

# **615 TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS, MODIFICATIONS AND EXEMPTIONS FOR IEPs, SECTION 504 PLANS AND ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS**

## **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the policy is to provide adequate opportunity for students identified as having individualized education program (IEP), Rehabilitation Act of 1973, § 504 accommodation plan (504 plan) or English Learners (EL) needs to participate in statewide assessment systems designed to hold schools accountable for the academic performance of all students.

## **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

### **A. Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS)**

1. The school district will utilize the existing annual review of IEPs or 504 plans to review, on a case-by-case basis, and determine how a student with a disability will participate in statewide testing.
2. Participation decisions will be made separately for mathematics, reading and science. The assessment options are the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) and the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS).
3. Eligibility Requirements:
  - a. The following requirements must be met for a student with a significant cognitive disability to be eligible for the MTAS:
    - (1) The IEP team must consider the student's ability to access the MCA, with or without accommodations;
    - (2) The IEP must review the student's instructional program to ensure that the student is receiving instruction linked to the general education curriculum to the extent appropriate. If instruction is not linked to the general education curriculum, the IEP team must review the student's goals and determine how access to the general curriculum will be provided;
    - (3) The IEP team determined the student's cognitive functioning to be significantly below age expectations. The team also determined that the student's disability has a significant impact on his or her ability to function in

multiple environments, including home, school and community;

- (4) The IEP team determined that the student needs explicit and intensive instruction and/or extensive supports in multiple settings to acquire, maintain and generalize academic life skills in order to actively participate in school, work, home and community environments;
- (5) The IEP team must document, in the IEP, reasons the MCA is or is not an appropriate measure of the student's academic progress and how the student would participate in statewide testing.

b. MTAS participation decisions must not be made on the following factors:

- (1) Student's disability category;
- (2) Placement;
- (3) Participation in a separate, specialized curriculum;
- (4) An expectation that the student will receive a low score on the MCA;
- (5) Language, social, cultural or economic differences;
- (6) Concern for accountability calculations.

B. Alternate Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State (ACCESS) for ELs

1. The school district will utilize the existing annual review of IEPs or 504 plans to review, on a case-by-case basis, and determine how an identified EL student with a disability will participate in statewide testing.
2. Eligibility Requirements
  - a. The student must be identified as EL in MARSS in order to take an English Language Proficiency Assessment.
  - b. The student must have a significant cognitive disability. If the student has been identified as eligible to take the MTAS in the mathematics, reading or science, the student meets this criterion.

- c. For students in grades that the MTAS is not administered:
    - (1) the student must have cognitive functioning significantly below age level;
    - (2) the student's disability must have a significant impact on his or her ability to function in multiple environments, including home, school and community; and
    - (3) the student needs explicit and intensive instruction and/or extensive supports in multiple settings to acquire, maintain and generalize academic and life skills in order to actively participate in school, work, home and community environments.
  - d. The IEP team must consider the student's ability to access the ACCESS, with or without accommodations.
  - e. The IEP team must document, in the IEP, reasons the MCA is or is not an appropriate English language proficiency assessment for the student.
3. Alternate ACCESS participation decisions must not be made on the following factors:
- a. Student's disability category;
  - b. Participation in a separate, specialized curriculum;
  - c. Current level of English language proficiency;
  - d. The expectation that the student will receive a low score on the ACCESS for ELs;
  - e. Language, social, cultural or economic differences;
  - f. Concern for accountability calculations.

C. EL Students New to the United States

EL students new to the United States will take all assessments, including all academic assessments (math, reading and science), as well as the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ACCESS).

### **III. DEFINITION OF TERMS**

See the current “Procedures Manual for the Minnesota Assessments” which is produced by the Minnesota Department of Education.

#### **IV. GRANTING AND DOCUMENTING ACCOMMODATIONS, MODIFICATIONS OR EXEMPTIONS FOR TESTING**

See the current “Procedures Manual for the Minnesota Assessments” Guidelines for Administration of Accommodations and Linguistic Supports.

#### **V. RECORDS**

All test accommodations, modifications or exemptions shall be reported to the school district test administrator. The school district test administrator shall be responsible for keeping a list of all such test accommodations, modifications, and exemptions for school district audit purposes. Testing results will be documented and reported.

#### **Legal References:**

Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 (Statewide Testing and Reporting System)

Minn. Stat. § 125A.08(a)(1) (Individualized Education Programs)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0640-3501.0655 (Academic Standards for Language Arts)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0700-3501.0745 (Academic Standards for Mathematics)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0800-3501.0815 (Academic Standards for the Arts)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0900-3501.0955 (Academic Standards in Science)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1000-3501.1190 (Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma)  
(repealed Minn. L. 2013, Ch. 116, Art. 2, § 22)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1300-3501.1345 (Academic Standards for Social Studies)

Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1400-3501.1410 (Academic Standards for Physical Education)

Eligibility Requirements for the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS),

<https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/hiddencontent/mdaw/mda2/~edisp/006087.pdf>

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Participation Guidelines,

<https://education.mn.gov/mdeprod/groups/educ/documents/hiddencontent/mdaw/mdq5/~edisp/049763.pdf>

#### **Cross References:**

Policy 104 (School District Mission Statement)

Policy 601 (School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals)

Policy 613 (Graduation Requirements)

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 614 (School District Testing Plan and Procedure)

Policy 616 (School District System Accountability)

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Alexandria Public Schools - No. 206  
Alexandria, Minnesota