

Interpreting MCA and NALT test scores... how can the information be used to help my child?



Beginning/End of Kindergarten Assessment

This test is given to Kindergarten students in the first month of the school and again at the end of the school year. This test was designed by the Minneapolis school district and is aligned with Minneapolis grade level expectations. The Kindergarten Assessment is given individually to students, assessing mathematics and literacy skills. Students are asked to identify alphabet letters, comprehend a story read to them, print information, vocabulary, count to 35, count items, order numbers 0-9, and extend a pattern.

The results are given to the student's teacher to be used for instructional decisions. The district uses the results to evaluate the academic skills of incoming students.

Oral Reading Assessment

The Oral Reading Assessment was designed by the Minneapolis School District. Students in first grade and second grade are given this test in the spring. A trained tester administers the test individually to each student. The tester listens as each student reads three grade-level passages. The student is then asked questions about the passage they have just read. Each student receives three scores: number of words read correctly in one minute, reading expression and reading comprehension.

Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA)

The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) is required by the state and administered by all school districts to evaluate how well their curriculum prepares students for the state's content standards. This test is used to measure progress of schools and districts over time. The tests are not used to pass or fail a student.

The MCA's are given to 3rd, 5th, 7th, 10th and 11th grades. The MCA tests students in reading, math and writing.

- The MCA reading test is given to students in 3rd, 5th, 7th and 10th grades
- The MCA math test is given to students in 3rd, 5th, 7th and 11th grades
- The MCA writing composition test is given to students in 5th and 10th grades

The MCA reading test has students read nonfiction and fiction selections and answer comprehension questions on what they have read. Answers are multiple choice or short written answer.

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The MCA mathematics test requests that students to solve math problems appropriate to the grade level they are in. Students may use calculators on portions of the test. Answers are multiple choice and short written answer.

The MCA writing composition has students to write a composition on a subject assigned in the directions.

Students with documented special needs (eg. IEP, 504 Plan, ELL) may qualify for special testing accommodations.

Northwest Achievement Levels Tests (NALT)

This is a multiple-choice test given to students in 2nd through 7th grade and 9th grade. The test is given in both mathematics and reading. The questions are aligned with district and state standards.

Students are tested at their current instructional level. Each student is given a placement test in the spring of second grade. Students who are new to the district are given a placement test before taking the Northwest Achievement Levels Tests (NALT).

Students with documented special needs (eg. IEP, 504 Plan, ELL) may qualify for special testing accommodations.

Where can I learn more?

District-wide Tests. (n.d). Retrieved August 5, 2003, from http://www.mpls.k12.mn.us/curriculum/rea_testing.shtml

General Information about the Third Grade Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments. (n.d). Retrieved August 15,2003, from http://education.state.mn.us_stellent.groups/public/documents/translatedcontent/pub_01059...

Parent's Guide to the 3rd and 5th Grade Test Results. (n.d). Retrieved August 15, 2003, from <http://education.state.mn.us>

LDA of Minnesota

For more than 36 years, **Learning Disabilities Association of Minnesota** has been serving the needs of people of all ages at risk for learning disabilities or related learning difficulties by maximizing their potential so that they may lead more productive and fulfilled lives. Services include educational assessments, one-to-one and small group tutoring, consultations, family literacy activities, school-to-work transition programming, professional training, public education, and high-quality educational products.

LDA of Minnesota is the state affiliate of LDA of America, a non-profit organization of volunteers dedicated to identifying causes, promoting prevention of learning disabilities, and enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their families by encouraging effective identification and intervention, fostering research, and protecting their rights under law.