

## Frequently Asked Questions about MCA Testing

### Basic Information about the MCA

1. **What is the MCA?** MCA stands for Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment. This is a statewide, annual test that measures achievement on the Minnesota Academic Standards in reading, mathematics, and science. These set of assessments are required to be administered as part of federal and state legislation. See also:  
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/tests/>
2. **What is the MTAS?** MTAS stands for Minnesota Test of Academic Skills. It is administered – instead of the MCA—to students with significant cognitive disabilities. See also:  
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/tests/>
3. **What grades take the MCA/MTAS?** Reading is given annually in grades 3-8 and in grade 10. Math is given annually in grades 3-8 and in grade 11. Science is given annually in grades 5, 8, and once in high school.
4. **Where do I find the district results for the MCA?** You may look at on the state’s school report card at  
<https://rc.education.mn.gov/#mySchool/p--3>
5. **Where can I see a sample test? Please see**
  - o <http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/reading/>
  - o <http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/math/>
  - o <http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/science/>
  - o <http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/item-samplers/mtas/>

### Impact on Individual student

1. **When will my students test?** See testing calendars on district website at <https://www.hopkinsschools.org/servicesdepartments/teaching-learning-assessment/assessment-research-and-evaluation/assessment-calendars>. You can also check your student’s school website.
2. **Won’t the 11<sup>th</sup> grade MCA Math testing interfere with college testing?** No. Hopkins High School made a conscious effort to separate the MCA testing from both the ACT and AP tests. It is important to know that students do not need to prepare for the MCA tests.
3. **What information can I get from the MCA about my student?** There is a lot of information on the MCA student reports! The MCA reports scale scores and corresponding achievement levels, a written summary of the achievement level, the state percentile rank, content area performance details, performance history to date, a written summary of growth from the previous year, progress toward career and college readiness, and access to customized student learning resources. For more information, please see

[http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/resources/resources-training/reporting/2019\\_MN\\_InterpretiveGuide.pdf](http://minnesota.pearsonaccessnext.com/resources/resources-training/reporting/2019_MN_InterpretiveGuide.pdf)

4. **When will parents/guardians get the results of the MCA?** Official printed student reports will be distributed to parents in early fall. However, preliminary results will be uploaded to Parent Portal frequently throughout the spring.
5. **How does the MCA report college readiness?** The goal progress score from the MCA is compared to a grade level target for being on track to demonstrate career and college readiness on a subject specific college admissions test at the end of grade 11 (i.e., ACT). Students who are considered career and college ready can successfully complete credit-bearing coursework at a two or four-year college or university or other credit-bearing postsecondary program without need for remediation.
6. **Will MCA scores be used in college course placement?** This may vary by specific college, but Minnesota legislation now enables college students to be placed into college-level courses based on their high school Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) scores. For Minnesota students entering Minnesota State colleges and universities, scores from the grade 10 MCA Reading assessment and grade 11 MCA Math assessment will be used in the course placement process.
7. **Will MCA test results appear on my student's transcript?** No.
8. **Does MCA testing affect graduation?** No.
9. **What are the consequences for not taking MCA?** You may lose valuable information about how your student is progressing academically. In addition, refusing may impact the school, district, and state's efforts to equitably distribute resources and support student learning. Depending on the number of students who refuse to test, the representation of Hopkins schools to the public may be adversely affected.
10. **If my student does not take the MCA, what will he/she do while others test?** Students are expected to come to school and be given alternate assignments.
11. **What do district leaders want me to do regarding MCA participation?** We ask you to support your student's participation in this important test. If you have any questions about MCA testing and/or your student's needs, please feel free to contact your student's principal or our district Teaching and Learning Department.
12. **What should I say to my student about why he/she should take the test?** Please talk to your student about pride in representing Hopkins schools and in helping to improve them through the feedback that testing yields. Your student also could be reminded that the MCAs offer an addition piece of evidence about his/her academic strengths and challenges. Please convey that you expect them to give their best effort, but there is no need to study for this test.

13. **If I choose to have my student not test, what do I need to do?** Please submit the 2018-19 Parent / Guardian Guide and Refusal for Student Participation in Statewide Testing form to your student's administrator or test coordinator. The form in English may be obtained at [https://www.hopkinsschools.org/sites/default/files/public/downloads/page/parentguardianguiderefusalstatewidetesting\\_o.pdf](https://www.hopkinsschools.org/sites/default/files/public/downloads/page/parentguardianguiderefusalstatewidetesting_o.pdf) or on the Minnesota Department of Education website, where there are also translated versions. <https://education.mn.gov/MDE/fam/tests/>

## Impact on School, District, and Community

1. **How do teachers use MCA data?** Teachers use group data to reflect on the strength of their curriculum and instruction on the Minnesota Academic Standards. The MCA is often used to measure achievement of the school improvement goals. MCA may be one piece of information among several in determining entry into or exit from special programs.
2. **How do district leaders use MCA data?** District leaders use group MCA data to reflect on curriculum and instruction across the district. Results may point to needed professional development and/or shifts in instruction. MCA data is also used to compare the performance and growth of subgroups of students and assure that we are addressing the needs of all students. MCA results are presented to the School Board and presented publicly on the Minnesota Department of Education's website. Results impact state and federal funding.
3. **Why is MCA important in terms of educational equity?** According to Randy E. Bennett (2016), opting out has become a civil rights issue. A May 2015 statement by 12 national civil and human rights organizations (including Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, NAACP, National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, and the Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund) said:  
*"The educational outcomes for the children we represent are unacceptable by almost every measurement. And we rely on the consistent, accurate, and reliable data provided by annual statewide assessments to advocate for better lives and outcomes for our children. These data are critical for understanding whether and where there is equal opportunity. . . Our communities had to fight for this simple right to be counted and we are standing by it. . . But we cannot fix what we cannot measure. And abolishing the tests or sabotaging the validity of their results only makes it harder to identify and fix the deep-seated problems in our schools."* (see full statement at <https://civilrights.org/2015/05/05/civil-rights-groups-we-oppose-anti-testing-efforts/>)
4. **Why is it important to present Hopkins Public Schools accurately to the public?** Families choose to move into our district based on the information they hear and see. It is important that we present a positive and honest response to both our achievements and challenges.
5. **Why is it important that we measure performance on the MCAs?** The Minnesota Academic Standards provide the foundation of our instruction. They are the statewide expectations for student achievement and identify the knowledge and skills all students must achieve in a content

area by the end of a grade. We are accountable for the progress of learning based on the standards. The results provide important feedback for improving our instruction.

- 6. If the MCAs are so important, why do we need to do other testing?** We administer tests for a variety of reasons. Classroom tests are given by individual teachers on a regular basis and may include quizzes, mid-terms, chapter tests, and final exams, among others. Others are used for deciding entry into or exit from specific programs. Some help us evaluate the curriculum on a broader scale, both within the school and districtwide. Some are for external accountability.

### Other questions?

Please contact your student's principal or the Innovation, Design, and Learning Department at 952.988.4036.