

Glossary of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Terms:

ACCESS for ELLs – ESSA and Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.59, require that all English learners be assessed in grades K–12 in English language proficiency. ACCESS stands for Assessing Communication State to State. ACCESS for ELLs (ACCESS) and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs (Alternate ACCESS), developed by the multi-state WIDA Consortium, are used to meet this federal requirement. Statewide assessments are standardized summative assessments that are administered annually. Data from statewide assessments are most useful to school and district leaders when evaluating curriculum and programming.

Achievement Level – Summarized test score. Scores on the MCA-III/MTAS-III are categorized into 4 achievement levels: Exceeds the Standards (proficient), Meets the Standards (proficient), Partially Meets the Standards (not proficient), and Does Not Meet the Standards (not proficient). Results are assigned an achievement level based on the scale score (00 to 99 with a grade level prefix, see scaled score).

Achievement & Integration Plan – Plan required by Minnesota Statutes. Approved by the School Board and by the MN Department of Education in 2020, the plan is updated on a three year cycle.

ACT – A standardized college entrance test administered by ACT, Inc. to aid in the selection of incoming college students. It contains multiple choice items that measure verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities and subject-area knowledge in English, mathematics, reading, and science, scored on a scale from 1-36. SPPS administers the ACT w/Writing (scored on a scale 2-12) that includes an additional section to evaluate Writing skills. More information [here](#).

- ***College Ready***-ACT's benchmark score is a minimum measure of preparation for college-bearing courses. Each section has a different benchmark score; Reading is 22, English is 18, Math is 22, and Science is 23.

Advanced Course Participation – The percent of secondary students who took and passed one or more Honors, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or College in the School (CIS) courses. This is reported by the number of different subjects in which students took courses.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs – An alternate assessment for English Language Learner special education students with severe cognitive disabilities who, according to their IEPs, do not qualify to take ACCESS for ELLs assessment.

Alternate Assessment – Assessment administered to special education students when the IEP team determines that the MCA, even with accommodations, is not the appropriate assessment to measure the student's knowledge and skills (See Alternate ACCESS for ELLs and MTAS).

Approaches Used to Address Academic Standards

- ***Stand-alone content block***-Content is taught on its own all year round.
- ***Integrated content course***-Content is taught in combination with content in other subject areas.
- ***Fieldwork/Field trips***-Content is taught through hands-on experience by going to a specific environment and/or taking a trip outside of school to study and experience a phenomenon.
- ***Rotational specialist***-Content is taught for a period of time within the year in conjunction with content in other subject areas where students rotate among the subjects.
- ***Targeted residency***-Content is taught by a teacher who specializes in a specific subject area and is employed short-term.
- ***Other***- An approach not already listed above, examples include: science fairs, history days, guest speakers/visitors, lessons from school counselors, etc.

Attendance Rate – The Average Daily Attendance (ADA) divided by Average Daily Membership (ADM) as recorded in MARSS. ADA equals the number of days a student is marked in attendance divided by the number of instructional days. ADM equals the number of days a student is reported as enrolled divided by the number of instructional days.

Campus – The student information system used in SPPS to collect and manage information including enrollment, demographics, address, attendance, assessment, grades, and discipline.

Consistent Attendance – Measured by the Minnesota Department of Education and used in federal accountability or North Star. Students who attend school more than 90 percent of the time they are enrolled are considered consistently attending. Conversely, students who miss 10 percent or more of the school days they are enrolled are considered chronically absent. SPPS also measures significant absence when a student has 11 or more days absent in a single school year.

Composite – Total or overall; Used in describing overall ACT scores as a combination of reading, math, science, and english (not writing), or an overall ACCESS score combining listening, reading, speaking, and writing.

Continue – Used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate) for students who do not graduate in the given number of cohort years but instead continue their K-12 education.

Continuation Rate – The continuation rate uses the “Continuation Period” from October 1 to October 1 based on official October 1 enrollment. The continuation rate analysis matches student October 1 enrollment records of the first year to that of the second year at the individual student level. For example, the same-school continuation rate indicates the percentage of students enrolled in a given school on October 1, 2020 (SY 2020-21) who were still enrolled at that same school on October 1, 2021 (SY 2021-22).

DAC – District Assessment Coordinator. Find the DAC contact information [here](#).

Disaggregation – The reporting of data for a particular student group of the population (e.g., Asian American or special education) rather than for the entire population as a whole.

Dropout – A student in grade 7-12 who left school and did not re-enroll by October 1 of the following fall.

Dropout Rate – There are two definitions of dropout rate in common use:

- **One Year Dropout**–The number of dropouts divided by the number of students in grades 7-12 enrolled at any point during the school year (students served).
- **Dropout**–A student who has stopped their education for various reasons as reported in [MARSS](#). Dropout is used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate). In the graduation rate calculation, if a student drops out after less than half an academic year at a high school, they will be counted as a dropout in the graduation rate of whichever high school they have attended for the most time.

EC – Early Childhood Special Education.

ELL – English Language Learners, also known as EL (English Learners) or MLL (Multi Language Learners)

ESSA – Every Student Succeeds Act; federal law requiring measurement of math, reading, and science performance in schools and the creation of state report cards to measure and report this to the public.

FRL – Free and Reduced Price Lunch

Graduation Rates – Minnesota uses an exclusion adjusted cohort graduation indicator (EACGI) model to calculate graduation rates. This model assigns each student to a cohort or group when they first enroll in public high school in Minnesota. When a student transfers from one public high school to another, they enter their new school's graduation cohort and leave their previous school's cohort. When a student leaves the Minnesota K-12 public education system they are removed from the cohort. The Minnesota Department of Education calculates a 4, 5, 6, and 7 year graduation rate. There are four graduation rate groups: graduate, dropout, continue and unknown.

Graduate – A student who has received a diploma. Recorded as a status end code of 08 in MARSS and used when calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – Written for a child with a disability by a team including parent/guardian, special education professionals and a school administrator. The IEP describes a child's strengths and current skills, what skills will be worked on during a school year, the services that the child will receive and other help such as transportation, adjustments in the classroom, etc. that will be provided to the child.

Johnson-O'Malley – Eligible American Indian and Alaska Native students are enrolled members of a federally recognized tribe or at least one-fourth or more degree of Indian blood descendant of a member of a federally recognized Indian tribal government.

Individual Student Report (ISR) – An Individual Student Report (ISR) is the final and official report of a student's assessment results provided by MDE to districts to distribute to parents or guardians.

Level – See "Achievement Level."

MARSS – Minnesota Automated Reporting Student System. Database of student information reported to MDE. The data comes from student enrollment collected by schools in the Campus system.

MCA-III – Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments—Series III, which measures student achievement with regard to the Minnesota Academic Standards. The administration of the MCA-III math assessment began in the spring of 2011 in grades 3-8, science (all grades) in the spring of 2012, and reading (all grades) in the spring of 2013. MCA-III math grade 11 administration began in the spring of 2014.

MDE – Minnesota Department of Education.

MN Report Card – The Minnesota Report Card is a set of reporting dashboards created by MDE, which provide student information at the school and district level across the state.

MTAS-III – Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS-III) is an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for special education students, designed to measure the extent to which students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general curriculum. It has been administered annually since 2007 in reading (grades 3-8 and 10) and in math (grades 3-8 and 11) (see Alternate Assessment). The MTAS science assessment, added in 2008, is administered in grades 5, 8, and once in high school (see “Alternate Assessment Eligibility Requirements” [here](#).)

Mobility Index – The Mobility Index shows the stability of classrooms as a function of students both leaving and enrolling in the school during the school year. The index gives the number of occasions when students enroll after October 1, plus the number of occasions when students leave the district before June 1, as a percent of the October 1 enrollment. The index can count single students multiple times. Only traditional schools are included in the district-wide index.

Multi-Level Disaggregation – A method used to isolate the performance of a particular student group (e.g., Asian American, non-special education, non-ELL, free or reduced lunch), also known as “Apples to Apples” comparisons.

North Star – Minnesota Department of Education’s ESSA plan; requires school districts to report academic achievement and academic progress (through standardized test scores), progress towards English proficiency, graduation rates, and consistent attendance. More information on North Star can be found [here](#).

OCR – Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights. OCR is responsible for enforcing civil rights in education.

October 1 – Official enrollment is taken on October 1st. These numbers inform budget and planning decisions for the entire school year.

Percent – Not to be confused with percentile, a percent or percent score is the number of correct items divided by the total number of items multiplied by 100.

Percentile/Percentile Rank – Percentile ranks show how a student compares with others who took the test on a scale of 1 to 99. (For example, if a student scored in the 65th percentile on a test, the student performed as well or better than 65% of the other students who took the test).

Post-Secondary Enrollment – Measures enrollment in college the fall after high school graduation. Data comes from the National Student Clearinghouse.

Proficiency (MCA-III) – Defined by a cut score set by MDE. On the MCA-IIIs, any score of Level M (Meets the Standards) or E (Exceeds the Standards) is considered proficient; any score of Level D (Does Not Meet the Standards) or P (Partially Meets the Standards) is considered not proficient.

Raw Score – The number of items a student has answered correctly.

REA – Saint Paul Public Schools Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (see: spps.org/rea)

SAC – School Assessment Coordinator

Scale(d) Score – A score that represents student performance across all levels and forms of the same test on a single scale. In other words, the scaled scores of second graders are lower than those of fifth graders. Each subject area has its own system of scaled scores. Therefore, you cannot compare scaled scores on a reading test with scaled scores on a math test. Scaled scores can be averaged and reported within a grade level and subject area.

SPED – Special Education Services

SPPS – Saint Paul Public Schools

SPPS Achieves – SPPS' five year strategic plan implemented in 2018. Development required by MN State Statutes. SPPS Achieves is also SPPS' World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Plan.

Stability Index – The Stability Index shows the stability of classrooms as a function of students' continuous enrollment throughout the school year. The index gives the number of students enrolled at the school 160 days or more, as a percent of the October 1 enrollment. Only traditional schools are included in the district-wide index.

Stakeholders – Groups of people with a vested interest in SPPS and/or involved in providing feedback and input with regards to district policy and program decision-making.

Strand/Subtest/Subarea – One of a few broad content areas within a subject of a test (e.g., Patterns, Functions, & Algebra is a strand of the Math MCA-III assessment) (see Substrand).

Student group – Group of students identified by a particular demographic characteristic. These include but are not limited to:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Black, Non-Hispanic
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Two or More Races
- Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch
- Special Education
- ELL (English Language Learners)
- Johnson-O'Malley
- State Identified American Indian-demographic group started being collected in SY 2019-2020 per state legislation *Counting All Students*, which can be found in sections 120B.31, subdivision 3a and 120B.35, subdivision 3. It is more inclusive than the American Indian/Alaskan Native Federal Race/Ethnicity definition.

Subject – Used to refer to a particular content area of a test (e.g., reading or math).

Substrand – One of a number of specific skill areas within a strand/subtest/subarea of a test (e.g., Algebraic Thinking is a substrand of the Patterns, Functions, & Algebra strand of the Math MCA-III assessment) (see Strand).

Suspension – Disciplinary time spent out of school for one or more days.

Too Few to Report – If the population is fewer than 10, we will not report results for that indicator in order to protect students from being identified.

Trend – Data analyses that represent performance over time.

Unknown – Used in calculating the EACGI graduation rate (see graduation rate) for students who were marked as leaving a school and/or district but never enrolled in another K-12 public school in Minnesota.

WIDA – World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment; the WIDA Consortium is a non-profit group whose purpose is to develop standards and assessments that meet the requirements of NCLB while promoting educational equity for English language learners in 27 member states. Helped develop Alternate Access for ELLs assessment

WBWF – World’s Best Workforce Force; Strategic plan to improve teaching and planning as required by MN State Statutes. SPPS Achieves is the current WBWF plan, adopted in 2020 under a three year cycle.

Additional Resources:

[Acronym Reference Guide](#)

[School Directory](#)