



2020 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance Due to COVID-19

June 11, 2020

Timeline of Events for State Assessment Windows

The ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS administration window was scheduled for January 27–March 20. Districts and schools had flexibility to schedule within this eight week window in order to assess all of their students with English learner (EL) status. Due to COVID-19 and the Executive Order 20-02 issued on March 15, which closed school buildings to allow educators to plan for distance learning, the ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS were disrupted in the last week of the administration window.

The Mathematics, Reading, and Science Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MCA and MTAS) were scheduled for March 2–May 1 or May 8, depending on the test and subject. Districts and schools had flexibility to schedule within these windows in order to assess all students in grades 3–8 in mathematics and reading, reading in grade 10, mathematics in grade 11, and science in grades 5, 8, and high school. Due to COVID-19 and the Executive Orders 20-02 and 20-19, the MCA/MTAS assessments were disrupted in the third week of the administration window and closed March 27.

In order to make informed decisions for 2020 reporting activities, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) reviewed national resources and guidance, including the [Center for Assessment](https://www.nciea.org/current-initiatives/covid-19-response-resources) (<https://www.nciea.org/current-initiatives/covid-19-response-resources>), and had discussions with district staff. This resource was created based on these resources and input.

Possible scenarios and decision for Minnesota due to the timeline above:

At the time of the announcement of Executive Order 20-02 on March 15, many districts were on, or going on, their spring breaks. Without knowing the impact at the school level of who was able to complete statewide assessments or who was not, nor the climate of the school buildings during the few weeks before closure, summarizing any data at any level could lead to misconceptions.

The following scenarios illustrate this variability. MDE considered the scenarios with different variables (by assessment, by subject/domain, and grade level), and the outcome of the scenario could be different based on the variable being considered.

Scenario 1: School or district had no assessment results

If no assessments were completed before the administration window closed, then the school or district would not be represented in any potential summary data or by statewide student group summaries.

Scenario 2: School or district assessed all students

If a school or district assessed all of their students before the window was closed, then the school or district would likely be over-represented in any potential statewide summary data or by statewide student group summaries. It is also possible that all students were assessed, but some completed assessment materials remain in locked buildings and the applicable processes for scoring have not been completed.

Scenario 3: School or district assessed some students

If a school or district only assessed some of their students, then a school or district would not be fully represented in any potential summary data as a whole or by student groups. It is also possible that some students completed an assessment but their completed assessment materials remain in locked buildings.

Decision based on these scenarios

Providing summary reports based on a non-representative subset of students participating may give rise to confusion about performance trends, or potentially violate student privacy. Therefore, to limit misconceptions of any assessment data for 2020 and the variability illustrated by the scenarios above, MDE determined the best decision is to provide ONLY the individual-level assessment results to schools and districts. MDE does not plan to summarize or aggregate results for research or other purposes.

Questions and Answers

General

1. What assessment data will be available this year?

MDE will provide only student-level results to schools and districts. There will not be any summarized assessment data for MCA, MTAS, ACCESS, or Alternate ACCESS produced by the state. See Appendix A for a more detailed listing of the reports available in 2020.

2. Should a school or district consider reporting summarized assessment data publicly even though MDE will not?

Possibly. At the school or district level, producing summary assessment reports may be appropriate and defensible in scenarios 2 and 3 above. If the school or district can affirm the integrity of the conditions for instruction and assessment while ensuring student privacy, then the school or district can summarize 2020 assessment data. Even so, the school or district may consider not summarizing data if their release is thought to lead to misconceptions or promote ill-advised practices.

Appendices B and C provide more information for the school or district during the decision-making process.

3. What does “embargoed” mean this year?

For 2020 only, there is no embargo on assessment results. Once districts have final student-level results, they can share the data, as appropriate, while following the recommendations and considerations in Appendices B and C. This includes sharing any summarized data publicly with their school board or wider audiences for curriculum and instruction planning. This year’s exception is only because there will be no summary-level information provided by MDE. Ensuring student privacy is critical when deciding whether and how to share results.

4. Can assessment data from 2020 be reported as part of a grant requirement?

Possibly, depending on specific context/considerations of the school or district. Student privacy must be maintained.

5. Can districts share assessment data from 2020 via data sharing agreements for research and other purposes?

Possibly. It depends on the specific context/considerations of the school or district. Student privacy must be maintained by summarizing and otherwise protecting individual results.

6. Will MDE share assessment data from 2020 via data sharing agreements for research and other purposes?

MDE does not plan to provide student-level results, nor does it plan to summarize or aggregate results, for research or other purposes.

7. Why are Individual Student Reports (ISRs) not available until Aug. 20?

All of the standard procedures to ensure quality data still need to be performed, regardless of the number of ISRs that need to be created.

- Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS will be provided for all students who participated in ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS.
- Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for MCA/MTAS will be created only for students with a valid score in at least one subject. Minnesota percentile rank, growth, and average scores (school, district and state averages) will not be included on ISRs.

ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS

8. What are appropriate uses of ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS scores for the 2020 administration?

Results can and should be used for district planning purposes. ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS results at the individual level can be utilized to determine EL programming and for exiting decisions.

9. What will be available in WIDA AMS on Aug. 20?

- Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS will be provided for all students that participated in ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS.
- No District or School Frequency Reports will be available in WIDA AMS. This decision is consistent with the process described above.

10. How can districts appropriately use ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS results if all domains could not be completed?

If a student was not able to complete all domains of the 2020 ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS, they do not have a composite score. A composite score is typically necessary for English Learner (EL) identification and exit decisions. A document providing guidance for 2020–21 EL programming will be posted to the [English Learner Education](#) page in July.

11. Can we use trend information at a student level for ACCESS?

Probably. If you have 2020 data for a student, it can be used in trend data for that student after considering all of the contextual situations described above, and MDE recommends having three or more years of data for trend data.

12. Can we use trend information at an aggregate level for ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS?

Even though the majority of the expected ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS were administered, there will be no state-level trend data for 2019–20. Decisions are yet to be made on how 2020 will be notated in future trend data in public reports provided by MDE. If a school or district decides to summarize ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS data, they must ensure student privacy and take caution so as to not lead to misconceptions or confusion in reporting all students or student groups.

Depending on the specific context at the school or district level and after considering points in Appendices B and C, aggregating ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS results and examining trends may be appropriate.

MCA/MTAS

13. Can we use trend information at an aggregate level for MCA/MTAS?

Since approximately 2 percent of the expected MCA/MTAS were administered, there will be no state-level trend data for 2019–20. Decisions are yet to be made on how 2020 will be notated in future trend data in public reports provided by MDE. If a school or district decides to summarize MCA/MTAS data, they must ensure student privacy and take caution so as to not lead to misconceptions or confusion in reporting all students or student groups.

Depending on the specific context at the school or district level and after considering points in Appendices B and C, aggregating MCA/MTAS results and examining trends may be appropriate.

14. Our district Q-Comp plan uses MCA scores to determine how much money various teachers should be rewarded. What should we do for this calculation for school year 2019-20?

Follow COVID-19 Q Comp and Teacher Development and Evaluation Guidance located on the [COVID-19 Updates page](#).

Accountability

15. What is happening with accountability?

Secure rosters for the progress toward English language proficiency indicator will be made available for districts in Secure Reports. Rosters will not be generated for academic achievement or academic progress.

None of these indicators will be publicly reported at the school or district level.

16. Since there will be no 2020 accountability data, what will be the impact on determining designations?

Consistent with Minnesota's federal waiver application that was accepted March 27, any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement or additional targeted support and improvement in the 2019–20 school year will maintain that identification status in the 2020–21 school year.

17. Will 2020 graduation and attendance data still be used in 2021 accountability calculations?

No. Graduation and consistent attendance indicators from the 2019-20 school year will not be used for accountability calculations in 2021.

Consistent attendance for the 2018-19 school year will be publicly reported during the summer of 2020 and will be included in three-year averages when making new identifications in 2021.

Contacts for Clarification

Assessments – mde.testing@state.mn.us

English Learner Programming – mde.el@state.mn.us

NorthStar Accountability – mde.essa@state.mn.us

Q-Comp – mde.q-comp@state.mn.us

Student Privacy Protection – mde.datapractices@state.mn.us

Teacher Development and Evaluation – mde.schoolsupport@state.mn.us

World's Best Workforce Accountability – MDE.WorldsBestWorkForce@state.mn.us

Appendix A – List of Assessment Reports

Reports available for 2020 include resource links.

Name of Report	Description	Assessment Results for 2020 are Reported?
District and School Student Results (DSR/SSR) DSR/SSR User Guide (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports)	Secure; individual student result data files	Yes
Test Results Summary	Secure; summary information in secure reports for schools/districts	No
Report Card – Achievement Levels, Proficiency, Participation	Public, summary information	No
Data Reports and Analytics – Assessment and Growth Files	Public, summary spreadsheets	No
Data Reports and Analytics – Subscore Report	Public, summary subscore	No
Data Reports and Analytics – Counting All Students	Public; enrollment and Proficiency for detailed demographics	Updated in 2020 to include more information from 2019 administration; no 2020 assessment results will be included
Student Assessment History Report Student Assessment History Report User Guide (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Business and Finance > Data Submissions > Assessment Secure Reports)	Secure; assessment history look-up by student	Yes
MCA/MTAS Individual Student Reports (ISRs) Individual Student Report (ISR) Resources page (PearsonAccess Next > Reporting Resources > Individual Student Report (ISR) Resources)	Secure (in PearsonAccess Next) and shipped to districts; individual student reports	Yes, but only for students with a valid score in at least one subject

Name of Report	Description	Assessment Results for 2020 are Reported?
MCA/MTAS Rosters	Secure; individual student results in list format available in PearsonAccess Next	No
MCA Benchmark Reports	Secure; school- or district-level performance on each benchmark available in PearsonAccess Next	No
ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS Individual Student Reports WIDA Resource Library (WIDA website > Resource Library)	Secure (in WIDA AMS) and shipped to districts; individual student reports	Yes
ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS School Rosters WIDA Resource Library (WIDA website > Resource Library)	Secure (in WIDA AMS); individual student results in list format available in WIDA AMS	Yes
ACCESS/Alternate ACCESS School and District Frequency Reports	Secure; number and percentage of tested students (per grade) who scored at each proficiency level	No

Appendix B – Important Considerations for Summarizing Results

How to determine if summarizing assessment is best for your school/district

The following list of questions should be discussed and answered to help you determine if your data should or should not be summarized.

- Did enough students complete assessments in order to protect student data privacy once summarized? (See Appendix C.)
- Due to realities and complexities of returning paper materials for ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for 2020, when will all of the completed assessment results be available to the school or district?
- What is the staff capacity and ability to conduct and check summaries?
- What is the staff capacity and ability to ensure student privacy is maintained?
- What is the availability of other data sources for comparison and/or confirmation and context?
- Thoroughly review and consider all points from the [Center for Assessment](#) in an effort to limit misconceptions and confusion.

Interpretation of summarized results

The following questions should always be considered after summarizing your results. Especially in 2020, when releasing results with limited students participating (in many cases), there may be questions on the interpretation and meaning of the data. The following list of questions should be answered and discussed to determine if your data should be summarized and whether the data you will summarize is appropriate for sharing.

- What percentage of students are included in the summarized data?
- Are the students that completed the assessment representative of the total student population of the school or district?
 - Student characteristics (i.e., gender, race/ethnicity, EL, special education, free or reduced priced meals)
 - Other instructional factors (i.e., anticipated performance, classrooms, length of enrollment in EL programs)
 - When considering the district-level, representative across all schools
- Were there specific local adjustments or approaches utilized for 2019–20 that provide additional context for this year (i.e., textbook change, purposeful emphasis on content strand)?

Have any important changes happened during the years being looked at in the trend that could be considered “breaking” the trend?

Appendix C – Ensuring Student Privacy

Refer to your district’s data privacy policies and procedures when sharing data with other district and school staff. Ensure individual student-level data is only shared with individuals who are authorized to access the information and who have a specific legitimate educational interest in knowing the information. Schools should share student data on as limited a basis as possible to serve the needs of the students while also protecting their rights and privacy.

Even with aggregate data, results may be presented for a small number of students, which may make it possible to identify individual students depending on demographic information and other factors. Ensure student data privacy is maintained when accessing or sharing data electronically, or when sharing printed hard copies of any reports or results. Consult with your internal guidance, legal counsel, or data practices compliance official about how to protect private data in aggregate data.

For reference and to assist in those conversations, MDE’s current privacy protection rules are to not publicly report the assessment results if there are fewer than 10 students represented in the data. If the school or district decides to summarize, be sure to consider student privacy protection at all levels of results (e.g., completed assessments by grade, achievement levels).