

Statewide Assessments: What Families Need to Know about Using MCA and MTAS Results

Each spring Minnesota students in grades 3-12 take the following assessments to meet federal and state requirements:

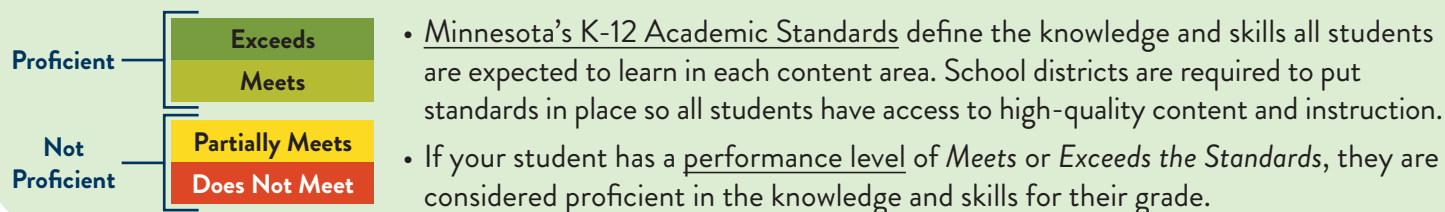
- MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment)
- MTAS (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills)

Most students take the MCA, but students who receive special education services and meet eligibility requirements take the MTAS instead. Both provide information about student learning of grade level content in reading, math and/or science.

Ensuring every student receives access to rigorous content and instruction is a priority in Minnesota's commitment to provide a high-quality education for every child, no matter their race or ZIP code.

The Individual Student Report (ISR) provides each student's MCA or MTAS results from spring 2021 to help families engage and advocate for their child's success in school.

The results represent **a snapshot** of student learning in math, reading, and/or science, based on what all students are expected to learn in school by the end of a grade.



Classwork



Report card grades

State tests

Teacher feedback

Other tests & quizzes

The results are **one measure** of student learning. You can use the results to help identify where your student is doing well and where they might need more support. Additional measures should be used for a more complete picture.

- The performance level (Does Not Meet, Meets, Partially Meets, or Exceeds) can indicate progress in a subject over time, but MCA/MTAS scores should not be compared across years as the scales are not comparable.
- Schools can use results to guide decisions about supporting groups of students and to improve instructional materials, but not as the only factor for individual student decisions like promotion to the next grade and advanced/remedial course placement.
- High school students can use results for course placement at Minnesota State system of colleges and universities or for Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) and College in the Schools programs.

Questions to ask your student:

- What are your strengths in the subject and what is challenging?
- Who can you talk to at school to get help or ask a question?

Questions to ask your student's teacher:

- How did changes in learning model (i.e., in-person, hybrid, or distance learning) affect my student's learning?
- How can I receive additional updates on my student's progress?
- What services are available at school to support my student?



Statewide Assessments Inform Minnesota's Education Plan

Monitor Implementation of Standards

- The standards define the expectations for student learning and instruction.
- Statewide assessments provide a snapshot of student learning of the standards.
- Public schools and districts use these results as one part of their comprehensive assessment system.
- Information from a district's assessment system (classroom, district, and state assessments) works together to guide teaching and learning of the standards.

Prioritize Equity

- Information from a comprehensive assessment system can be used as a guide to ensure every student receives a high-quality education, no matter their race or ZIP code.
- Statewide assessments results can be used to look across student groups, schools and districts to identify underlying inequities and highlight promising instructional practices.

Provide Valid Results

- Minnesota educators and community members are involved in multiple steps of test development and are critical partners in this work.
- There are rigorous checks and validations of results prior to reporting.
- Both of these ensure that statewide assessment results are a valid and reliable measure of learning of the standards at the time students test.

During the 2020–21 school year, educators, students and families experienced significant and profound changes in teaching and learning, as well as social and emotional well-being.

It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting assessment results, as these changes are reflected in student scores but are difficult to account for accurately.

For more information about how your school is doing in supporting student learning, visit the Test Achievement Levels, Test Results and Participation page on the Minnesota Report Card.

If you have questions about your student's MCA or MTAS results, contact your school. If you have questions about Minnesota's academic standards or assessments, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us.