

Questions and Answers about the MTAS in Mathematics, Reading and Science

What is the MTAS?

The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is part of the Minnesota assessment program.

The MTAS measures reading, mathematics and science skills that are linked to the general education curriculum. These skills represent high expectations for students with significant cognitive disabilities, but tasks to measure these skills are considerably less difficult than the items on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA).

What is the purpose of the MTAS?

The MTAS is one of the tests used in federal school accountability measurements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) that may be taken in place of the MCA.

Schools are responsible for meeting the educational needs of all students. Some students are unable to achieve grade-level proficiency due to their disability, and the MTAS helps ensure that schools provide access to mathematics, reading and science instruction that is linked to the Minnesota Academic Standards at the student's grade level to the extent appropriate.

Your child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) may indicate a need for specialized instruction in both functional and academic skills. The MTAS is designed to measure student progress on academic skills.

Who must take this test?

ESEA requires that all students in public schools participate in the statewide assessment program. Tests are provided for specific grades in reading (3–8 and 10), mathematics (3–8 and 11) and science (5, 8 and once in high school).

The MTAS may be appropriate for certain students with IEPs who have the most significant cognitive disabilities. Students may take the MTAS in reading, mathematics and/or science instead of the MCA. The IEP team is responsible for determining how the student participates in statewide testing.

The *MTAS Eligibility Requirements* provide guidance to IEP teams to help them determine who should take the MTAS. [See the MTAS Eligibility Requirements on the MDE website for more information.](#) (Go to School Support > Test Administration > Minnesota Tests.)

What does it take to pass the test?

Students do not pass or fail the MTAS, and it will not be used to determine whether your child can progress to the next grade. Each student receives a score that falls in one of four achievement levels:

- Does Not Meet the Alternate Achievement Standards
- Partially Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
- Meets the Alternate Achievement Standards
- Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

The grade 10 Reading MTAS and the grade 11 Mathematics MTAS may be used to meet graduation assessment requirements. Please contact your child's school for additional information.

What is the format of the test?

The MTAS is a performance assessment that is administered by the student's teacher (or another school district employee) in a one-on-one setting. The performance tasks are clearly academic and measure your child's skills in reading, mathematics and science. Tasks on the MTAS are significantly easier than test questions on the MCA. Tasks may be read aloud and presented with pictures, symbols and/or objects to make them easier to understand. Students may respond in a variety of ways (such as speaking, pointing or using eye gaze) to show what they know on tasks.

What skills are measured on the MTAS?

The MTAS test specifications for reading, mathematics and science provide very specific information about the skills that are assessed on the MTAS. [View the test specifications on the MDE website](#). (Go to Educator Excellence > Testing Resources > Test Specifications.)

Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and provide examples of the types of questions that are on the test. You can find item samplers for each grade and subject on the PearsonAccess website (www.pearsonaccess.com/mn). [View the item samplers on the PearsonAccess website](#). (Go to PearsonAccess > Item Samplers.)

Reading

The Reading MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of short fiction and nonfiction passages. Passages and tasks may be accompanied by pictures, symbols and/or objects. Students taking the Reading MTAS may listen to passages, read the passages along with the teacher or read the passages independently.

Mathematics

The Mathematics MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of computational skills and mathematical reasoning. The tasks may be supported with line drawings, pictures and/or objects (such as shapes) that help the student understand what he or she is being asked to do.

Science

The Science MTAS includes performance tasks that measure the student's understanding of scientific ideas and processes. The performance tasks may be supported with line drawings, pictures and/or objects (such as tools) to help the student understand what he or she is being asked to do.

How can I see the MTAS results for my child, school and district?

Your school district will receive an individual student report for each child who takes the MTAS and will provide this information to parents and guardians. This report shows how your child did on each task and indicates your child's achievement level on the MTAS. The school may use this information to help evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, and the IEP team may also choose to use this information as one measure of educational progress.

School and district results are available in the Minnesota Report Card section of the Data Center on the MDE website. [Go to the Minnesota Report Card section of the MDE website.](#) (Go to Data Center > Minnesota Report Card.)

For more information, contact:

Statewide Testing
mde.testing@state.mn.us

Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266
<http://education.state.mn.us>

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