

Explore, Plan and ACT Gap Analysis Summary

Executive Summary

MDE assessment content specialists participated in a Gap Analysis. The objective of this activity was to inform the best course of action and assessments to administer in grades 8, 10, and 11 to satisfy federal and state requirements beginning in 2014-15 school year.

The staff reviewed some of the ACT, Explore, and Plan test forms which will be operationally administered in 2014-2015. The Explore and Plan assessments can function as a predictive model for performance on the ACT. Predicting performance on the ACT at grades 8 and 10 is a requirement of 2013 legislation. Items were reviewed for benchmark alignment, cognitive level, and general item quality. Assessment content specialists took Minnesota item development principles into consideration as well.

Recommendations

As a result of the Gap Analysis, it is Statewide Testing's recommendation to:

- Continue offering MCA and MTAS Science in grades 8 and high school as currently designed and administered. These tests will satisfy federal and state accountability requirements.
- Continue offering MCA and MTAS Mathematics in grades 8 and 11 as currently designed and administered. These tests will satisfy federal and state accountability requirements.
- Continue offering MCA and MTAS Reading in grades 8 and 10 as currently designed and administered. These tests will satisfy federal and state accountability requirements.
- For Grade 8, administer Explore in the fall to satisfy state requirements for career and college assessments.
- For Grade 10, administer Plan in the fall to satisfy state requirements for career and college assessments.
- For Grade 11, administer ACT in the spring to satisfy state requirements for career and college assessments.

Analysis

MDE staff participating in the gap analysis signed a Confidentiality Agreement with ACT prior to reviewing the test forms. To ensure the continued security of ACT's test forms (such forms, among other items, "Confidential Information" under the Confidentiality Agreement), the Confidentiality Agreement requires MDE to keep all Confidential Information strictly confidential and secure and not take any Confidential Information outside of the ACT monitored meeting site. Additionally, MDE agreed to not discuss specific test form designations and content with anyone, as to do so will be considered a breach in security. Consequently MDE is unable to share further details of the analysis.