Non-Public School Participation in Minnesota Assessments
2014–2015

The option to participate in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS), as well as Optional Local Purpose Assessment (OLPA) and the Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) retests at a cost is open to non-public schools. This document outlines the basic steps necessary to participate in the Minnesota Assessments. References to other documents with detailed information are provided below.

In order to test, every non-public student needs to have a unique state student ID (SSID) number, which is obtained through the Student Identity Validation Interface, or a MARSS number from a past enrollment in a Minnesota public school district. Once every student has a unique SSID number, non-public schools must manually add each student individually into Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES. Students must be manually added each year they will participate in testing. Once students are added, schools can change test assignments and/or indicate accommodations, if necessary, during Pretest Editing in order to receive appropriate test materials.


Designating Staff and Granting Access

The first steps in the process involve designating staff and granting access to the systems used for assessments. If your organization participated in statewide assessments last year, staff do not need to request access again; however, authorizations must be reviewed by the school annually to include additional staff or to remove staff who no longer need access.

To participate, at least one designated person in the organization must possess a secure user account with MDE. A separate representative who has legal authority to act on behalf of the organization (generally the organization’s head) must have authorized the designee to access the necessary MDE systems for assessment administration.

1 This site will no longer be available after October, 2014. An updated Non-Public School Participation in Minnesota Assessments 2014–2015 document will be available prior to that time.
• Using email, send to mde.studentidauth@state.mn.us the contact information for the person(s) who will act as the organization’s authorizer(s).
• Once MDE has received contact information for your authorizer(s), the following steps must be taken to set up users and contacts:
  o Student Identity Validation Interface:
    ▪ The authorizer must complete the “Student Identification Validation User Agreement for Non-Public School Users” to grant access to the Student ID Validation Interface for the designated person(s) who will obtain unique student IDs. [View the agreement on the Student ID Validations Data Submissions page of the MDE website](MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > Student ID Validations). Non-public school users must request access as a Maintainer in order to be able to assign SSIDs, not just look up SSIDs, in the system.
    ▪ Return the form (from the authorizer’s email) to mde.studentidauth@state.mn.us.
    ▪ Once the form is returned, the person designated on the form will need to request access to the Student Identity Validation Interface. Non-public school users will need to request access in the district in which the non-public school is located because non-public schools are not independently listed.
  o Test WES:
    ▪ The authorizer must complete the “Test WES: Superintendent Authorization Form” to grant access for the designated person(s) who will manually add students, confirm or change the tests students will take, and enter any accommodations. [View the authorization form on the Test WES Data Submissions page of the MDE website](MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > Test WES).
    ▪ Return the form (from the authorizer’s email) to mde.testwes@state.mn.us.
    ▪ Once the form is returned, the person designated on the form will need to request access to Test WES. Non-public school users must request school read-write access for their role and then select the appropriate non-public school.
  o Additional information about requesting and modifying access to MDE secure systems is available on the Data Submissions page of the MDE website. [View the Data Submissions page](MDE > School Support > Data Submissions).
• To designate a District Assessment Coordinator (DAC), the non-public school must contact the public school district in which the non-public school is located to update the DAC contact information in MDE-ORG, a searchable database of Minnesota’s educational organizations. [Search MDE-ORG](MDE > MDE-ORG). Non-public schools are not able to make changes in MDE-ORG.
  o MDE recommends that the non-public school email the public district to request DAC contact updates; the email itself should be sent from (or copy) the person authorizing the non-public user to access MDE systems.
  o The public district’s Site Verification Coordinator will update the DAC contact through the MDE District and School Site Verification system. [View the District and School Site Verification page](MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > District and School Site Verification).
Once added to MDE-ORG, the DAC in the non-public school will be signed up to receive the weekly Assessment Update newsletter emails. The DAC will also receive a login for PearsonAccess.

The New District Assessment Coordinator and Information on Accessing Systems and Resources document provides additional information about resources for DACs. View this document on the Test Administration page of the MDE website (MDE > School Support > Test Administration).

**Entering Students for Testing**

- Search for a unique state student ID (SSID) number for each participating student through the Student Identify Validation Interface. Some students may have a MARSS number from a previous enrollment; for other students, the SSID number will need to be created. The Student Identity Validation Interface is used both to search for past MARSS numbers and to create new SSID numbers. View the Student ID Validations page of the MDE website for further information (MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > Student ID Validations).

- Once every student has a MARSS or SSID number, schools will manually add each individual student in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES. Students must be manually added each year they will participate in testing in your school. For students participating in Reading and Mathematics GRAD retests, students must be added each month they will retest, and retests are available every other month (August, October, etc.). View the user guide on the Test WES Data Submissions page (MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > Test WES).

  - Please note: students can only be added during the school year in which they will be testing. For example, if students will be testing in school year 2014–2015, they cannot be added until Test WES rolls over for that school year (typically in September of each year).

  - When manually adding students, you will receive a warning message that says: “Adding a manual enrollment record will override all other records; MARSS updates will not be reflected. Are you sure?” Since non-public schools do not submit MARSS (enrollment) data to the state, this message can be disregarded. Click “OK” to add the student.

  - If there is an error in the student information entered (e.g., student name misspelled), the manually added record can be deleted and re-entered. The user guide provides step-by-step instructions for adding and deleting records. It typically takes one business day for updated information to appear in PearsonAccess.

**Receiving Test Materials and Loading Students for Online Testing**

For MCA and MTAS, schools will use Pretest Editing in Test WES to change test assignments or to add accommodations, if necessary, in order to receive the appropriate paper test materials. Paper accommodated test materials for MCA and regular MTAS test materials are automatically sent based on the indications made December 15, 2014, to January 23, 2015. View the Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide on the Test WES Data Submissions page.
• By January 23, 2015, confirm or change student test assignments and indicate student accommodations in Test WES. The information indicated in Test WES by this date will be used to generate the initial test materials order for paper accommodated test materials for MCA and regular MTAS test materials.

• After January 23, any paper test materials needed must be ordered in PearsonAccess. See the Important Dates in the Procedures Manual for the dates additional orders windows open by test and subject.

• Pretest Editing continues for MCA and MTAS until the day before the last day of the testing windows so that student eligibility information continues to be updated in Pearson’s systems. If accommodations are changed or entered after January 23, accommodated test materials must be ordered through PearsonAccess.

• Non-public schools must complete the Site Readiness Verification and indicate their readiness in Test WES in order to administer the online assessments. Refer to the Pretest Editing user guide and chapter 8 of the Procedures Manual for additional information.

For Reading and Mathematics GRAD retests, which are offered in the even months (e.g., October, December, etc.), precode files are only sent during specified times. “Precode” refers to the files sent to service providers containing student test eligibility and demographic information. Refer to the Important Dates for the dates precode files are sent. If the student is manually added in Precode Student Eligibility during the time precode files are being sent, the student will be included in precode for the next retest (e.g., if the student is added October 1, the student will be sent for October retests). For subsequent retests, the student will need to be added again each month he or she will retest. Any accommodated test materials for Reading and Mathematics GRAD retests must be ordered by filling out the applicable forms available in the Procedures Manual and faxing them to Pearson.

For Written Composition GRAD retests, regular and accommodated test materials are ordered in PearsonAccess during the additional orders windows. Refer to the Important Dates for the window dates.

Ordering English Language Proficiency Assessments

Non-public schools who want to administer the English Language Proficiency Assessments (ACCESS for ELLs or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) should contact WIDA directly. WIDA and its subcontractor, MetriTech, are the service providers for these assessments. Contact WIDA at help@wida.us or 1-866-276-7735.

Ordering Career and College Assessments

Non-public schools who are interested in administering Career and College Assessments (Explore, Plan, Compass, or ACT Plus Writing) should contact ACT directly. Contact ACT for Explore and Plan at 877-789-2925; Compass at 800-645-1992; and ACT Plus Writing at 800-553-6244, ext. 2800.