



MCA and MTAS during COVID-19 Pandemic

The priority of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is to protect the health and safety of students and staff. Each district and charter school has developed local health and safety precautions for test administration, based on information provided by MDE and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

What are the MCA and MTAS?

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) are reading, mathematics, and science standards-based assessments used to meet federal and state legislative requirements. These assessments measure achievement of the Minnesota Academic Standards.

Most students take the MCA, but students who receive special education services and meet the MTAS eligibility requirements may take the MTAS instead.

Why do we give these tests?

MCA and MTAS results provide valuable information about how well students have mastered concepts and skills from the academic standards. Families can use the results as one way to measure how students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction. Educators and schools can use the results to plan instruction and evaluate their curriculum.

School- and district-level test results are used in federal and state accountability measurements.

When can students take the MCA and MTAS for the 2020–21 school year?

For Reading and Mathematics MCA, and Reading, Mathematics, and Science MTAS, students can take the tests between March 8 and May 7. For Science MCA, students can take the test between March 8 and May 14.

How are the MCA and MTAS administered?

Both the MCA and MTAS must be taken at school, even if your student is in distance learning. Schools are required to follow health and safety measures any time students are in school. MDE, in conjunction with MDH, has also provided guidance specific to test administration, including how to clean test materials, ensure social distancing, and provide transportation and meals as necessary.

Most students take the MCA online, but some eligible students take the test in a paper test book instead. For the MTAS, teachers work with each student individually using a paper test materials.

What health and safety measures are being taken at schools?

Schools operating in-person or hybrid learning models are following guidance outlined in the [Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year](#) created by MDE and MDH. Everyone in a school building must wear a cloth face covering and follow social distancing practices. Schools are expected to clean and disinfect surfaces regularly. Test materials will be cleaned before each use. Schools are also limiting the number of visitors to their buildings and monitoring all students and staff for symptoms of COVID-19. Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed inside the school building.

If a school is operating in distance learning, they will follow these safety protocols during test administration.

What if I am concerned about the health and safety of my student or family and do not want them to go in to the school to test?

Your school can provide more specific information about the health and safety measures they are taking to ensure students and staff stay safe and healthy during test administration.

If your student is in distance learning and you do not want your student to go in to the school to test because of concerns for health and safety related to COVID-19, you can choose for your student to not take the MCA or MTAS. There are no consequences for your student or your family if they do not participate. If you do not want your student to participate, let your school know.

How can I get more information?

Contact your school for more information about their health and safety procedures during statewide testing, and how these test scores are used to support your student's learning.

The [MCA and MTAS Parent Fact Sheets](#) are available on the MDE website (under Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing) in several languages. Please email mde.testing@state.mn.us if you have questions about MCA or MTAS.