction (such as expository and persuasive text, and literary nonfiction).

The ten reading standards are organized under four skill domains. The skill domains are Key Ideas and Details (standards 1-3), Craft and Structure (standards 4-6), Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (standards 7-9), and Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity (standard 10). Seven of the ten reading standards are assessed on the Reading MCA-Modified III. Standards 7, 9, and 10 are best assessed using classroom measures and are not assessed in the MCA-Modified III.

MTAS

Scale Score
The raw score totals for Mathematics, Reading, and Science MTAS are converted to a scale score for each test subject and grade. This scale score represents how the student performed on the test. Each year, the test is equated for difficulty with the previous year’s test, which means the scale score permits a valid comparison of achievement from year to year for a given grade and subject (provided that the academic standards being assessed have not changed).
Achievement Levels
There are four achievement levels for the MTAS:

- Exceeds the Extended Standards (E)
- Meets the Extended Standards (M)
- Partially Meets the Extended Standards (P)
- Does Not Meet the Extended Standards (D)

Students are assigned an achievement level based on their scale score. The cut scores for levels Partially Meets the Standards (P) and Meets the Standards (M) for all grades and subjects are 190 and 200 respectively. The cut score for level Exceeds the Standards (E) varies by grade and subject.

Specific details regarding the raw score to scale score relationship are reported on the Technical Reports section of the MDE website. View the Technical Reports section of the MDE website (http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/TestAdmin/MNTests/TechRep/index.html).

Sub-Scores
The sub-scores are the raw score points earned by the student on the mathematics, reading, and science tasks identified by the essence statements described in the MTAS test specifications. The number of possible points for each task is 3. Each MTAS sub-score may stem from a single or multiple tasks. The sum of an individual student’s sub-scores is the student’s total raw score.

⚠️ CAUTION – Use care when interpreting:

- **Data involving few students or test items:** The more students taking the test or more test items measuring the concepts, the more confident you can be of the results.
- **Sub-scores:** The difficulty of a strand or sub-strand and raw score points possible will likely vary by grade, subject, and year.
**GRAD RETEST ASSESSMENTS**

**Written Composition GRAD Retests**
The total score for Written Composition GRAD is the holistic score earned by the student. Students write to one prompt and the paper is assigned a score between 1–6 based on the rater’s overall impression of the writing. A score of 3 or higher is required to pass the Written Composition GRAD.

**Reading and Mathematics GRAD Retests**
The raw score totals for Reading and Mathematics GRAD are converted to a scale score and the scale score is used to determine how the student performed on the test. Each retest form is equated for difficulty with the previous tests, which means the scale score provides a valid comparison from test to test for a given grade and subject. The passing score for the GRAD is 50 on a scale score range of 15–85.

**Reading Sub-Scores**
The Reading GRAD sub-scores align with the three sub-strands of the Reading and Literature strand of the English Language Arts Standards from the 2003 Minnesota Academic Standards and are outlined in the Minnesota GRAD Test Specifications for Reading.

- **Vocabulary Expansion**: using a variety of strategies to expand reading vocabulary (the use of context clues to understand new words)
- **Comprehension**: showing understanding of the meaning of text and demonstrating literal, interpretive, inferential, and evaluative comprehension
- **Literature**: demonstrating the ability to read, understand, respond to, analyze, evaluate, and interpret a wide variety of fiction and nonfiction text

**Mathematics Sub-Scores**
The Mathematics GRAD sub-scores align with Minnesota (GRAD) Test Specifications for Mathematics.

- **Number Sense**: understanding numbers, operations, and quantitative reasoning
- **Patterns, Functions & Algebra**: understanding patterns, relationships, and algebraic reasoning (the use of symbols to represent real-world situations)
- **Data, Statistics & Probability**: understanding probability (the chance that an event will occur) and statistics (the collection, organization, and interpretation of data)
- **Spatial Sense, Geometry & Measurement**: understanding geometry and spatial reasoning (the location/position of an object and the amount of space it occupies in the real world).
REPORT DESCRIPTIONS FOR TITLE I ASSESSMENTS

General Description of the MCA, MCA-Modified, and MTAS Individual Student Report

An Individual Student Report (ISR) is generated for every student who took the assessment. The ISR describes an individual student’s performance in terms of scale score, achievement level, and Minnesota Academic Standards for each subject.

Schools will receive a hard copy of each student’s ISR to send home with the student or to mail to the student’s parent/guardian. For the hard copy paper ISRs, reading and mathematics results are printed on one 4 page report; science is printed on a separate 1 page report. Districts can also access final student-level information through the DSR and SSR files provided on the MDE website.

Description of the Grades 3–8 Reading and Mathematics MCA Sample Individual Student Report – Page 1

1. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.
2. **Student’s Achievement Level** – The achievement level earned by the student in the subject.
3. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.
4. **About this Report** – A brief description of the assessment.
5. **Achievement Levels** – A student can achieve one of four levels for each subject: Exceeds the Standards, Meets the Standards, Partially Meets the Standards, or Does Not Meet the Standards.
6. **Student’s Performance** – A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.
7. **Scale Score Range** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equals possible differences in test difficulty from one year to the next.
8. **School, District, and State Comparison** – This section graphically shows the average scale score for all tested students in the school, district, and state. It provides a quick comparison of the student’s performance to reference groups. MTAS and MCA-Modified averages are reported only at the state level.

Student results for Science MCA will appear on a separate Individual Student Report.
MCA-Modified Sample Individual Student Report – Pages 2 and 3

1. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.
2. **Student’s Achievement** – The achievement level earned by the student in the subject.
3. **Achievement Level Description** – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the modified achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.
4. **Total Points Earned** – The total points earned out of the total points on the test.
5. **Sub-Scores** – The strands or sub-strands from the Minnesota Academic Standards.
6. **Sub-Scores Points Earned and Points Possible** – The points the student earned and the number of possible points for each strand or sub-strand.
7. **State Average** – The average number of points earned for all students tested in the state.
8. **What Was Measured?** – A brief description of what is being assessed by each of the strands or sub-strands of the Minnesota Academic Standards.
### MTAS Sample Individual Student Report – Pages 2 and 3

1. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.
2. **Student’s Achievement** – The achievement level earned by the student in the subject.
3. **Achievement Level Description** – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.
4. **Total Points Earned** – The total points earned out of the total points on the test.
5. **Sub-Scores** – The strands or extended benchmarks from the Minnesota Academic Standards.
6. **Sub-Scores Points Earned and Points Possible** – The points the student earned and the number of possible points for each strand or extended benchmark.
7. **State Average** – The average number of points earned for all students tested in the state.
8. **What Was Measured?** – A brief description of what is being assessed by each of the strands or sub-strands of the Minnesota Academic Standards.
9. **Reading Access** – During test administration, the test administrator indicates how the student accessed the reading passage. The choices available for each passage are: the passage was read independently by the student, the student read along with the test administrator, and the test administrator read the passage to the student.
10. **Scoring Rubric** – The 0–3 rubric used for scoring MTAS tasks.
Reading and Mathematics Sample Individual Student Report– Page 4

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be tri-folded in order to take advantage of this section.

2. **Learn More Information** – This section contains an overview of the Minnesota Assessments and a link to the MDE website.
Science MCA Sample Individual Student Report – Pages 1 and 2

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be tri-folded in order to take advantage of this section.

2. **About this Report** – A brief description of the assessment and a link to the MDE website.

3. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.

4. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.

5. **Student’s Performance** – A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.

6. **Scale Score Range** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equalizes possible differences in test difficulty from one year to the next.

7. **Achievement Level Description** – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.

8. **Score Analysis by Strand** – A description of the interpretations of sub-scores.

9. **Sub-Scores** – The strands or sub-strands from the Minnesota Academic Standards.

10. **Scale Score** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equalizes possible differences in test form difficulty.

11. **Scale Score Range** – This section graphically shows the student’s score and a band of uncertainty around their score.
Science MTAS Sample Individual Student Report – Pages 1 and 2

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be tri-folded in order to take advantage of this section.

2. **About this Report** – A brief description of the assessment and a link to the MDE website.

3. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.

4. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.

5. **Student’s Performance** - A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.

6. **Scale Score Range** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equalizes possible differences in test difficulty from one year to the next.

7. **Achievement Level Description** – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.

8. **Sub-Scores** – The strands or extended benchmarks from the Minnesota Academic Standards.

9. **Sub-Scores Points Earned and Points Possible** – The points the student earned and the number of possible points for each strand or extended benchmark.

10. **State Average** – The average number of points earned for all students tested in the state.

11. **What Was Measured?** – A brief description of what is being assessed by each of the strands or sub-strands of the Minnesota Academic Standards.

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Minnesota students must satisfy graduation assessment requirements in order to graduate from a Minnesota public high school. Based on the revisions to Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.30, the graduation assessment requirements have changed. There are different routes to meeting graduation assessment requirements depending on what year students were first enrolled in grade 8.

The grade 11 mathematics and grade 10 reading Title 1 ISRs indicate student achievement as an option for meeting graduation assessment requirements. The GRAD retest ISRs for mathematics, reading and written composition indicate student achievement on the subject taken in terms of passing the GRAD. Students now have other additional options to meet the graduation assessment requirements as referenced above under Purpose of the Minnesota Assessments.
General Description of the Grade 10 Reading MCA Individual Student Report

Students taking the grade 10 Reading MCA receive a single Individual Student Report (ISR). Because MCA Reading does not include an embedded GRAD component, students taking these assessments will receive only a graduation assessment requirement status statement in addition to their MCA score.

Schools will receive a hard copy of each student’s ISR to send home with the student or mail to the student's parent/guardian. Districts can also access final student-level information through the DSR and SSR files provided on the Secure Reports section of the MDE website.

Description of the Grade 10 Reading Sample Individual Student Report – Front and Back Page

1. Address Section – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be tri-folded in order to take advantage of this section.

2. About this Report – A brief description of the assessment and a link to the MDE website.

3. Student Demographic Information – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.

4. Subject and Test – The subject and test being reported.

5. Student’s Performance – A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.

6. Scale Score Range – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equals possible differences in test difficulty from one year to the next.

7. Achievement Level Description – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.

8. Student’s Graduation Assessment Requirement Status Statement – A summary indicating whether the student has met the graduation assessment requirement for that subject.

9. Score Analysis by Strand – A description of the interpretations of sub-scores.

10. Sub-Scores – The strands or sub-strands from the Minnesota Academic Standards.

11. Scale Score – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equals possible differences in test form difficulty.

12. Scale Score Range – This section graphically shows the student’s score and a band of uncertainty around their score.

13. Percentile Rank – A comparison among other students who took this test.

14. Lexile® Measure – The predicted Lexile measure and upper and lower range for the student. Available for MCA Reading only.
General Description of the Grade 11 Mathematics MCA Individual Student Report

Students taking the grade 11 Mathematics MCA receive a single Individual Student Report (ISR). Because MCA Mathematics does not include an embedded GRAD component, students taking these assessments will receive only a graduation assessment requirement status statement in addition to their MCA score.

Schools will receive a hard copy of each student's ISR to send home with the student or mail to the student's parent/guardian. Districts can also access final student-level information through the DSR and SSR files provided on the Secure Reports section of the MDE website.

Description of the Grade 11 Mathematics Sample Individual Student Report – Front and Back Page

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be tri-folded in order to take advantage of this section.

2. **About this Report** – A brief description of the assessment and a link to the MDE website.

3. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.

4. **Subject and Test** – The subject and test being reported.

5. **Student’s Performance** – A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.

6. **Scale Score Range** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equalizes possible differences in test form difficulty.

7. **Achievement Level Description** – A summary of the expected knowledge and skills of the typical Minnesota student scoring at the achievement level identified. These descriptors are unique for each grade, subject, and achievement level.

8. **Student’s Graduation Assessment Requirement Status Statement** – A summary indicating whether the student has met the graduation assessment requirement for that subject.

9. **Score Analysis by Strand** – A description of the interpretations of sub-scores.

10. **Sub-Scores** – The strands or sub-strands from the Minnesota Academic Standards.

11. **Scale Score** – A scale score is a conversion of a student’s raw score that equalizes possible differences in test form difficulty.

12. **Scale Score Range** – This section graphically shows the student’s score and a band of uncertainty around their score.

13. **Percentile Rank** – A comparison among other students who took this test.
General Description of the Reading and Mathematics GRAD Retest Individual Student Report

Students taking the Reading or Mathematics GRAD retest assessment receive an Individual Student Report (ISR) that will contain the results for subject tested. All students taking these assessments will see a graduation assessment requirement status statement indicating whether they have met the graduation assessment requirement based on the GRAD retest.

Due to the change in testing vendor, if districts need to obtain a copy of student results please access student-level information through the DSR and SSR files provided on the Assessment Secure Reports section of the MDE Data Center website.

Description of the GRAD Retests Sample Individual Student Report – Front and Back

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Individual Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be bi-folded to take advantage of this section.

2. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, District.

3. **Subject** – The subject being reported.

4. **Student Score and GRAD Passing Status** – The scale score and GRAD passing status earned by the student in the subject.

5. **Student’s Performance** – A graphical representation of the relationship between the achievement level and the scale score the student earned for the subject.

6. **What Was Measured?** – A brief description of what is being assessed by each of the strands or sub-strands of the Minnesota Academic Standards.

7. **Sub-Scores Points Earned and Points Possible** – The points the student earned and the number of possible points for each strand or sub-strand.
General Description of the Written Composition GRAD Retest Individual Student Report

An Individual Student Report (ISR) is generated for each student who took the assessment. Schools receive a hard copy of each student’s ISR to send home with the student or mail to the student’s parent/guardian. Districts can also access final student-level information through the DSR and SSR files provided on the MDE Data Center website. The ISR describes an individual student’s performance in terms of passing score.

Description of the Written Composition GRAD Sample Individual Student Report – Front and Back Page

1. **Address Section** – The school can use this area to print an address for mailing the Individual Student Report to the student’s home. The school district return address has been pre-printed. The report must be bi-folded to take advantage of this section.

2. **About the Assessment** – A brief description of the assessment.

3. **Student Demographic Information** – A description of the demographic information for the student, including: Student Name, Local Use # (optional number assigned by districts to aid in sorting data), MARSS Number (unique student number), UIN (unique identification number assigned by the vendor and MDE), Grade, Birth Date, School, and District.

4. **Student Score and Passing Status** – The performance level and passing status earned by the student in the subject.

5. **Prompt** – The prompt the student responded to for this assessment.

6. **Holistic Scoring Guidelines** – A graphical representation of the student’s score and a description of each possible score point on the rubric.
STUDENT LABELS

General Description of the Student Labels
The student labels provide test score information for every student tested. These labels can be used on the student’s hard-copy permanent file. Districts determine whether they want to receive student labels for Title I assessments. Student labels are automatically sent for the GRAD retests.

Description of the Sample Student Labels
1. Assessment, subject, and testing year.
2. Student name.
3. District and school where test was taken.
4. Student demographic data such as MARSS Number, Grade, Date of Birth, Gender, and Local Use ID.
5. Student’s scale score and achievement level or pass status for each subject in the assessment; science and writing will each be on separate labels.
CONTACT INFORMATION

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Code</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>E-mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>612</td>
<td>Jennifer Burton</td>
<td>651-582-8622</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jennifer.Burton@state.mn.us">Jennifer.Burton@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>651, 763, 952</td>
<td>Tracy Cerda</td>
<td>651-582-8692</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Tracy.Cerda@state.mn.us">Tracy.Cerda@state.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>507, 320</td>
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<tr>
<td>218</td>
<td>Julie Nielsen-Fuhrmann</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Resources</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Inquiries</td>
<td>651-582-8231</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us">mde.testing@state.mn.us</a></td>
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To assist with the report descriptions, we include sample reports in this guide. The names, scores, and other data displayed in this document are fictitious, used solely for the purpose of demonstrating the functionality of Minnesota testing and reporting. Any similarity to real persons or assessment results is coincidental and not intended by MDE or the test vendor.