

Toolkit for School Leaders and Educators: Communicating Statewide Assessment Results

Minnesota students took the statewide assessments in spring 2021 as one of a number of ways for districts, families, and policymakers to better understand where students are at in their learning and to help guide COVID-19 academic recovery efforts. 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. Statewide assessment results are one piece of information that can help guide this work.

The resources outlined below can be used by school leaders, communicators and educators to better understand what the results mean, and for sharing the results with their staff, families and community. Some of the materials are customizable and should be modified as needed before sharing with staff and families.

Use of these resources is completely optional, as each district and school has their own approach to communicating with educators, staff and families. School leaders, communicators and educators are encouraged to review the resources to determine if they would be an effective way to share information with those stakeholders about the results. MDE will continue to build upon this toolkit as feedback is received from school staff.

Understanding and Using Statewide Assessment Results

The resources below are informational. Use as a reference for interpreting and using results.

- [Use Statewide Assessment Data](#)
 - This webpage outlines appropriate uses of results and how to access them.
- [Comprehensive and Balanced Assessment Systems](#)
 - This webpage explains the purpose and use of assessments at the state, district, and school levels.
- [Interpret Statewide Assessment Scores](#)
 - This webpage explains what the individual student results mean.
- [MCA Achievement Level Descriptors](#) (ALDs) and Benchmark ALDs
 - This is the criteria students must demonstrate for each achievement level reported on the MCA, based on academic standards for each grade level.
- [WIDA Performance Definitions: Expressive Domains](#)
- [WIDA Performance Definitions: Receptive Domains](#)
 - The WIDA Performance Definitions are educator resources that outlines what English learners can do at each proficiency level in each domain.

Communicating Results with School Staff

- [Assessment Results PowerPoint](#)
 - For use in meetings or discussions with school and district staff about district or school-level results.
 - Contains data templates, purposes of the assessments, and examples that can be customized. Text that should be deleted or edited is written in red in brackets.
 - The data tables presented in this presentation are examples, and do not represent all possible ways to present the results.
- [2021 Statewide Assessment Reporting Guidance](#)
 - Detailed reporting guidance provided to districts about 2021 assessment results.
 - Download under *Test Score Interpretation Resources* section.

Sharing Results with Families

- [Letter to Families](#)
 - Template letter that can be customized and mailed or emailed to families about student results.
- [Statewide Assessment Results: FAQ for Educators and School Leaders](#)
- For responding to Questions from families.
 - May be useful for educators who distribute individual student reports (ISRs) at parent teacher conferences.

Information and Resources to Share with Families

- [Family Toolkit](#)
 - These resources do not need modification and can be shared directly with families.

Get Involved

- [Join an Educator MCA Review Committee](#)
 - An opportunity for educators to give feedback on statewide assessments for each subject, and ensure test content and question type align closely with best practices in classroom instruction.
- [Standards Portal](#)
 - Guidance for teams of educators to implement policies, programs and practices that systematically impact teaching and learning so that all students achieve Minnesota's K-12 academic standards.
- [Academic Standards Review Committees](#)
 - In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, Minnesota's academic standards are reviewed and revised on a 10-year cycle. Visit this webpage to learn more and stay updated about opportunities to join a committee.

Template Letter to Families

[Add district header]

[Date]

[Student Name]

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Minnesota students took the statewide assessments in spring 2021 as one of a number of ways for districts, families, and policymakers to better understand where students are at in their learning and to help guide COVID-19 academic recovery efforts. Ensuring every student receives high quality content and instruction at school is a priority in ***[District]***'s commitment to provide a high-quality education for every student.

This week you received the individual student reports (ISRs), ***[Add specifics here about how the ISRs are distributed in your district; e.g. mailed OR posted in your secure information system]*** which contain your student's results from the statewide assessments they took in spring 2021. If your student did not participate in the assessments last spring, the reason why is listed on the report.

As with any assessment, these results are only one piece of information about what your student learned last year. 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 looking at the results, as these changes are reflected in your student's scores but are difficult to account for accurately. The results are provided so you can engage and advocate for your child's success in school.

Overview of Statewide Assessments

[Change/modify title and information here if you want to include additional local assessment information or results]

Each spring beginning in Grade 3, all Minnesota students take the following assessments in math, reading, and/or science to meet federal and state requirements:

- MCA (Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment)
 - Taken by most students
- MTAS (Minnesota Test of Academic Skills)
 - Taken by students who receive special education services and meet eligibility requirements

In addition, Minnesota's English learners (ELs), take one of the following English language proficiency assessments beginning in kindergarten:

- ACCESS (ACCESS for ELLs)
- Alternate ACCESS (Alternate ACCESS for ELLs)

MCA and MTAS Results

The MCA and MTAS provide a snapshot of information about your student's learning in math, reading, and/or science, based on what all students are expected to learn in school by the end of the grade they are enrolled. [Minnesota's K-12 Academic Standards](#) define the knowledge and skills all students are expected to learn in each content area.

If your student has a performance level of Meets or Exceeds the Standards, they are considered proficient in the knowledge and skills for their grade. For more information about how results are used, read [Statewide Assessments: What Families Need to Know about Using MCA and MTAS Results](#).

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Results

ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS results are one measure of each EL's progress in learning English, as described by WIDA's English Language Development Standards.

The results are used to monitor the English language development skills students need to fully participate in the classroom. For more information about how results are used, read [Statewide Assessments: What Families Need to Know about Using ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS Results](#).

How [District X] Uses these Results

Our teachers will use this information along with other information gathered throughout the school year to understand how students are progressing in learning grade-level reading, math, and science standards and to help guide instruction by identifying opportunities for accelerating learning. Information from ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS will be used to continue supporting EL students so they can fully participate in their core classes. If you have additional questions about your child's results, please feel free to reach out.

[School name; school contact email/phone number].