

Questions and Answers about the MTAS in Reading, Mathematics, 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 to meet federal and state legislative requirements 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 reading, mathematics, 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?

All students in public schools are required to 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 on the MDE website](#) (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Minnesota Tests) help IEP teams determine who should take the MTAS.

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, and Exceeds the Alternate Achievement Standards

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 less complex than test questions on the MCA. Tasks may be read aloud and presented with pictures, symbols, and/or objects to make them accessible to students who need such supports. 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 on the MDE website](#) (Go to Districts, Schools and Educator > Statewide Testing > Test Specifications) provide very specific information about the skills that are assessed on the MTAS.

Item samplers help students become familiar with the format of the test and the types of questions that are on the test. Go to the [Item Samplers page on the MDE website](#) (Go to Districts, Schools and Educators > Statewide Testing > Item Samplers) for information on accessing the item samplers and student tutorials.

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 will receive an individual student report for your child and will provide this information to you. This report shows your child's scores for specific skill areas within each subject and the overall score in each subject, 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 on the MDE website](#) (Go to Data Center > Minnesota Report Card).

For more information, contact Statewide Testing at:

mde.testing@state.mn.us