

Glossary of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment Terms:

Achievement Level—Summarized test score on the MCA-II, TEAE, and MN-SOLOM. For example, scores on the MCA-II are categorized into 4 achievement levels: Does Not Meet the Standards (D), Partially Meets the Standards (P), Meets the Standards (M), and Exceeds the Standards (E).

Alternate Assessment—Assessment for special education students with severe cognitive disabilities who, according to their IEPs, do not qualify to take the statewide test (see MTAS).

AMAO—Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives, also known as “English language proficiency performance targets.” It is a summary of ELL students’ performance that is calculated in order to satisfy a federal accountability requirement under Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

“Apples to Apples”—A method used to isolate the performance of a particular subgroup of students (e.g., Asian American, non-special education, non-ELL, free or reduced lunch), also known as multi-level disaggregation.

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.

AYP—Adequate Yearly Progress; reported annually for each Minnesota district and school by MDE (see: http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/Accountability_Programs/No_Child_Left_Behind_Programs/School_Performance_AYP/index.html).

BST—Basic Skills Tests, or reading, math, and writing tests that students who entered grade 8 in 2004-2005 or earlier must pass to receive a diploma from a public high school. Students who entered grade 8 in 2005-2006 or later instead take the MCA-II/GRAD as a graduation requirement (see GRAD).

Campus—The database used in the district to collect student information including enrollment, demographics, address, attendance, and discipline.

Cell Size Limitation—The minimum number of students needed to measure AYP for an indicator. For participation and proficiency, the number of students in all tested grades is combined for a subject.

Indicator	Subgroup	Cell Size
Participation	All students, All 8 subgroups	40
Proficiency	All students, All 8 subgroups	20
Attendance	All students, All 8 subgroups	40
Graduation	All students, All 8 subgroups	40

Clusters/Subskills—(See Substrand).

Confidence Interval—The boundaries, or limits, within which the true population mean lies. A 95% confidence interval indicates that we are 95% certain that the interval contains the mean. MDE calculates a confidence interval around the index target; schools/districts make AYP by exceeding the lower limit (score) of the confidence interval.

Continuous Enrollment—Students who were enrolled in a school (or district) for a “full academic year”—defined by MDE as enrolled in the same school/district on October 1 and on the day of the test—are considered “continuously enrolled” in that school/district.

Disaggregation—The reporting of data for a particular subgroup 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 reenroll by October 1 of the following fall.

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

- The **Annual Dropout Rate** is the number of dropouts divided by the number of students enrolled on October 1.
- The **Four-Year Dropout Rate** is reported as a component of the SPPS Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rate (see graduation rate definition below).

ELL—English Language Learners, also known as LEP, Limited English Proficient.

Equipercenile—Method of equating tests by determining which raw scores on two instruments have the same percentile rank.

Field Test—The first stage in MDE’s three-step test development process. During field testing, the test is administered to a subset of the student population in order to determine how well the questions work. From the field test, a “pilot test” is developed using proven test items and given to a larger pool of students (see Pilot Test and Operational Test).

GRAD (MCA-II/GRAD)—The Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma is a set of tests that all students who entered grade 8 in 2005-2006 or later must take and pass in order to graduate from a public high school in Minnesota, replacing the former BSTs. The GRAD Test of Written Composition, similar to the BST writing test, is given in grade 9. The GRAD reading and math tests are comprised of items embedded in the grade 10 and 11 MCA-II assessments (referred to as the GRAD component of the MCA-II). All three tests are retaken until a passing score is achieved on each one; however, subsequent administrations of the GRAD reading and math tests do not include all MCA-II items, only the GRAD component. This graphic helps to illustrate the overlapping MCA-II/GRAD test design:

GRAD First Administration (MCA-II):

GRAD			
Essential GRAD Only Items	Common GRAD & MCA-II Items	MCA-II MCA-II Only Items	Field Test Field Test Items
		NCLB	

GRAD Retests:

GRAD	
Essential GRAD Only Items	Common GRAD & MCA-II Items

Graduation Rate—There are two definitions of graduation rate in common use:

- The **NCLB Cumulative Graduation Rate**, defined and used by the state for NCLB purposes, counts the total number of students graduating divided by the total number of graduates and dropouts (i.e., students who were not found as re-enrolled in any other school in the state by the following fall) multiplied by 100. Students who transferred into the district are included in this calculation.
- The **SPPS Four-Year Cohort Completion Rate** is calculated by following a cohort of students who started 9th grade in an SPPS school. Four years later this cohort is divided into three groups: those who graduated in four years, those who are continuing their high school education in SPPS, and those who dropped out and did not reenroll in SPPS by the following fall. Students who transferred into or out of the district are not included in this calculation.

Growth/Trend/Gain—Calculation of change in academic achievement over time. Growth is often reported as an average for a population or sub-population of students.

Index Point—Students are assigned index points based on their achievement level in each subject on the MCA-II:

- 1 point—Levels M and E
- ½ point—Level P
- 0 points—Level D

Index Rate—Calculated for a group of students enrolled in a school/district on October 1, the index rate is their total number of index points divided by the total number of students multiplied by 100 (i.e., average index point). Index rates are calculated in order to make comparisons to Index Targets for the purpose of determining AYP status.

Index Target—The target index rate set by MDE each year that must be reached in order to make AYP.

Indicator—A category of data used to describe the performance of a school or district. MDE uses 4 indicators in determining AYP status—participation, proficiency, attendance, and graduation.

Infobase—The district database where graduation test (BST and GRAD) results are stored.

Item—A question on a test.

Level—See “Achievement Level.”

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

MAT7—Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Seventh Edition; administered in the district from 1993-2002.

MCA—Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, which measure student achievement with regard to the Minnesota Profile of Learning; given in 2005 in the subjects and grades below. Since 2006, the MCAs have been replaced by the MCA-II (see MCA-II definition below).

Grade	Reading	Math	Writing
3	x	x	
5	x	x	x
7	x	x	
10	x		x
11		x	

MCA-II—Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments—Series II, which measure student achievement with regard to the new Minnesota Academic Standards. The administration of these assessments began in the spring of 2006 in grades 3-8 (reading and math), 10 (reading only), and 11 (math only), replacing the original MCAs. One other difference from the MCA, besides the added grade levels being tested, is that there is no MCA-II test in writing.

MDE—Minnesota Department of Education (formerly Department of Children, Families, and Learning or CFL).

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.

MTELL—Mathematics Test for English Language Learners (MTELL) is a series of math assessments that are designed to serve as an optional accommodation for the math MCA-II for qualifying English language learners in grades 3-8 and 11. Scores of students who take the MTELL are combined with other MCA-II math scores in AYP calculations. The MTELL has been administered annually since 2007.

MTAS—Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) is Minnesota’s alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards for special education students, designed to measure the extent to which students with significant cognitive disabilities are making progress in the general curriculum. It has been administered annually since 2007 (see Alternate Assessment).

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

NCE—Normal Curve Equivalent. NCEs are test scores that are based on a national sample of all students taking a particular test. They range from 1 and 99 with a score of 50 being equal to the national average. Unlike percentiles, NCE scores are *equal interval*, which means that the difference between any two adjacent scores is the same. This characteristic allows NCEs to be legitimately aggregated and averaged.

NCLB—"No Child Left Behind" Act of 2001, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that President George W. Bush signed into law in January 2002.

Operational Test—The third stage in MDE's three-step test development process. Once a new test has been "field tested" and "pilot tested," it is considered to be a complete and "operational" test. Tests are not used for AYP purposes until they are operational (see Field Test and Pilot Test).

Participation—Measure of the percent of students enrolled in a school or district that attempted the MCA-II or alternative assessment.

Percent—Not to be confused with percentile, a percent or percent score is the number of items correct 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.) Percentiles differ from NCEs in that they *do not represent equal units* of achievement along the scale (e.g., the difference between percentile ranks of 5 and 10 is not the same difference in achievement as the difference between percentile ranks of 50 and 55), and therefore they cannot be legitimately aggregated or averaged.

Pilot Test—The second stage in MDE's three-step test development process. After a new test is "field tested" and before the test is administered widely and used for accountability purposes (i.e., "operational"), it is "pilot tested" with the population of students to ensure that it is working properly (see Field Test and Operational Test).

Proficiency (MCA-II/AYP)—Defined by a cut score set by MDE. On the MCA-IIs, 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. For the purposes of AYP, proficiency is calculated across grades within a subject area. Proficiency calculations for AYP are based on students who were enrolled in a school (or district) for a "full academic year"—defined as enrolled in the same school/district on October 1 and on the day of the test (see "continuous enrollment").

Proficiency (TEAE/SOLOM)—Defined by a cut score set by MDE. Any score of Level 4 or above is considered proficient on the TEAE reading and SOLOM; any score below Level 4 is considered not proficient. Any score of Level 5 on TEAE writing is considered proficient; any score below Level 5 is considered not proficient. For the TEAE and SOLOM, proficiency is reported as the percent of students who achieved the required (proficient) achievement levels on all three assessments (TEAE reading, TEAE writing, and SOLOM).

Progress (TEAE/SOLOM)—On each of the three assessments (TEAE reading, TEAE writing, and SOLOM), an ELL student who has a score in two consecutive years (in the same district) contributes a "yes" or "no" to the question: did the student's test score increase since the previous year? A group of 1000 ELL students with scores in two consecutive years then has 3000 total possibilities for a "yes" or "no" to this question. The proportion of "yes" marks over the sum of "yes" and "no" marks is the percent of ELL students making progress in any given year.

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

REA—Saint Paul Public Schools Department of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment housed in the Office of Accountability (see: <http://rea.spps.org/>).

Safe Harbor—An AYP designation that is achieved when a school or district reduces the number of non-proficient (i.e., Level D and Level P) students by 10% from the prior year. Safe Harbor only applies to the proficiency indicator and is only calculated when the index target has not been met. A school or district can make AYP based on Safe Harbor provided that group meets the AYP target for either attendance and/or graduation rate, as appropriate.

SAT10—The Stanford Achievement Test Series, Tenth Edition, has been given in reading and math in grade 9 in all high schools since 2007. Prior to 2007, the SAT10 was administered to grades 2-8. (In 2006, the SAT10 began in grade 9 but was optional.)

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 generally lower than those of fifth graders. Each subject area has its own system of scaled scores. Therefore, for example, you cannot compare scaled scores on a reading test with scaled scores on a math test. However, you can use scaled scores to compare an individual student's test performance in a single subject over time. Scaled scores can be averaged and reported within a grade level within a subject area.

SOLOM—Student Oral Language Observation Matrix, a teacher-completed oral language and listening assessment for students in grades K-12 who have been identified to receive ELL services (also referred to as the MN-SOLOM).

SPPS—Saint Paul Public Schools.

SSI—Scaled Score Improvement; growth indicator used to show change in achievement from one year to the next relative to the expected level of growth.

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.

Stanine—An abbreviation for standard nine, derived from the fact that stanine scores range from a low of 1 to a high of 9. Stanines of 1, 2, or 3 are below the national average; 4, 5, or 6 are average; and 7, 8, or 9 are above average. These three clusters of stanine scores are often referred to as below average, average, and above average "ranges."

Status—Snapshot of academic achievement at a specific point in time.

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-II assessment) (see Substrand).

Subgroup—Group of students identified by a particular demographic characteristic. Schools and districts receive an AYP status based on the following groups and disaggregations, in addition to the "all students" group:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- Black, Non-Hispanic
- White, Non-Hispanic
- Free or Reduced-Priced Lunch
- Special Education
- LEP (Limited English Proficiency)

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-II assessment) (see Strand).

TEAE—Test of Emerging Academic English, given to students in grades 3-12 who have been identified to receive ELL services.

Trend—Data analyses that represent performance over time.

Viewpoint—An online data mining tool used for posting and retrieving rosters of student-level test data that has replaced Swift Knowledge.