

March 19, 2008

Item Samplers, Released Items and Related Materials

Math and Reading MCA-II s

The MCA-II Item Samplers that have been available on MDE's website represent the 2008 MCA-II administration format. The purpose of the item samplers is for teachers and students to see representative test questions and become familiar with the format of the actual MCA-II s.

Science MCA-II

Science item samplers have been repackaged to work with the new ePat Launcher. Go to the Resources: Item Samplers section on the MN Online Assessments website¹. Classroom assessments that generate scorable reports are also available for grades 5, 8 and the high school. They are a good way for students to become familiar with the content and format of the test. Contact your District Assessment Coordinator for the URL.

Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (MTELL)

Item samplers familiarize the teacher and students with the item types, format and content of the computer-delivered MTELL. The Item Sampler Launcher (also known as ePat Launcher) needs to be installed in order to use the MTELL item samplers. Both the launcher and item samplers can be found in the Resources: Item Samplers section on the MN Online Assessments website .

Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)

A PDF of all materials for each grade and subject will be available at the MTAS Item Sampler section of the MDE Website. These sample items are similar to the materials that will be available for the MTAS at SchoolSuccess or shipped to the district. These materials include the task script, reading passages, presentation pages in PowerPoint or Boardmaker, and response option cards.

Alternate Writing Assessment

The Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) covers the MCA-II s and the GRAD for reading and mathematics. The MTAS does not cover the GRAD Test of Written Composition given to ninth graders. The alternate assessment for that test is called the Alternate Writing Assessment and is located in the [Special Education section](#)² of the MDE Website. This assessment has been around for a number of years. It consists of a set of Key Indicators for a number of writing attributes and a rating scale for each that ranges from Awareness to Understanding to Application. The results from the Minnesota Alternate Assessment for Writing are entered into SchoolSuccess during the reading and mathematics MTAS testing window (March 31 – May 2).

Alternate Assessment Waiver

If a district has a high percentage of students taking the MTAS, usually for reasons related to special programming, it may qualify for a waiver of the 1% cap on the number of MTAS assessments that can contribute index points toward the district's calculation of AYP. To apply for a waiver, a district logs on to Test WES sometime **in the March 3 – 28 window, not in the summer when test results are available**, and uses the Appeal and Waiver Requests section on the left side of the screen. The Help link has information on the kinds of information that should accompany the request and how to use Test WES to submit the request. Requests for a waiver are typically initiated by a director of special education or a district assessment coordinator. Once the Submit Request button is clicked, the request is automatically sent to the superintendent of the district who reviews it (a step called Authorization) and sends it on to MDE. When a request arrives at MDE, it may be returned if it contains a weak rationale for why the waiver should be granted. Final decisions are made in a few weeks.

1 MN Online Assessments website: <http://etest.pearson.com/customers/Minnesota>

2 Home: Learning Support: Special Education: Evaluation & Program Planning: Statewide Assessment for Students with Disabilities

MTAS Updates

MTAS Training Materials

The following MTAS training materials are now available at the MDE website under the heading [Test Administration Training](#).

- **Test Administration Training (Online Training version) for PC and MAC:** The presentation provides a narrated version of the regional MTAS test administrator training plus all the video clips used for the administration of the MTAS. Please read the Instructions for Viewing a Zip file to access this presentation.
- **Test Administration Training (Train-the-Trainer) for PC and MAC:** The presentation contains the PowerPoint slides plus all video clips used at the regional MTAS test administrator trainings to be used to train others. Please read the Instructions for Viewing a Zip file to access this presentation.
- **Test Administration Training (PowerPoint handout version):** This PowerPoint file can be used to print handouts and notes to accompany the MTAS Train-the-Trainer presentation. This file does not contain the video clips, which are also needed for training.

Object Lists

The MTAS Object Lists for Mathematics and Science are on the Resources page of the SchoolSuccess website. These lists are secure, optional resources that can be used to collect objects and manipulatives for use with the MTAS scripts, presentation pages, and response option cards.

MTAS Materials

MTAS materials will arrive on March 25 if your district selected this date for the arrival of the MCA-II materials. Some districts received materials on March 17. Districts receive MTAS test materials packaged by school based on MCA-II materials delivery date unless otherwise arranged with Pearson. The MTAS materials include grade-level Task Administration Manuals, which include administration guidelines for test administrators and all of the tasks and reading passages for that grade, and packages of Response Option Cards by grade, which test administrators can use to present answer options to the students. Other materials are available in SchoolSuccess, including student presentation materials for math and science tasks in a single presentation format and reading tasks and passages in Boardmaker and picture book formats.

The amount of materials is determined by the number of students administered the test last year at each site or by the number of special education students in MARSS if you are a new school using a ratio of one set of materials for every three students. In addition, the district will receive one set of Task Administration Manuals and Response Option Cards for each grade and subject as overage.

Additional Orders

The Additional Orders Window for MTAS materials (Task Administration Manuals and Response Option Cards) opened on March 17 and closes May 23. Additional Orders for MTAS test materials should be ordered no later than April 29 for reading and mathematics and May 20 for science for delivery prior to the end of the test administration windows. During May 20 – 23, you may still request additional “return” materials (shipping labels, boxes, etc.). Before ordering additional materials, please check the number of materials that arrive at the district and use the overage provided. The Additional Orders Window is available on Pearson’s SchoolHouse website at: <http://www.ncsschoolhouse.com>.

Online Testing Update

MN Online Assessments website: <http://etest.pearson.com/customers/Minnesota>

Test Administration Windows for Online Tests:

- MTELL: April 14 – May 2, 2008
- Science MCA-II: April 28 – May 23, 2008

The Live Test Administration Site is scheduled to go live on **March 24th** for both MTELL and Science MCA-II. The site serves as a single source for managing all aspects of online testing for MTELL and Science MCA-II. Beginning March 24, users can manage student data, create test sessions, and create or edit user accounts for other staff assisting with online testing (e.g., test monitors, school assessment coordinators, technology coordinators). Content will be available for proctor caching 24 hours prior to the opening of the test administration window for each test.

For instructions on administrative functions, see the Minnesota Online Assessment Manual. For instructions on proctor caching, see the Proctor Caching Users’ Guide. Both can be found in the Resources: Manuals for Online Testing section of the MN Online Assessments website.

Pearson's eMeasurement (eMS) site will be unavailable during the following evening and weekend hours:

- Thursday, March 20, 9:00 p.m. – midnight
- Tuesday, March 25, 9:00 p.m. – midnight
- Saturday, March 29, 10:00 p.m. – midnight

System Status Web Page

Pearson has added a website which reports on the status of their online services. The link is available on the main Resources page of the MN Online Assessments website. The direct link is:

<http://support.pearsonaccess.com/Minnesota>

Site Readiness Certification – List of Certified Districts Attached

As of 2 p.m. today, March 19, 424 out of 514 districts have completed the certification process. Certified districts are on the attached list. There may still be work that needs to be done to prepare for spring testing, such as running the Full-length Sample Test or training staff, but in those cases districts have indicated that there's a plan in place.

An additional 40 districts have submitted workbooks but documentation is incomplete. MDE or Pearson has contacted most of these districts, indicating what is needed to complete the process. If your district's name is NOT on the attached list, please submit requested materials as soon as possible. Contact MDE or Pearson staff (see below) if you need assistance or you have not yet been contacted to see what is needed.

45 districts have not yet submitted workbooks. It is imperative that every district complete and submit their site readiness workbook as soon as possible to ensure a successful online testing experience for their students this spring. Please complete all requested information including the Signature Page, Readiness Checklist, Scheduling Calculator, Network Assessment and Schools tabs. If you cannot meet all requirements or have not yet completed preparations for spring online testing, complete the worksheets accurately and add comments at the bottom of the Readiness Checklist tab noting your situation.

The workbook is available at: <http://etest.pearson.com/customers/Minnesota/mn/resources.htm>

- For assistance completing the Network Assessment, obtaining master district logins, installing software or testing computer setup with the Full-length Sample Test, contact the **Pearson help line**:
Phone: 1-800-627-7990, state code 824, online testing/option 3. E-mail: mnonline@pearson.com.
- For general questions or for assistance completing the Readiness Checklist or Scheduling Calculator, please contact Diane Gamm at 651-582-8335, or diane.gamm@state.mn.us.
- If you need assistance setting up your Test WES account or uploading the file, contact mde.testing@state.mn.us. If you do not have a Test WES account set up yet, you may email your file to diane.gamm@state.mn.us.