

Nonpublic School Participation in Minnesota Assessments 2015–2016

The option to participate in the Minnesota Assessments at a cost is open to nonpublic schools. This document outlines the basic steps necessary to participate in the Optional Local Purpose Assessment (OLPA), Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA), and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS), as well as provides information on the English Language Proficiency Assessments and the administration of a college entrance exam. References to other documents with detailed information are provided below.

Any nonpublic school that administers statewide assessments must follow **all** of the policies, procedures, and security requirements outlined in the *Procedures Manual* and other manuals before, during, and after testing. [View the Manuals tab on the PearsonAccess Resources page](#) (PearsonAccess > Resources > Manuals tab). The *Procedures Manual* also provides cost to test information in Chapter 8.

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, access must be reviewed by the school annually to add new users or to remove staff who no longer need access.

To participate, an Identified Official with Authority must be designated for your school in order to pre-authorize staff access to the applicable secure MDE system(s), which include the Student Identity Validation Interface and Test WES.

- Similar to public school districts and charter schools, your school’s board/council or head of the organization must designate the Identified Official with Authority. The designation of the Identified Official with Authority must be submitted to MDE in writing on official letterhead. [View the External User Access Recertification System page for more information if an Identified Official with Authority has not been designated](#) (MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > External User Access Recertification).
- After an Identified Official with Authority has been designated, he or she must pre-authorize staff access to the applicable system(s).
- After staff have been pre-authorized, they must log in to each system they are pre-authorized for and request access within 30 days. They will select the type of role (if applicable) and the organization to which access is needed.
 - For the Student Identity Validation Interface, nonpublic school users must request access as a “Maintainer” in order to be able to assign SSIDs and request access in the district in which the nonpublic school is located because nonpublic schools are not independently listed.
 - For Test WES, nonpublic school users must request the “Nonpublic User Read Write” user role and then select the appropriate nonpublic school.

- 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 nonpublic school must contact the public school district in which the nonpublic 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). **NOTE:** This is the one step in the process where the nonpublic school must work with the public school district, because nonpublic schools are not able to make changes to MDE-ORG.

- MDE recommends that the nonpublic school email the public district’s Site Verification Coordinator to request updates to the DAC contact; the email itself should be sent from the Identified Official with Authority or head of the nonpublic school.
- 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 nonpublic 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

- In order to test, every nonpublic student must 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.
 - 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, you must manually add each individual student in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES. Students must be manually added each year they will participate in statewide testing in your school. [View the Precode Student Eligibility and Sent Precode User Guide on the Test WES Data Submissions page](#) (MDE > School Support > Data Submissions > Test WES). This user guide is updated annually in September.
 - Please note: students can only be added during the school year in which they will be testing. If students will be testing in school year 2015–2016, they cannot be added until precode begins to be sent in October.

- 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 nonpublic 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 OLPA, once students in applicable grades are added in Precode Student Eligibility in Test WES, they will automatically be sent to Pearson for online testing. No paper accommodated test materials are available.

For MCA and MTAS, schools will use Pretest Editing in Test WES to change test assignments (from MCA to MTAS or vice versa) 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 14, 2015, to January 22, 2016. [View the Test WES Pretest Editing User Guide on the Test WES Data Submissions page.](#) This user guide is updated annually in December.

- **By January 22, 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.
- 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 22, accommodated test materials must be ordered through additional orders in PearsonAccess. See the Important Dates in the *Procedures Manual* for the dates additional orders windows open by test and subject.
- Nonpublic 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.

Participating in English Language Proficiency Assessments

Nonpublic schools who want to administer the English Language Proficiency Assessments (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) should contact WIDA directly. WIDA and its subcontractor, DRC, are the service providers for these assessments. Contact WIDA at help@wida.us or 1-866-276-7735.

Participating in College Entrance Exam

Legislation passed in 2015 requires Minnesota public school districts to offer the opportunity for all grades 11 and 12 students to participate in a nationally normed college entrance exam (ACT or SAT) during the school day.

Nonpublic schools wanting to offer the ACT must contract with ACT; the deadline for 2015–2016 is August 14. Contact ACT at 800-553-6244, ext. 2800 for more information. Nonpublic schools and students may be reimbursed for ACT fees. Timing of the determination of the reimbursement for nonpublic students will be examined after all reimbursement requests have been received for public school districts. Note: nonpublic students are not eligible to take the ACT at a public school during a school day. However, Nonpublic Pupil Aid can continue to be used to pay for ACT test costs.

Nonpublic schools wanting to offer the SAT must contract with College Board. There is no reimbursement for SAT.