



Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-II)—Science

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA-IIs) are reading, mathematics, writing, and science tests that help schools and districts measure student progress toward the state's academic standards. Starting in 2008, the new science MCA-IIs will be operational with testing in grades 5, 8, and one test given in grades 10–12.

The science MCA-IIs will be computer-delivered, web-based tests with the capacity to deliver innovative science assessment items to students. These assessments will include multiple choice and constructed response items as well as figural response items. Figural response is a new item type designed to allow students to respond by selecting one or more points on or moving objects around within a graphic. More details on the test design and how the Minnesota Academic Standards in science will be assessed can be found in the Test Specifications for Science located at <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/static/006366.pdf>

Item samplers are provided to familiarize teachers with the format of these computer-delivered tests. A student tutorial is also available for download. These samples are intended to be used with students to familiarize them with and provide practice opportunities for this new test format. The samplers are located at http://education.state.mn.us/mde/Accountability_Programs/Assessment_and_Testing/Assessments/MCA_II/MCA_II_Item_Samplers/index.html

What is being tested...

The content of each assessment is based on approved grade-banding in the following grade levels in the Minnesota academic standards in science:

- Standards in grades 3–5 will be covered by the MCA-II given in grade 5
- Standards in grades 6–8 will be covered by the MCA-II given in grade 8
- Standards in life science and the history & nature of science (addressed in a life science context) in grades 9–12 will be covered by the MCA-II given in high school. This assessment will be required for each student once during grade 10, 11 or 12. Districts will determine the grade level(s) for administration to reflect the needs of individual students and the local curriculum.

What is the timeline...

Spring 2005	Test design, development, and advisory panel reviews began.
Spring 2006	Tryout field testing in participating schools and districts <i>Test items were field tested in participating schools to gather information on test delivery and performance.</i>
Spring 2007	Field test <i>The test is sent out to schools to gather data on items, and select the items that will be used on the operational test in spring 2008.</i>
Spring 2008	Operational test takes place in spring 2008 for all schools in Minnesota <i>This will be the first year that the test scores are reported to students and the public. Tests will take place in grades 5, 8 and one test in high school.</i>

What you can do...

It is important that teachers are involved throughout the test development process. Advisory panels are made up of teachers who help review test items as a 2–4 day commitment and provide feedback to improve the quality of the assessment. For more information about types of panels and to register to be contacted about being part of an advisory panel, go to www.tinyurl.com/96utn.

If your school or district would like to participate in the Field Test in spring 2007, ask your district assessment coordinator to send an email to mde.testing@state.mn.us and request to be considered for the science MCA-II field test.

Please contact us with any questions or comments.

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