



MCA/MTAS Testing Refusal Information 2018-2019

In Stillwater Area Public Schools, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs) is an important standardized assessment administered to the majority of students. This assessment is used to measure reading, math, and at some grade levels, science. The MCAs allow district staff to measure Stillwater student performance against their grade level peers statewide as well as how students are performing relative to grade level state standards. This assessment serves as a vital accountability systems check to measure student progress throughout Stillwater academic programming.

The MCA-III reading, math, and science tests are required for all students in Grades 3-8, 10, and 11. This assessment is valuable to students, staff, and parents for a variety of reasons listed below:

- **Inform Course Placement**
MCA results are used to help determine student academic supports, such as enrichment or intervention, as well as language arts, math, and science course placement for students at the secondary level.
- **Measure Growth of Individual Students**
MCA results provide important information about individual students and student groups in which school staff use to measure growth from one year to the next. Measuring growth enables staff to know if students are learning the expected standards at each grade level throughout their school careers.
- **Provide Immediate Feedback for Staff**
With online testing comes the ability for school staff to view student results one day after a student completes the test. In the past, MCA scores were not viewable until later in the summer. However, staff have the ability to view preliminary MCA results immediately.
- **Move Beyond Proficiency**
MCA results help school districts move beyond simply measuring student proficiency to ensuring that all students are growing regardless of their ethnic background, language ability, or special programs in which they are receiving services.
- **Meet Legislative Requirements**
The MCA Tests are required by law for all students in the identified grade levels to participate. If schools and school districts do not reach the minimum 95 percent participation rate, they run the risk of not meeting the legal requirements as determined by the newly enacted Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Not meeting the participation rate could cause the Stillwater Area Public Schools to receive sanctions, depending on the frequency of falling below the required participation levels.

Additional Information Regarding MCAs

The MCAs have evolved in recent years. Significant changes have occurred in both the process and the content. The MCA is now administered online, which allows for more immediate feedback to teachers. The MCA content has also been redesigned to reflect changes in standards of learning in these core content areas. MCAs have always been summative in nature, designed to allow school districts to measure student performance over time and to use the

Afton-Lakeland Elementary, Andersen Elementary, Brookview Elementary, Early Childhood Family Center, Lake Elmo Elementary, Lily Lake Elementary, Oak-Land Middle School, Rutherford Elementary, St. Croix Valley Area Learning Center, Stillwater Area High School, Stillwater Middle School, Stonebridge Elementary



data to make a stronger impact on academic programming for each student.

State Approved Reasons for refusing Statewide Testing (ACCESS/MTAS/MCA)

By law, parents/guardians have the right to opt their children out of ACCESS/MTAS/MCA testing. The following are state approved reasons for students not to test:

- Medical Exemption – As determined by a doctor, the student is unable to test for medical reasons
- Student Refusal – The student is a significant distraction to himself/herself or others
- Parent Refusal – The parent/guardian has strong wishes to have his/her child not take the MCA tests.

A parent or guardian must take the following steps to refuse MCA/MTAS/ACCESS testing for their child:

1. Complete and sign the Minnesota Department of Education refusal form.
2. Turn in the signed forms to your school principal. Refusal forms will be submitted to the Learning and Innovation Coordinator of Assessment by school personnel following the attainment of appropriate signatures.

***NOTE: The deadline to opt out of Spring 2019 testing is January 11, 2019 for ACCESS and March 15th, 2019 for MCA/MTAS.** Requests received after these dates will be considered on an individual basis. The district office may not be able to approve requests within 72 hours of your child’s scheduled testing date/time. Please look for communication from your school or child’s teacher with regard to the site-based testing schedules.

If you and your child choose to opt out, there are no facilitated educational activities that will take place in lieu of testing. Any questions related to the statewide testing refusal procedures may be directed to school principals or Melinda Fierro, Learning and Innovation Coordinator, Assessment at fierrm@stillwaterschools.org.

DESCRIPTION OF RIGHTS:

During Minnesota’s 2016 legislative session the following language was adopted. HF 2749, Lines 459.17-459.27 Sec. 22. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 120B.31, is amended by adding a subdivision to read: Subd. 4a. Student participation. The commissioner shall create and publish a form for parents and guardians to complete if they refuse to have their student participate in state or locally required standardized testing. The form must state why there are state academic standards, indicate which tests are aligned with state standards, and what consequences, if any, the school or student may face if a student does not participate in state or locally required standardized testing. This form must ask parents to indicate a reason for their refusal. This is effective for the 2016-2017 school year and later.

By signing below, I agree that I understand the information above and am opting my child out of MCA testing.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Principal Signature _____ Date _____

DISTRICT USE ONLY:

Received by: _____ Date _____

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Stillwater

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