

Glossary of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Terms:

ACCESS for ELLs – The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, require that all English learners be assessed in grades K–12 in English language proficiency. ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) is developed by the multi-state WIDA Consortium and is used to meet this federal requirement. Statewide assessments are tests that are given to Minnesota students each spring. They can be thought of as a snapshot of what students have learned. In the same way, Minnesota’s statewide assessments give teachers, school districts and state education leaders information in context that they can use to make decisions about education.

Performance Level Descriptors – Student performance on the MCA and Alt MCA is differentiated into four performance levels: Beginning, Intermediate, Meets, and Advanced. Students performing at the “Meets” and “Advanced” levels are considered proficient in the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) described in the academic standards.

Achievement & Integration Plan – Plan required by Minnesota Statutes. Approved by the School Board and by the MN Department of Education in 2020, the plan is updated on a three-year cycle.

ACT – A standardized college entrance test administered by ACT, Inc. to aid in the selection of incoming college students. It contains multiple choice items that measure verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities and subject-area knowledge in English, mathematics, reading, and science, scored on a scale from 1-36. SPPS administers the ACT w/Writing (scored on a scale 2-12) that includes an additional section to evaluate Writing skills. More information [here](#).

- ***College Ready***-ACT’s benchmark score is a minimum measure of preparation for college-bearing courses. Each section has a different benchmark score; Reading is 22, English is 18, Math is 22, and Science is 23.

Advanced Course Participation – The percent of secondary students who took and passed one or more Honors, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or College in the School (CIS) courses. This is reported by the number of different subjects in which students took courses.

Alternate Assessment – Most students in Minnesota take the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs), but some students may be eligible to take an

alternate assessment in place of the MCA. The United States Department of Education (ED) recognizes that there is a very small number of children with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose performance must be measured against alternate academic achievement standards, as permitted in federal regulations.

Attendance Rate – The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) divided by Average Daily Membership (ADM) as recorded in MARSS. ADA equals the number of days a student is marked in attendance divided by the number of instructional days. ADM equals the number of days a student is reported as enrolled divided by the number of instructional days.

Campus – The student information system used in SPPS to collect and manage information including enrollment, demographics, address, attendance, assessment, grades, and discipline.

Consistent Attendance – Measured by the Minnesota Department of Education and used in federal accountability or North Star. Students who attend school more than 90 percent of the time they are enrolled are considered consistently attending. Conversely, students who miss 10 percent or more of the school days they are enrolled are considered chronically absent. SPPS also measures significant absence when a student has 11 or more days absent in a single school year.

Composite – Total or overall; Used in describing overall ACT scores as a combination of reading, math, science, and english (not writing), or an overall ACCESS score combining listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Continue – Used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate) for students who do not graduate in the given number of cohort years but instead continue their K-12 education.

Continuation Rate – The continuation rate uses the “Continuation Period” from October 1 to October 1 based on official October 1 enrollment. The continuation rate analysis matches student October 1 enrollment records of the first year to that of the second year at the individual student level. For example, the same-school continuation rate indicates the percentage of students enrolled in a given school on October 1, 2020 (SY 2020-21) who were still enrolled at that same school on October 1, 2021 (SY 2021-22).

DAC – District Assessment Coordinator. Find the DAC contact information [here](#).

Disaggregation – The reporting of data for a particular student group of the population (e.g., Asian American or special education) rather than for the entire population as a whole.

Dropout – A student in grade 7-12 who left school and did not re-enroll by October 1 of the following fall.

Dropout Rate – There are two definitions of dropout rate in common use:

- **One Year Dropout**–The number of dropouts divided by the number of students in grades 7-12 enrolled at any point during the school year (students served).
- **Dropout**–A student who has stopped their education for various reasons as reported in [MARSS](#). Dropout is used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate). In the graduation rate calculation, if a student drops out after less than half an academic year at a high school, they will be counted as a dropout in the graduation rate of whichever high school they have attended for the most time.

EC – grade level for Early Childhood Special Education.

ELL – English Language Learners, also known as EL (English Learners) or MLL (Multi Language Learners)

ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act; federal law requiring measurement of math, reading, and science performance in schools and the creation of state report cards to measure and report this to the public.

Federal Race – Federal race categories are socially constructed self-identifications and currently include American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, and Two or More Races. Ethnicity, as a separate category, includes Hispanic or Latino origin. These categories are established by the Office of Management and Budget.

FRL – Free and Reduced Price Lunch

Graduation Rates – Minnesota uses an exclusion adjusted cohort graduation indicator (EACGI) model to calculate graduation rates. This model assigns each student to a cohort or group when they first enroll in public high school in Minnesota. When a student transfers from one public high school to another, they enter their new school's graduation cohort and leave their previous school's cohort. When a student leaves the Minnesota K-12 public education system they are removed from the cohort. The

Minnesota Department of Education calculates a 4, 5, 6, and 7 year graduation rate. There are four graduation rate groups: graduate, dropout, continue and unknown.

Graduate – A student who has received a diploma. Recorded as a status end code of 08 in MARSS and used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – Written for a child with a disability by a team including parent/guardian, special education professionals and a school administrator. The IEP describes a child's strengths and current skills, what skills will be worked on during a school year, the services that the child will receive and other help such as transportation, adjustments in the classroom, etc. that will be provided to the child.

Johnson-O'Malley – Eligible American Indian and Alaska Native students are enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe or at least one-fourth or more degree of Indian blood descendant of a member of a federally recognized Indian tribal government.

Individual Student Report (ISR) — An Individual Student Report (ISR) is the final and official report of a student's assessment results provided by MDE to districts to distribute to parents or guardians.

MARSS — Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System. Database of student information reported to MDE. The data comes from student enrollment collected by schools in the Campus system.

MCA-IV — The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, Series IV (MCA-IV), is a series of new assessments, designed and developed by MDE in close collaboration with Minnesota educators, that will replace [MCA-III](#). This series will include assessments in reading, mathematics, and science. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) are assessments in reading, mathematics, and science that are given every year in the spring.

MDE — Minnesota Department of Education.

MN Report Card — The Minnesota Report Card is a set of reporting dashboards created by MDE, which provide student information at the school and district level across the state.

Alternative MCA — The Alternate MCA will be available as an option for students with significant cognitive disabilities and has been completely redesigned to be more equitable and inclusive. While continuing to provide options for paper test materials, the

redesign also includes an online option to increase access for students who use assistive technology.

Multi-Level Disaggregation — A method used to isolate the performance of a particular student group (e.g., Asian American, non-special education, non-ELL, free or reduced lunch), also known as “Apples to Apples” comparisons.

North Star — Minnesota Department of Education’s ESSA plan; requires school districts to report academic achievement and academic progress (through standardized test scores), progress towards English proficiency, graduation rates, and consistent attendance. More information on North Star can be found [here](#).

OCR — Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. OCR is responsible for enforcing civil rights in education.

October 1 — Official enrollment is taken on October 1st. These numbers inform budget and planning decisions for the entire school year.

Percent — Not to be confused with percentile, a percent or percent score is the number of correct items divided by the total number of items multiplied by 100.

Post-Secondary Enrollment — Measures enrollment in college the fall after high school graduation. Data comes from the National Student Clearinghouse.

Proficient (MCA-IV) — Students performing at the “Meets” and “Advanced” levels are considered proficient in the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) described in the academic standards.

REA — Saint Paul Public Schools Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (see: spps.org/rea)

SAC — School Assessment Coordinator

SPED — Special Education Services

SPPS — Saint Paul Public Schools

SPPS Achieves — SPPS’ five year strategic plan implemented in 2018. Development required by MN State Statutes. SPPS Achieves is also SPPS’ World’s Best Workforce (WBWF) Plan.

Stakeholders — Groups of people with a vested interest in SPPS and/or involved in providing feedback and input with regards to district policy and program decision-making.

State Race — Eight state-defined racial and ethnic groups, including the use of the state definition of American Indian and the new Other Indigenous Peoples group. Students count as American Indian if they meet the state definition regardless of any other racial or ethnic groups with which they may have identified. The state of Minnesota's definition of American Indian includes any of the original people within what is now the borders of the United States (excluding Hawaii) or Canada who maintain cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition. This is different from the federal definition of American Indian or Alaska Native which includes students whose only racial or ethnic identification is with the original peoples of North, Central, or South America. Within the eight-state racial or ethnic groups, the new Other Indigenous Peoples group includes students who meet the federal definition of American Indian or Alaska Native but not the state definition of American Indian, which means they identify only with indigenous peoples from Central and South America.

Student group — Group of students identified by a particular demographic characteristic. These include but are not limited to:

- State Race/Ethnicity
- Federal Race/Ethnicity
- Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch
- Special Education
- English Language Learners
- Home Language
- Johnson-O'Malley

Subject — Used to refer to a particular content area of a test (e.g., reading or math).

Suspension — Disciplinary time spent out of school for one or more days.

Too Few to Report — If the population is fewer than 10, we will not report results for that indicator in order to protect students from being identified.

Trend — Data analyses that represent performance over time.

Unknown — Used in calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate) for students who were marked as leaving a school and/or district but never enrolled in another K-12 public school in Minnesota.

WIDA ACCESS — WIDA ACCESS is the collective name for WIDA's suite of summative English language proficiency assessments. WIDA ACCESS is given annually to English learners in kindergarten through grade 12 in WIDA Consortium member states to monitor students' progress in learning academic English. WIDA ACCESS tests include

- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten
- WIDA ACCESS Online (grades 1-12)
- WIDA ACCESS Paper (grades 1-12)

WIDA Alternate ACCESS (Alternate ACCESS)– A large-print, pencil-and-paper test individually administered to students in grades K-12 who are identified as English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Alternate ACCESS is intended for English learners who participate, or who would be likely to participate, in their state's alternate content assessment(s).

WBWF — World's Best Workforce Force; Strategic plan to improve teaching and planning as required by MN State Statutes. SPPS Achieves is the current WBWF plan, adopted in 2020 under a three year cycle.

Additional Resources:

[Acronym Reference Guide](#)

[School Directory](#)