



## Information for Families: MCA and MTAS Statewide Assessments

Dear Big Lake Families,

The Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) requires that statewide assessments are annually administered in reading, mathematics, and science. Students in grades 3-8 are tested in reading and math; grades 5 and 8 also take the science MCA. Students in grade 10 take the reading and science MCAs, and students in grade 11 take the math MCA.

The MCAs are designed to provide the state, districts, and schools with a snapshot of student learning of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards.

### What are the MCA and MTAS?

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) are reading, mathematics, and science standards-based assessments that measure student learning of the Minnesota Academic Standards. These assessments are used to meet federal and state legislative requirements.

Most students take the MCA, but students who receive special education services and meet the MTAS eligibility requirements may take the MTAS instead.

### Why do we give these assessments?

MCA and MTAS results provide valuable information for the school, district and MDE about how well students have learned concepts and skills from the academic standards. Educators and schools can use the results to plan instruction and evaluate their curriculum. Families can also use the results as one way to measure how students are doing on the content that is part of their daily instruction.

School- and district-level test results are used in federal and state accountability measurements.

### When will students take the MCA and MTAS for the 2021–22 school year?

Families can access [the testing calendar](#) to determine when students at Independence, Big Lake Middle School, and Big Lake High School will be testing for reading, math, and/or science. For questions about testing at Independence, contact Mr. Scott Pierce at [s.pierce@biglakeschools.org](mailto:s.pierce@biglakeschools.org). At BLMS, contact Ms. Hannah Pagel or Ms. Keri Neubauer at [h.pagel@biglakeschools.org](mailto:h.pagel@biglakeschools.org) or [k.neubauer@biglakeschools.org](mailto:k.neubauer@biglakeschools.org). At BLHS, contact Ms. Angie Charboneau-Folch at [a.folch@biglakeschools.org](mailto:a.folch@biglakeschools.org).

### How are the MCA and MTAS administered?

Both the MCA and MTAS must be taken in person, even if your student is enrolled in an online program. For students temporarily learning online, they will take statewide assessments when they return to school. Your

school can provide more specific information about the health and safety measures they are taking to ensure students and staff stay safe and healthy during test administration.

Most students take the MCA online, but some eligible students take the assessment in a paper test book instead. For the MTAS, teachers work with each student individually using paper test materials.

## **What if I am concerned about the health and safety of my student or family and do not want them to test in person?**

If your student is enrolled in an online program and you do not want your student to test in person because of concerns for health and safety related to COVID-19, you can choose for your student to not take the MCA or MTAS. If you do not want your student to participate, contact Mr. Scott Pierce (Independence), Ms. Hannah Pagel (BLMS), Ms. Angie Charboneau-Folch (BLHS), or Ms. Keri Neubauer (BLMS and/or Big Lake Online).

## **How can I get more information?**

Contact your school for more information on how these test results are used to support your student's learning.

The [MCA and MTAS Parent Fact Sheets](#) are available on the MDE website (under Students and Families > Programs and Initiatives > Statewide Testing) in several languages. Please email [mde.testing@state.mn.us](mailto:mde.testing@state.mn.us) if you have questions about MCA or MTAS.

## **Where can I access additional information for BLS families?**

Families can also access additional resources and information on MCAs on the [Big Lake Schools website](#).