

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

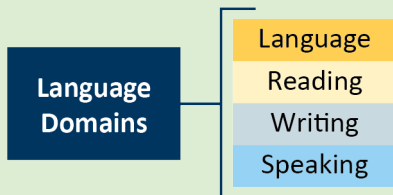
Each year, Minnesota students identified as English learners (ELs) take one of the following English language proficiency assessments, in addition to the MCA or MTAS, to meet federal and state requirements:

- 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 the English language domains of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The Individual Student Report (ISR) provides each student's ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS results.



- The results are **one measure** of your student's progress in learning English, as described by WIDA's English Language Development Standards.
- The report includes results for each language domain along with a description of what each proficiency level means.
- The Composite result represents the combined proficiency levels from the four language domains tested. A language proficiency level is a measurement of where students are in the ongoing process of building language skills. When students reach the highest levels of language proficiency, they no longer need language support services.

The results are used to **monitor** how students' English language skills are developing.



- Schools can use results to make decisions about English language programs and instruction.
- Teachers can use the results to help support English language development in the classroom.
- ACCESS results are used to determine English proficiency and when to exit students from EL programs.



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 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 represent a snapshot of student learning of the standards.
- Public schools and districts use these results as one part of their balanced and 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 balanced and 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 determine where there may be 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 essential 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.

Since March 2020, 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.

Questions?

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