

## Questions and Answers about the MCA-Modified in Mathematics and Reading Spring 2014

### What is the MCA-Modified?

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments-Modified (MCA-Modified) is an alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards for a limited group of special education students whose disability has prohibited them from attaining grade-level proficiency. The MCA-Modified is part of the Minnesota assessment program through school year 2013–2014.

The MCA-Modified measures mathematics and reading skills based on grade-level content standards. The assessment is less difficult than the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) taken by the general student population, and the expectations for achievement are less rigorous.

### What is the purpose of the MCA-Modified?

The MCA-Modified is one of the tests used in federal school accountability measurements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); it is one of the alternate assessments 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 MCA-Modified helps ensure that schools provide mathematics and reading instruction that will help these students learn grade-level content.

### Who must take this test?

ESEA requires that all students in public schools participate in the statewide assessment program. The MCA-Modified is provided for specific grades in reading (5–8 and 10) and mathematics (5–8 and 11).

The MCA-Modified may be appropriate for certain students with Individualized Education Programs (IEP). Students may take the MCA-Modified in reading and/or mathematics instead of the MCA. The IEP team is responsible for determining how the student participates in statewide testing.

The *Alternate Assessment Eligibility Requirements* provide guidance to IEP teams to help them determine who should take the MCA-Modified. [See the \*Alternate Assessment Eligibility Requirements on the MDE website for more information\*](#). (Go to School Support > Test Administration > Minnesota Tests.)

## What does it take to pass the test?

Students do not pass or fail the MCA-Modified. Each student receives a score that falls in one of four achievement levels:

- Does Not Meet the Modified Achievement Standards
- Partially Meets the Modified Achievement Standards
- Meets the Modified Achievement Standards
- Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards

The MCA-Modified will not be used to determine whether your child can progress to the next grade. The grade 10 Reading MCA-Modified and the grade 11 Mathematics MCA-Modified may be used to meet graduation assessment requirements. If students achieve Meets or Exceeds the Modified Achievement Standards, they have met their graduation assessment requirement for that subject. [View the Graduation Assessment Requirements Parent Fact Sheet on the MDE website for further information on graduation assessment requirements.](#) (Go to Just for Parents > Testing Information.)

## How are the tests administered?

The Reading MCA-Modified in grades 5–8 and 10 and the Mathematics MCA-Modified in grades 5–8 and 11 are administered online.

Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and provide examples of the types of questions that are on the test. You can find item samplers for each grade and subject on the Minnesota Assessments portal ([www.mnstateassessments.org](http://www.mnstateassessments.org)). [View the item samplers on the Minnesota Assessments portal.](#)

## What skills are measured on the MCA-Modified?

Both the MCA and the MCA-Modified measure student performance on the Minnesota Academic Standards. [View the Minnesota Academic Standards on the MDE website.](#) (Go to Educator Excellence > Standards, Curriculum and Instruction > K-12 Academic Standards.) The Reading MCA-Modified is aligned to the 2010 academic standards. The Mathematics MCA-Modified is aligned to the 2007 academic standards.

### ***Reading***

The Reading MCA-Modified measures student understanding of fiction and nonfiction passages. The passages are generally shorter than in the MCA, and more of the passages are at the lower end of the readability range for each grade. Some items are grouped with the related part of the passage, and items referring to the entire passage appear at the end.

### ***Mathematics***

The Mathematics MCA-Modified items are accompanied by graphic support when appropriate. The reading load is reduced and read-aloud support is available via the computer. Formulas are provided in the items or on a separate formula sheet.

## **How can I see the MCA-Modified results for my child, school and district?**

Your school district will receive an individual student report for each child who takes the MCA-Modified and will provide this information to parents and guardians. This report shows your child's overall score in each subject, as well as scores for specific skill areas within each subject. 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 Data for Parents and Educators section of the Data Center on the MDE website. [Go to the Data for Parents and Educators section of the MDE website](#). (Go to Data Center > Data for Parents and Educators.)

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*For more information, contact:*

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