Statewide Assessments: What Families Need to Know about Using ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Results

Each spring Minnesota students identified as English learners (ELs), take one of the following English language proficiency assessments in addition to the MCA or MTAS, to meet federal and state requirements:

• ACCESS (ACCESS for ELLs)

• Alternate ACCESS (Alternate ACCESS for ELLs)

Most ELs take ACCESS, but students who receive special education services and meet eligibility requirements may take the Alternate ACCESS instead.

The English language proficiency assessments provide information about your student's progress in learning academic English.

The Individual Student Report (ISR) provides each student's results on the English language proficiency test, so families can engage and advocate for their success in school.

Language Domains Tested

- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Speaking
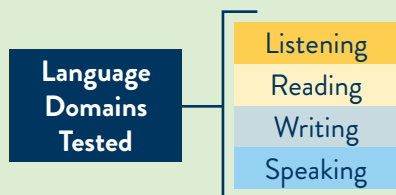
• The results are ***one measure*** of your student's progress in learning English, as described by WIDA's English Language Development Standards.

• The report provides your student's results for each domain along with a brief description of what each proficiency level means in terms of the knowledge and skills they demonstrated on the test.

The results are used to ***monitor the English language development skills*** students need to fully participate in the classroom.

- • Schools can use results to guide decisions about English language programs and instruction.
- • All teachers can use the results to support English learners.
- • When your student is proficient on ACCESS, they no longer need additional EL instruction.

Questions to ask your student:

- • What are your strengths in learning English 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 English learners are doing at your school, visit the *ACCESS for ELLs Achievement Levels* page on the Minnesota Report Card.

If you have questions about your student's ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS results, contact your school. If you have questions about the standards or assessments, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION