

ACCESS TESTING

All students identified as English Learners (EL) will be taking the ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS assessment between January and March.

This assessment is a federal requirement to assess English proficiency for students learning English. There are four domains tested - Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening.

If you have questions, please contact the principal at your child's school for specific dates and more information.

ABOUT ACCESS TESTING

In order to follow federal and state mandates, all EL-identified students are given an English proficiency examination annually, even if they are not currently receiving English learner services. The test scores are used to make sure students are making progress in English through reading, writing, listening and speaking. The test is called the Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS). This test helps teachers and schools understand how well students are learning English.

The ACCESS test includes questions about reading, writing and listening. The test is taken in a group setting with other students and includes a speaking assessment between each student and a teacher. The test will not be timed.

Your child will be tested during the regular school day either on a computer (online) or on paper as noted below. **Our testing schedule:**

Grades	Test
Kindergarten	Assessment: 60-90 minutes
Grades 1-12 (Online)	Listening: 65 minutes
Grades 1-12 (Online)	Reading: up to 90 minutes
Grades 1-12 (Online)	Speaking: 40-60 minutes

Grades	Test
Grades 1-5 (Paper)	Writing: 65-90 minutes
Grades 6-12 (Online)	Writing: 65-90 minutes
Alternate ACCESS test (for select students with an IEP)	Listening: 30 minutes Reading: 30 minutes Speaking: 30 minutes Writing: 30 minutes

TESTING

Upper Mississippi Academy administers the American College Test (the ACT) each year to students in grade 11. **The test will be administered online at school between April 23, 2024 and April 26, 2024.** [Minnesota State Statute 120B.30](#) requires SoWashCo Schools to provide an opportunity for high school students to take a college entrance exam during the school day.

ABOUT THE ACT

Why take the ACT? Here's what you need to know:

- The ACT is accepted by all US colleges and universities
- The ACT can help students get better scholarships
- The ACT provides college and career resources for each examinee

While some colleges are making the admissions process "test optional" at this time, here are some things to consider. Taking the ACT enables you to:

- Take the right classes
- Get more scholarships
- Qualify for specific programs
- Secure your admission.

[Read more here](#) about why the ACT is right for you even if not every college is requiring a college entrance exam at this time. Historically a college entrance exam, like the ACT, are required for admission into most colleges and are a large part of the admissions process.

When students take the ACT test, high school educators and counselors receive valuable information for guidance and curriculum development. K-12 professionals use ACT reports to:

- Guide students toward college and career readiness
- Assist students with college and career planning
- Evaluate the effectiveness of instruction
- Plan changes and improvements in curriculum

Each time you take the ACT, you get a composite score that is an average of the results on the four subjects of the test: Math, Science, English and Reading. Composite scores range from 1-36. For each subject you'll see your readiness for first year college courses in the corresponding subjects. [Sample score report](#).

THE ACT RESOURCES FOR EXAMINEES

- [Information for Examinees](#) on act.org
- [MyACT Account Setup Instructions](#)

- [Preparing for the ACT Test](#)
- [Using Your ACT Results](#)
- [Using Your ACT Results \(Spanish\)](#)

TEST RESULTS

Students are encouraged to sign up for a free [MyACT](#) account to access scores early. Students with an account can view their scores online before score reports are mailed out. At the latest, accounts must be created two days after testing.

Contact your principal for more specific information about ACT testing at your school.

Upper Mississippi administers the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) each year. Students who receive special education services and meet [eligibility criteria](#) may take the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) test as an alternative. Most students will take the MCA online during the school day.

ABOUT THE MCA/MTAS

The MCA/MTAS assesses students' knowledge of academic, grade-level standards in reading, mathematics, and science. The test results are a source of information for us to evaluate our services, supports, programs, and classroom instruction. [The MCA/MTAS assessment results](#) are used by many people for multiple purposes. Some examples include:

- High school students can use MCA results to skip remedial coursework at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, as well as to enroll in the Post-secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program.
- Families use the data to track and understand their child/ren's progress in learning grade-level standards.
- Teachers use the data to inform their instruction and assess student learning.
- District and school staff members use the results to assess academic achievement trends over time and identify inequities across student groups.
- The MN Department of Education uses MCA data as an academic indicator in the North Star accountability system. The system identifies schools and districts that need support to improve student outcomes, ensures that accountability indicators are publicly reported, and recognizes schools and districts that have implemented successful strategies.
- Policymakers use results to identify gaps in services and programming needs within communities.

PARTICIPATION

Students in the following grades participate in the MCA/MTAS:

- Reading: Grades 3–8, 10
- Mathematics: Grades 3–8, and 11
- Science: Grades 5 and 8, and any high school student taking a life science or biology course

Participation in MCA/MTAS testing is important so that we have accurate data to assess how students are learning academic standards and determine which academic areas we need to improve instruction in.

Testing dates for each school are posted in the [District Testing Calendar](#).

We recognize that the MCA/MTAS testing window overlaps with a number of religious observances and holy days. Upper Mississippi Academy is committed to honoring and being responsive to the needs of all families and students. Please contact your child's school if you have concerns or questions about school testing dates and times, needed accommodations, and/or your student's participation in MCA/MTAS testing.

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) has the following resources to learn more about the assessments:

- [Student Participation](#) in statewide assessments
- MCA Parent Fact Sheets
 - [English](#)
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Hmong](#)
 - [Vietnamese](#)

- [Chinese Mandarin](#)
 - [Somali](#)
- MTAS Parent Fact Sheets
 - [English](#)
 - [Spanish](#)
 - [Hmong](#)
 - [Vietnamese](#)
 - [Chinese Mandarin](#)
 - [Somali](#)
- [Additional translated Documents](#)