

Purpose

The MCAs are designed to assess students' knowledge, skills, and abilities in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science according to the [Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards](#). There are four MCA achievement levels that correspond to the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards: Does Not Meet the Standards, Partially Meets the Standards, Meets the Standards, and Exceeds the Standards.

[Achievement level descriptors](#) (ALDs) describe the knowledge, skills, and abilities a student should be able to master at each achievement level for the standards. Students' MCA test results are reported by achievement level, and the ALDs present a clearer picture of a student's level of mastery. Students who meet or exceed the standards are considered proficient in the knowledge, skills, and abilities set forth in the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

Does Not Meet the Standards	Partially Meets the Standards	Meets the Standards	Exceeds the Standards
Students at this level succeed at few of the most fundamental skills for the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.	Students at this level partially meet the subject's skills for the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.	Students at this level meet the subject's skills for the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.	Students at this level exceed the subject's skills for the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

Application

If an educator or a parent would like to know the knowledge, skills, and abilities a student demonstrated on the MCAs, they can refer to the [ALDs](#). These guidelines provide descriptions of grade-level student performance at each of the achievement levels. The ALDs are provided in two formats. The traditional vertical format goes through each achievement level and strand. The [ALD Map](#) is organized in a horizontal format for educators to see all achievement level descriptions on one page.

The ALDs can be used alongside the [Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards](#) to help educators make informed decisions on curriculum and the scope and sequence of lessons.



Guiding Questions

- How can teachers, parents, and students use the ALDs to support in the interpretation of the [Individual Student Reports](#)?
- How can teachers use the ALDs to impact classroom instruction throughout the year?
 - Does my classroom curriculum and instructional materials fully teach the depth and breadth of the [Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards](#)?
 - Are students responding to my classroom instruction with a level of understanding that is at or above the Meets the Standards achievement level?