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Alt-MSA Handbook Part 1: General Information

Introduction and Background

The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) requires that all students be assessed and receive an individual score in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8 and a high school grade (Maryland has chosen to assess grade 10 content to fulfill this federal mandate). In addition, NCLB also requires states to assess science. NCLB also requires that states provide an ***Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards*** and ensure access to the general curriculum when implementing statewide accountability systems. An assessment of this type is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities who meet specific participation guidelines. These students are unable to participate in a regular assessment, even when accommodations are provided to them. The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) also mandates that all students be instructed in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, health, art, music, and physical education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) also requires an Alternate Assessment to ensure that students have access to the general curriculum.

In Maryland, students with disabilities participate in either the

- Maryland School Assessment (MSA) for mathematics and reading in grades 3 – 8, and science in grades 5 and 8, with or without accommodations as appropriate, or the High School Assessment (HSA) end-of-course assessments in Algebra/Data Analysis, English, Government, and Biology, with or without accommodations as appropriate
- Modified High School Assessment (Mod-HSA) end-of-course assessments in Algebra/Data Analysis, English, and Biology
- Alternate Maryland School Assessment based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (Alt-MSA) for mathematics and reading in grades 3 - 8, 10, and science in grades 5, 8, 10

The MSA assesses students' attainment of grade level objectives in reading, mathematics, and science. The Alt-MSA assesses students with the most significant cognitive disabilities attainment of individually selected reading, mathematics, and science Mastery Objectives (MOs) which are aligned and linked with grade-level Maryland State Curriculum (SC) Content Standards. These selected MOs form the framework for the student's reading, mathematics, and science instructional program.

Visit the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE's) web site (http://www. marylandpublicschools.org/testing) for more information on the Maryland assessments.

(A guide to using this *Alt-MSA Handbook* appears on page 1–3. Participation Guidelines for Alt-MSA appear on page 1–4.)

> **IMPORTANT:**
>
> You **_MUST_** read this handbook thoroughly and follow the procedures and instructions contained herein in their entirety. Failure to follow proper testing procedures is a violation of the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR), Section 13A.03.04.05A: *Test Administration and Data Reporting Policies and Procedures, Testing Behavior Violations.*

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What's New in 2014 for Alt-MSA?

Removal of Science Alignment on Grades 3, 4, 6, and 7

Although students should be instructed in science content areas in all grades, in grades 3, 4, 6, and 7, students participating in Alt-MSA will no longer be required to align any reading and mathematics Mastery Objectives to science within Alt-MSA Online.

Alt-MSA Mastery Objective Bank and Common Core Mapping Document

In preparation for the transition to the Maryland Common Core State Standards (CCSS), content specialists from the MSDE and Pearson completed a review of the Alt-MSA mastery objective bank against the CCSS. Local content specialist also participated in an item review process and then the MSDE content specialists completed a final approval of each MO in the bank. **During the Alt-MSA custom MO writing phase, no MOs can be written that do not align with the CCSS.** To assist local educators with the transition of the Alt-MSA MO bank to the CCSS, a spreadsheet has been developed that shows the current listing of all MOs in the Alt-MSA Online system and how each MO aligns or does not align to the CCSS. This document was vetted by local content specialists and the Alt-MSA program management team and approved by the MSDE content specialists.

Common Core Mapping Document

- A Common Core Mapping spreadsheet lists all current MOs; their current alignment to the Maryland State Curriculum (SC); and the grades they are associated with in the Alt-MSA Online system.
- The spreadsheet shows for each MO whether it has a full alignment to the CCSS, a partial alignment, or did not align at all.
- If the MO does not align to the CCSS, the column "Does Not Align" is marked. The MO appears with red font and a strikethrough. **All Mastery Objectives (MOs) that did not align to the CCSS have been removed from the Alt-MSA MO bank.**
- If the MO fully aligns to the CCSS, the CCSS standard is listed. If the MO wording can be edited to create a full alignment, the revised wording is noted in red font and any deleted words have red font and a strikethrough.
- If the MO partially aligns to the CCSS, the standard is listed and an "X" appears under the column "Partial Alignment".

For the 2013-2014, Alt-MSA administration, the MOs that are not aligned to the CCSS have been removed from the Alt-MSA Online MO item bank. Although the SC is still assessed during this school year, the MSDE has chosen to remove these MOs for the 2013-2014 administration, in preparation for the full transition to the CCSS.

Alt-MSA Media

The following media is being discontinued and will no longer be available to order through PearsonAccess for the 2014 Alt-MSA Administration:

1. 8MM HG Digital HI8 Cassette (with red stripe)
2. 8 MM Video, Standard cassette (with black stripe)
3. Tape, VHS, Blank

Using the *Alt-MSA Handbook*

The *Alt-MSA Handbook* is divided into tabbed sections allowing users to easily refer to the procedures relevant to their role in Alt-MSA Testing. Users of this Handbook include Principals, members of the Test Examiner Team (TET), and School Test Coordinators (STCs). Local Accountability Coordinators (LACs) and Alt-MSA Facilitators (AMFs) should also be familiar with the entire content of this handbook. Parts 1 - 7 contain information for all staff involved with the Alt-MSA, while part 8 is primarily for STCs and LACs.

Part	Description
1	• General information
2	• Planning the development of the Alt-MSA Portfolio
3	• Selecting/writing and reviewing Alt-MSA MOs • Using *Alt-MSA Online* to select/enter, submit, revise, and print MOs
4	• Coordinating collection of baseline data, instruction and selecting Artifacts that demonstrate attainment of Alt-MSA MOs
5	• Portfolio scoring and reporting
6	• Resources to support implementation of Alt-MSA
7	• Forms required for the Alt-MSA Portfolio
8	• Ordering Alt-MSA Portfolio materials • Directions for acquisition and application of preprinted student identification labels • Directions for Alt-MSA Portfolio collection and shipping

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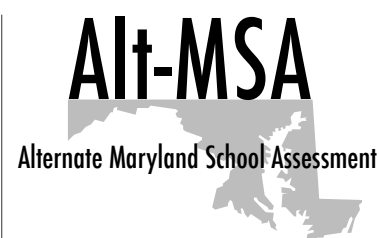
Alt-MSA Participation Criteria:

Participants in Alt-MSA <u>must</u> meet each of the six criteria described on this page.

Resources for Identifying Eligible Alt-MSA students

• Alt-MSA IEP Descision Making Process Eligibility Tool.

• Technical Assistance Bulletin 17, "Understanding the Criteria and Eligibility Process for Students with the Most Significant Disability Participating in Maryland Assessment Program".

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Alt-MSA Participation Guidelines

Alt-MSA Participation Criteria

As noted previously, students with disabilities in grades 3–8 must participate in either MSA or Alt-MSA. High school students participate in the High School Assessments (HSA), the Modified High School Assessments (Mod-HSA), or the Alt-MSA. The HSAs and Mod-HSAs are end of course tests, while the Alt-MSA assesses participating students in grade 10. The decision for which assessment is appropriate for an individual student is made by each student's IEP Team. A student with the most significant cognitive disability will participate in Alt-MSA if he or she meets **_each_** of the following criteria:

- The student is learning at emerging, readiness, and/or functional literacy levels in Maryland reading, Maryland mathematics, and Maryland science content standards objectives.

AND

- The student requires explicit and ongoing instruction in functional skills.

AND

- The student requires extensive and substantial modification (e.g., reduced complexity of objectives and learning materials, and more time to learn) of general education curriculum. The curriculum differs significantly from that of their non-disabled peers. They may learn different objectives, may use different materials, and may participate in different learning activities.

AND

- The student requires intensive instruction and may require extensive supports, including physical prompts, to learn, apply, and transfer or generalize knowledge and skills to multiple settings.

AND

- The student requires extensive support to perform and participate meaningfully and productively in daily activities in school, home, community, and work environments.

AND

- The student cannot participate in the MSA or HSA/Mod-HSA even with accommodations.

Students **not** meeting all the criteria above will participate in the MSA or HSA/Mod-HSA, with or without accommodations, as appropriate, based on their IEP. Refer to the Maryland Accommodation Manual for more information about accommodations and Maryland's assessments.

School IEP Teams can refer to two new documents developed by the MSDE DSE/EIS and DAA which can be found on the Resource Center tab of Alt-MSA Online and on **www.marylandpublic schools.org**.

- The Alt-MSA IEP Decision-Making Process Eligibility Tool is an IEP resource that can be used when identifying students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for participation in the Alt-MSA. This resource provides criteria descriptors that will assist IEP Teams in better understanding each of the criteria.

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- Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin 17, titled "Understanding the Criteria and Eligibility Process for Students with the Most Significant Disability Participating in Maryland Assessment Program" is a resource to be used by IEP Teams, including parents, in order to gain a better understanding of the Alt-MSA criteria and process.
- Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin 25, titled, "Alternate Maryland Assessment (Alt-MSA)": A Fact Sheet developed by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Accountability and Assessment and Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services about the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA).

Definitions

The following definitions will assist users of the Alt-MSA Handbook in understanding and implementing the Alt-MSA criteria:

- *Alternate Academic Achievement Standards:* The term "Alternate Academic Achievement Standards" has a specific meaning in the context of Maryland's State Assessment System as approved by the U.S. Department of Education. "Alternate Academic Achievement Standards" are performance standards which are based on a limited sample of content that is linked to grade-level Content Standards. This content, however, may not fully represent grade-level content and may include content which is substantially simplified.

- *Extended Maryland Content Standards*: Extended refers to a limited sample of content that is linked to but does not fully represent grade-level content.

- *Functional skills*: Skills which are commonly required in daily routines such as personal management, community, recreation, career/vocational, communication, decision making and interpersonal.

- *Extensive Support*: The student requires the use of a prompt hierarchy, low/med/high assistive technologies and substantial accommodations and modifications in order to access the general education curriculum.

- *Portfolio Assessment:* A collection of student work to demonstrate learning and achievement has taken place over time. It provides a framework for the instructional program for students with significant cognitive disabilities. An Alt-MSA Portfolio assesses a student's attainment of skills in reading, mathematics and science aligned with grade-level Maryland Content Standards.

Determining Students' Grade Level

Alt-MSA eligible students participate in Alt-MSA in Grades 3–8 and 10. To determine the grade level of a student in an ungraded program, the following Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) procedure should be used:

> Grade equals the number of years the student has been in school after kindergarten (including the current year) adjusted by subtracting the number of times he/she was not promoted and/or adding the number of times he/she was accelerated.

Nonpublic schools with ungraded programs must work with the local school system to determine the grade level for individual students.

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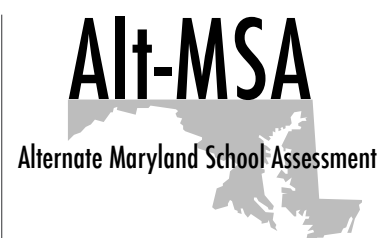
**Refer to Pages
1-6 through 1-11
for Procedures
Regarding:**

> Assessing students
who transfer
enrollment

> Assessing students
who are on Home and
Hospital instruction

> Excusing students

> Students from other
states attending
Special Placement
Schools in Maryland

FAQ

Q: Student enrolled into
school and MOs were
selected in Alt-MSA
Online but the student
transferred out of state
after only attending
school for one day.
Do we need to submit
the portfolio and
what do we do in Alt-
MSA Online?

A: The student should
be archived in Alt-MSA
Online. The portfolio
does not need to be
submitted because
the student did not
complete any baseline
or mastery artifacts. A
pretest file should not
be submitted for
the student.

**Assessing Students Who Transfer Enrollment**

Students who enter or transfer into a school during the test window must participate in the Alt-MSA and a portfolio must be submitted for the student.

If a student transfers out of a school during the assessment period (September 3, 2013 through February 26, 2014) and into another Maryland public or Special Placement (LEA 24) school, the STC, working in collaboration with the LAC, must transfer the portfolio in its then-current state of completion to the receiving school (whether or not that school is in your school system) **within 10 school days** of receiving notification from the receiving school or school system. When transferring the Alt-MSA portfolio, it is recommended that the LEA use a traceable method. In addition to transferring the portfolio, the LAC/STC should notify the LAC for the receiving school by sending them a copy of the Online Transfer Request form found in Part 7. For public schools only, when a student transfers out of the LEA the STC must notify his or her LAC. The sending LAC should also notify the receiving LAC of the transfer school system, if known. It is expected that the portfolio will contain test documents and the number of artifacts consistent with the number of days that the student was enrolled in the sending school. The receiving school will then continue instruction and complete the assessment and portfolio development process. **Failure to properly transfer a student portfolio may result in a student receiving a proficiency level of "Basic." Sending schools which do not forward portfolio information to a receiving school in a timely manner will be flagged for investigation of a testing irregularity and may be subject to State and/or local sanctions.**

Occasionally, schools are unable to determine the specific school or school system to which the student is transferring, or the student may be relocating to another state. In those cases, if the portfolio contains secure materials such as artifacts, submit the portfolio to the Alt-MSA contractor with test documents and artifacts in their current state of completion and follow invalidation process noted on page 1-11. However, if there are no secure materials in the portfolio, it does not need to be submitted. Secure materials are any completed student artifacts. Non-secure materials include: draft and final test documents, IEP's, and all forms found in Section 7.

Keep in mind that no matter when a student enters a school during the testing window, the school needs to make every reasonable effort to assess the student(s). This is good for the student, because, even if the entire Alt-MSA assessment cannot be completed in the remaining time in the testing window, the establishment of baselines and seeing where the student is currently performing can help to establish the instructional program and priorities for the rest of the current academic year. Beginning the assessment process can also provide valuable information for the student's Alt-MSA assessment in the next year.

For a student to "count" towards School Progress Index, (SPI) in a school, he or she must meet the full academic year requirement (i.e., student must be enrolled by September 30th). Therefore, students who move between schools within a district after September 30th will only count for or against the district, not the schools. Students who move within the State between districts only count at the State level. However, the student's results will still be reported for the achievement reporting at the school he or she was enrolled in when the testing period ended.

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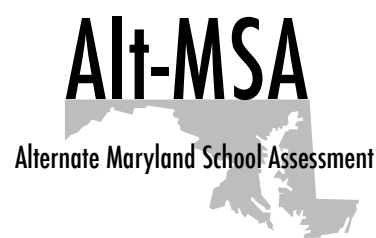
Participation in Assessment

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), all students must participate in state and district-wide assessments. IEP teams, which include parent/guardians, work collaboratively to determine the assessment in which a student with a disability will participate. All school IEP teams must follow the guidelines as documented in the Maryland Accommodations Manual (official as of July 2, 2012 Issue ID 201207) when considering excusing or exempting a student from a Maryland assessment.

Excusing Students from State Assessments

There are several steps that must be followed prior to and during testing if a student is to be excused from an assessment. Those steps can be found on pages 2-5 of the Maryland Accommodations Manual. Local school system staff should always consult with their LAC if they have any questions about excusing a student from testing.

Since the Alt-MSA testing window covers a six month period, the reasons for excusal that are found in the Maryland Accommodations Manual may not apply to a student participating in Alt-MSA. Within the Alt-MSA six month testing window, there would be multiple opportunities for a student to demonstrate attainment of their Alt-MSA Mastery Objectives.

All local school systems must submit a reason to MSDE for any student that is excused from testing during the ENTIRE six month Alt-MSA test administration window.

SPI Implications for Excusing Students from State Assessments

Students who are excused from an assessment receive no score and no proficiency level designation. These students are treated as non-participants for accountability purposes.

Alt-MSA: Full Physical (Medically Fragile) Excusal

If a student with the **most** significant cognitive disability, functioning at or near the profound intellectual range requires full physical prompt support to demonstrate what he or she knows and is able to do because they are **cognitively and physically/medically unable to access and comprehend the academic content presented**, the IEP team may consider an **excusal** for such a student from participation in the Alt-MSA. If applicable, the request for an excusal **must** be re-submitted each year.

A student qualifying for a full physical (medically fragile) excusal must fall into both categories listed below.

- The student is a student with the most significant cognitive disability, functioning at the profound intellectual range, who is **cognitively unable to access and comprehend the academic content** presented. Educational reports, including psychological, that supports the need to use full physical prompting due to significant cognitive limitations in the profound intellectual range of functioning are kept in the student's IEP file. Although specialized instructional supports are in place, the student is unable to access, demonstrate understanding, and respond to instruction in academic content.

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- The student is a student with the most significant cognitive disability, functioning at or near the profound intellectual range and **physically unable to access and actively participate in academic instructional activities, and may be identified as medically fragile with severe health care needs**. Characteristics of a medically fragile student may include, but are not limited to intensive direct daily management of health needs such as frequent hospitalization or need for a private duty nurse in the school environment, specialized medical equipment, detailed protocols and management by a group of medical personnel and/or agencies due to the complexity of the needs of the student. The student is not able to access and demonstrate what they know in the SC presented in classroom activities with or without the use of assistive technology. Constant adult support using full physical prompting is required for the student to participate in all activities of daily living and/or classroom instruction.

The expectation is that the test examiner (teacher) would have attempted everything instructionally possible to provide access for the student to demonstrate his or her skills and knowledge of the content. This includes the IEP team exploring all available assistive technology appropriate for the student in order for him/her to access instruction and demonstrate skills and knowledge on assessment tasks. For example, the student would not have another means of communication such as eye gaze or blinking to provide a response during instructional activities. The student would be excused from the academic State assessment only. However, the student will continue in his/her current educational program and placement, and continue to have the opportunity for access and exposure to the academic content, while working on his/her IEP goals and objectives. This decision will be discussed and made each year at annual review IEP Team meetings.

The student's IEP **must** document his/her need to use full physical prompting due to significant cognitive functioning at or near the profound intellectual range, physical and medical limitations and, although specialized instructional supports are in place, even with the use of full physical prompting, the **student is unable to access, demonstrate understanding, and respond to instruction in academic content**. Evidence of the need for full physical prompt supports must be provided in one or more of the IEP components listed below.

- Present Level Statements
- Impact Statement
- Supplementary aids, services, program modifications and supports
- Goals and Objectives
- Progress Reports (current)

The following documentation must be submitted to MSDE for verification of the IEP Team's descision.

- Copy of the **complete IEP** for the current assessment year.
- Copy of the most recent psychological report indicating that the student is a student with a significant cognitive disability at or near the profound intellectual range of functioning and, although specialized instructional supports are in place, the student, at this time, is unable to access, demonstrate understanding, and respond to instruction in academic content. This documentation must be kept in the student's IEP confidential file/folder.

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- Copy of the most recent educational report(s) that confirms the need for full physical prompting due to significant cognitive limitations at or near the profound intellectual range of functioning and, although specialized instructional supports are in place, the student, at this time, is unable to access, demonstrate understanding, and respond to instruction in academic content. This documentation must be kept in the student's IEP confidential file/folder.

- Copy of medical documentation that confirms the need for the student to use full physical prompting due to severe physical limitations and, although specialized related services supports are in place, the student is unable to access, demonstrate understanding, and respond to instruction in academic content at this time. Documentation should also confirm if the student is identified as medically fragile with severe health care needs. This documentation must be kept in the student's IEP confidential file/folder.

Please follow the process below when submitting documentation to MSDE.

The IEP Chairperson (1) completes the IEP Checklist form and obtains the Principal's signature (2) attaches a copy of the student's IEP along with a copy of the following most recent documents: supporting medical documentation, psychological report, and educational report(s) (3) submits the package of documentation to the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) in the local school system. (Special Placement Schools submit the package to the LAC of the student's Home LEA)

The LAC and the local Director of Special Education reviews the IEP and supporting documentation. If both the LAC and the Local Director of Special Education verifies that an excusal from the assessment is appropriate for the student, then the LAC submits the IEP Checklist with appropriate verification signatures, the current IEP and other supporting documentation to the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Accountability and Assessment & Data Systems.

Staff at MSDE in the Division of Accountability and Assessment and in the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services will review the documentation and then forward notice of their acceptance or nonacceptance of a Full Physical (Medical Fragile) Excusal to the LAC, who in turn forwards notice to the local school or Special Placement School, as appropriate.

This documentation must be submitted to the **MSDE by September 13, 2013** for verification that an excusal from the assessment is appropriate for the student.   In no case will MSDE accept for review a Full Physical (Medically Fragile) Excusal delivered to MSDE's Baltimore offices after Friday, September 13, 2013. Therefore, IEP Teams and other staff must take this timeline into consideration and plan accordingly. MSDE will render a descision if sufficient documentation was submitted and inform local school systems on or before October 11, 2013 in order for schools to have ample time to enter MOs into the online system, if necessary, by the deadline for entering MOs on October 18, 2013. If any student enrolls after September 13, 2013, please consult your LAC for guidance, who will in turn follow-up with MSDE.

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The portfolio materials for a student who MSDE has verified has sufficient documentation to support a full physical (medically fragile) excusal would not be submitted for scoring. The student must be submitted in both the pretest file as well as the post test file. During the nonparticipation reconciliation process, the student is to be coded with the appropriate nonparticipation reason code. The use of this code will then be verified by MSDE.

Students who are excused from the Alt-MSA assessment will receive no score and no proficiency level designation. As required by NCLB, students will count in the "n" (n=total number of students participating in the assessment) and be identified as a non-participant for accountability purposes.

Exempting Students from State Assessments

In general, **no** students should be exempted from participation in the Maryland State Assessment Programs. There are only <u>two</u> special exemptions noted for Maryland assessments.

1. Special Exemption Conditions for ELL Students on the Alternate Maryland School Assessment (Alt-MSA) in Reading

English language learners (ELLs) who are in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school may be exempted from the Reading portion of Alt-MSA for that academic year only. Such students must still participate in the Alt-MSA Mathematics and Alt-MSA Science test. Contact your LAC for more information.

2. Special Medical Exemption Conditions for Alt- MSA

Students may be exempted from the Alt-MSA when they **cannot take the assessment during the entire testing window because of a significant medical emergency**. A significant medical emergency is a significant health impairment that renders the student incapable of participating in ANY academic activities, including state assessments, for the testing window. Examples could include hospitalization for surgery or a life-threatening condition or a serious car or other accident. Determination of a "significant medical emergency" must be made by a medical doctor and documentation must be kept in the student's IEP and made available at the district for review. Medical exemptions for Alt-MSA are very rare, and are determined by the State. This means that the portfolio materials for a student for whom the local school system plans on seeking a medical exemption must be submitted for scoring. The result of the scoring will be the student being identified as a nonparticipant. During the nonparticipation reconciliation process, the student is to be coded with the appropriate nonparticipation reason code and the supporting documentation forwarded to MSDE for review. The use of this code will then be verified by MSDE.

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Assessing Students Who Are On Home and Hospital Instruction

Students receiving home and hospital instruction and who meet Alt-MSA participation guidelines **must** participate in the Alt-MSA. Teachers providing home and hospital instruction **must** attend Alt-MSA training sessions and receive the current *Alt-MSA Handbook*. Home and Hospital teachers are members of the TET and are expected to instruct and assess Alt-MSA MOs, in collaboration with other members of the student's team. Occasionally, health issues of students on home and hospital instruction may warrant excusing them from the Alt-MSA assessment. Please see Section 2 of the Maryland Accommodations Manual which documents the accountability purposes for students who are excused from statewide assessments.

Students From Other States Attending Special Placement Schools in Maryland

Students from other states attending special placement schools in Maryland **MUST** **NOT** participate in the Alt-MSA. These students will take the appropriate assessment for the state from which their public education funding comes.

Request for Portfolio Invalidation

An STC may submit a request to their LAC to invalidate a student's portfolio at any time during the administration window. Examples of invalidation include a student passing away, transferring out of state, receiving home schooling or changing eligibility. If the LAC approves, they will give the STC an invalidation sticker that should be placed on the spine of the portfolio below the student's pre-id label. The Non-Scorable Alt-MSA Transmittal Form found on page 7-30 MUST be taped to the front outside cover of any portfolio that has been approved for invalidation by the LAC (If a portfolio arrives with the Non-scorable transmittal form and no invalidation sticker, it will not be considered as approved by the LAC.) The student must be included on the pre-test file and the portfolio must be submitted to the contractor, along with all other portfolios for scoring, but will be considered invalid. If the student met full academic criteria, he/she will be considered a non-participant and require a non-participant reason code on the post-test file and the scores will be ignored for performance.

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Description of the Alt-MSA

The Alt-MSA was developed in close collaboration with:

- experts in reading, mathematics, and science content, psychometrics, and portfolio assessment for students receiving special education,
- consultants with a national perspective,
- stakeholder advisory committee members,
- special education staff, and
- parents/guardians and teachers of students who will participate in the Alt-MSA.

Steps in the Alt-MSA Process

The Alt-MSA assesses and reports student mastery of reading and mathematics MOs for students in grades 3 - 8 and 10, and science MOs for students in grades 5, 8, and 10; written at the student's grade level and aligned and linked with grade-level SC Maryland Content Standards and Topics and Core Learning Goals. A cycle of instruction and assessment is intrinsic to Alt-MSA. The Alt-MSA consists of the following steps:

Step 1: Review results and/or conduct pre-assessment (TET):

A Test Examiner Team, comprised of the instructional staff teaching the student,

- analyzes student's Alt-MSA results from the previous year, and conducts informal pre-assessments to facilitate appropriate MO selection and instructional planning and
- selects the reading and mathematics skills and concepts (and science concepts for students in grades 5, 8, and 10) that will be assessed for Alt-MSA.

If the student did not participate in Alt-MSA in the previous year the TET will use existing data in the student's file and conduct a pre-assessment to facilitate the selection of the skills and concepts that will be assessed for Alt-MSA. Note: The results of any informal pre-assessment **are not** to be included in the Alt-MSA portfolio.

Step 2: Select or Write MOs (TET and Principal):

The TET selects/writes 10 reading and 10 mathematics MOs for students in grades 3 - 8 and 10, selects/writes 5 science MOs for students in grades 5, 8, and 10. The MOs represent the content on which the student will be instructed and assessed for the Alt-MSA.

- The selected/written reading, mathematics, and science MOs must be challenging and attainable with at least 80% accuracy by February 26, 2014.
- Baseline data artifacts that demonstrate the student needs instruction in each MO must be included. Baseline data must indicate that the student performs the selected MO with 50% or less accuracy.

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- The objectives selected by the team may include IEP objectives in reading and mathematics that are aligned with SC Content Standards/CLGs that have not yet been achieved.

- MOs must be selected/written and entered on the **_Alt-MSA Online_** web application (**http://www.altmsa.com**). MOs selected from the MO Bank have been pre-approved and are correctly aligned to the SC and Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Custom written MOs entered in the bank by the teacher will be sent for review by the Test Contractor. Mastery Objectives that are not aligned to the Common Core have been deleted from the bank and cannot be used as custom MOs. Part 7 of this Handbook contains samples of the forms generated by **_Alt-MSA Online_** as well as other required forms to be included in the portfolio.

- MOs are submitted and checked by the principal. The principal then either rejects the MOs back to the TET for adjustment/correction or approves them and submits to the contractor for contractor verification and review.

> Mastery Objectives that are not aligned to the Common Core have been deleted from the bank and cannot be used as custom MOs.

Step 3: Collect Baseline Data, Conduct Ongoing Classroom Instruction, Assess MOs and Construct Portfolio (TET):

Students receive instruction in the reading, mathematics, and science MOs as part of their regular instructional program throughout the test window, September 3, 2013 – February 26, 2014.

- Concurrent with delivery of instruction, the TET constructs a portfolio of evidence that demonstrates that the individual student attained the MOs that were selected by the student's TET.

- Evidence of baseline and mastery, the artifacts, is collected at any appropriate time during the test window.

- The collection of student artifacts that demonstrate the student has attained the MOs, along with other identified information, comprise the student's Alt-MSA Portfolio.

- Once student has completed the work sample it should be immediately placed within the portfolio. No changes or additions may be made to the artifact once it has been completed by the student and placed into the portfolio.

- Thoughtful early planning, organization, and shared ownership of the Alt-MSA among the student's teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants, (TET), will result in a portfolio that conveys student learning reflective of an integrated instructional program provided by a collaborative instructional team.

Remember to Involve the Student in Portfolio Development. Since the Alt-MSA is a record of a student's work, portfolio development should involve the student as much as possible. Students should work with TEs to chart their learning and select artifacts that demonstrate mastery. (See page 2-8)

Remember to Involve Parents/Guardians in Portfolio Development. Active parent/guardian involvement will support the student in learning the selected reading, mathematics and science objectives. Students' opportunities to learn are broadened when parents/guardians are full participants in their children's education. Families provide additional opportunities to practice at home and in community settings what is learned in school. These opportunities increase the likelihood that skills learned in the school community will be generalized to activities in the home and in other community settings. (See pages 2-8 through 2-10)
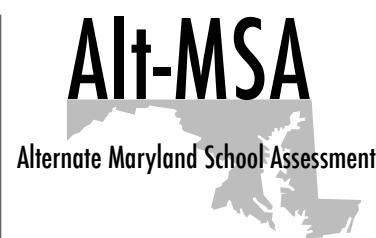
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Step 4: Prepare Portfolios for Shipping and Scoring (STC):

At the end of the Alt-MSA test window, the STC ensures that all components of the portfolio are accurately labeled with preprinted student identification labels and are properly packed for pickup by the Alt-MSA test contractor.

- Preprinted student identification labels will be shipped to each school registered for Alt-MSA in PearsonAccess. Upon receipt, immediately verify that a preprinted label has been received for each student participating in Alt-MSA.

- Remember that nothing may be added to, deleted from, or changed within a portfolio after the close of the testing window on February 26, 2014. After that date, the only actions that may be taken are the application of preprinted student identification labels and packing of portfolios for shipping.

- Other actions taken with portfolios after February 26, 2014 will be identified as test security violations, and as such could result in personnel actions, test invalidation, or other sanctions. To reiterate, at the end of the testing window (February 26, 2014), each student's portfolio must be complete and submitted to the STC. No other organization, insertion, or deletion of materials in a student's portfolio is allowed after February 26, 2014.

Step 5: Scoring and Reporting (MSDE and Contractor):

After portfolios are picked up from schools, they are processed and submitted to teams of scorers who review the portfolios to determine if the submitted evidence substantiates that the MOs have been attained.

- Based on the percentage of MOs attained, students receive a proficiency level designation of Basic, Proficient, or Advanced. For each content area (reading, mathematics and science), students will be assigned "Basic" if fewer than 60% of MOs are achieved, "Proficient" if at least 60% but less than 90% of MOs are achieved, and "Advanced" if 90% or greater of MOs are achieved.

- These results are reported as part of the State Education Accountability Program which meets the NCLB and IDEA requirements. The Alt-MSA proficiency scores in reading and mathematics contribute to school, local school system, and State School Progress Index (SPI).

- Alt-MSA Science scores are not presently part of the SPI requirements under NCLB and are not factored into the calculation of SPI. Students in grades 5, 8, and 10 will receive a proficiency designation, however, for Alt-MSA Science of "Basic," "Proficient," or "Advanced," and the science results will appear on their Home Report.

Figure 1-1 on pages 1-15 through 1-16 illustrates the necessary steps for successful Alt-MSA instruction and assessment. All procedures are described in detail in subsequent parts of this *Alt-MSA Handbook*. **The responsibility of Alt–MSA Portfolio development must be shared among the TET.** Important timeframes are included with each component.

Figure 1-1: Planning the Development of the Alt–MSA Portfolio for Reading, Mathematics and Science Instruction and Assessment

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Step 1: Review results and/or conduct pre-assessment (TET) September	
Activities	Handbook References
• Principal meets with TETs to plan administration of Alt-MSA. • TET meets to analyze results from the prior test administration or plan pre-assessments, and plan collection of baseline data, MO selection, instruction, and portfolio development. • STC orders portfolio materials.	Parts 1, 2, 6, and 7 Parts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 Part 8

Handbook references for planning the development of the Alt-MSA Portfolio.

Step 2: Select or Write MOs (TET and Principal) September through November	
Activities	Handbook References
• TET selects or writes MOs using MO Bank on *Alt-MSA Online* at student's grade level and instruct with grade-level and age-appropriate expectations. • Ensure that written MOs have the required components. • Principal checks and submits MOs by October 18, 2013. • Parents receive Alt-MSA MOs. • For written MOs submitted for technical review, feedback is received and revisions are made.	Part 3 Part 3 Part 3 Part 3 Parts 3 and 7 Part 3

Detailed Alt-MSA Timelines appear on page 1-24 through 1-26

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Detailed Alt-MSA
Timelines appear on
Page 1-24 through 1-26

Figure 1-1 Continued

Step 3: Collect Baseline Data, Conduct Ongoing Classroom Instruction, Assess MOs, and Construct Portfolio (TET): September through March	
Activities	Handbook References
• TET instructs and assesses MOs, selects baseline and mastery artifacts, and compiles portfolio.	Parts 4, 5, 6, and 7

Step 4: Prepare Portfolios for Shipping and Scoring (STC) February/March	
Activities	Handbook References
• STC verifies a preprinted label is available for each student participating in Alt-MSA. • STC collects all portfolios. STC then applies labels, and prepares for pick up.	Part 8

Step 5: Scoring and Reporting (MSDE and Contractor) March - June	
Activities	Handbook References
• MSDE and Contractor score portfolios, compile results, and report to students, parents, schools, and the general public.	Part 5

Contents of the Alt-MSA Portfolio

The Alt-MSA Portfolio consists of four sections (five sections for students in grades 5, 8, and 10) plus a Table of Contents. All forms that must be included in the Alt-MSA Portfolio are in Part 7 of the *Alt-MSA Handbook* and are available online at **http://www.altmsa.com** and also at **http://docushare.msde.state.md.us**

Requirements for each of the four portfolio sections are outlined below.

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Table of Contents
• See pages 7-2 through 7-8 for required Table of Contents

Detailed Alt-MSA timeline appear on page 1-24 through 1-26

Portfolio Section 1: Student Information
• **Labeled "A"**: List of Test Examiners who comprise the TET for the student.
• **Labeled "B"**: Assistive Technology Verification Form (if applicable).
• **Labeled "C"**: Alt-MSA 2014 MOs for the student. (This document printed from the *Alt-MSA Online* web application also includes copies of the previous year's MOs for reference, as well as any contractor feedback received.
• **Labeled "D"**: Copy of the student's IEP goals and objectives. Complete current IEP and any medical documentation for students using full physical prompt(s).
• **Labeled "E"**: Copy of "Non-public Alt-MSA Portfolio Review Form

Arrangement of contents of Alt-MSA portfolio.

Portfolio Section 2: Parent/Guardian Participation
• **Labeled "F"**: Signed form from the parents/guardians for their review and comments on Alt-MSA MOs.
• **Labeled "G"**: Documentation that the parents/guardians were invited to review portfolio and whether they reviewed the Alt-MSA portfolio before it was submitted for scoring.
• **Labeled "H"**: Parent/Guardian Contacts.

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The Alt-MSA MO Bank is online at http://www.altmsa.com. and also at http://docushare.msde. state.md.us

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Portfolio Section 3: Artifacts for Baseline Data and Student Mastery of Ten (10) Reading Objectives

• Artifacts for baseline data and as evidence of MO attainment including one videotaped artifact of the student demonstrating mastery of at least one reading MO. Artifacts must be numbered as indicated on the portfolio Table of Contents (see *Alt-MSA Handbook* Part 7).

Note: See page 1–19 of this Handbook for Reading Content Standards and Topics to be assessed on the Alt-MSA.

Portfolio Section 4: Artifacts for Baseline Data and Student Mastery of Ten (10) Mathematics Objectives

• Artifacts for baseline data and as evidence of MO attainment including one videotaped artifact of the student demonstrating mastery of at least one mathematics MO. Artifacts must be numbered as indicated on the portfolio Table of Contents (see *Alt-MSA Handbook* Part 7).

Note: See page 1–20 of this Handbook for Mathematics Content Standards and Topics to be assessed on the Alt-MSA.

Portfolio Section 5 for Students in Grades 5, 8, and 10: Artifacts for Baseline Data and Student Mastery of Five (5) Science Objectives

• Artifacts for baseline data and as evidence of MO attainment. Artifacts must be numbered as indicated on the portfolio Table of Contents (see *Alt-MSA Handbook* Part 7).

Note: See page 1–21 through 1-23 of this Handbook for Science Content Standards to be assessed on the Alt-MSA.

Reading Content Assessed on Alt-MSA

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Test examiners must select two SC Objectives and the corresponding SC Indicators from each of the SC Content Standards or Topics listed below. Next, MOs will be selected or written. MOs and artifacts must reflect the Maryland SC content standards for the student's grade level and the content and materials used must be age-and grade-appropriate. **Specified reading MOs MUST be aligned with at least two of the science content standards in Grades 5, 8, and 10 listed on pages 1-21 through 1-23. Science alignment must reflect accurate science as found in the Science SC or Core Learning Goals (CLGs), which are based on Benchmarks for Science Literacy: Project 2061 and the National Science Education Standards.**

MOs for Science assessed grades (5, 8 and 10) must be from the specified grade bands. For example, grade 5 can only be assessed on grades 4 and 5 and grade 8 can only be assessed on grades 6, 7 and 8. Grade 10 will assess Biology only.

Reading Content Assessed on Alt-MSA

Standard 1.0: General Reading Processes

A. Phonemic Awareness

B. Phonics

C. Fluency

D. Vocabulary

E. General Reading Comprehension

Standard 2.0: Comprehension of Informational Text

Standard 3.0: Comprehension of Literary Text

Standard 1.0: General Reading Processes

(A) Phonemic Awareness, (B) Phonics, (C) Fluency [sight words only], or Other
If the student does not acquire literacy skills through instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, or sight words, **the TET will select two objectives in another area of reading to replace objectives in these areas** for the Alt-MSA. This information must be documented in the designated area on the Alt-MSA Test Document for Reading and the Table of Contents.

(D) Vocabulary
Grades 5, 8, and 10:   MO #3 or #4 MUST be aligned with science content standard/core learning goal and taught in the context of accurate science (See page 1-21 through 1-23)

(E) General Reading Comprehension

Standard 2.0: Comprehension of Informational Text

Grades 5, 8, and 10:   MO #7 or #8 MUST be aligned with science content standard/core learning goal and taught in the context of accurate science (See page 1-21 through 1-23)

Standard 3.0: Comprehension of Literary Text

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Mathematics Content Assessed on Alt-MSA:

> Algebra, Patterns and Functions

> Geometry

> Measurement

> Data Analysis

> Number Relationships or Computation

Mathematics Content Assessed on Alt-MSA

Test examiners must select two SC Indicators with corresponding SC Objectives from each of the Content Standards or Topics listed below. Next, MOs will be selected or written. MOs and artifacts must reflect the Maryland SC content standards for the student's grade level and the content and materials used must be age-and grade-appropriate. **Specified mathematics MOs MUST be aligned with at least two or more of the science content standards listed on page 1-21 through 1-23. Science alignment must reflect accurate science as found in the research-based SC or Core Learning Goals, which are based on Benchmarks for Science Literacy: Project 2061 and the National Science Education Standards.**

MOs for Science assessed grades (5, 8 and 10) must be from the specified grade bands. For example, grade 5 can only be assessed on grades 4 and 5 and grade 8 can only be assessed on grades 6, 7 and 8. Grade 10 will assess Biology only.

Standard 1.0: Algebra, Patterns, and Functions
Standard 2.0: Knowledge of Geometry
Standard 3.0: Knowledge of Measurement
Grades 5, 8, and 10:   MO #5 or #6 MUST be aligned with science content standard/core learning goal and taught in the context of accurate science (see page 1-21 through 1-23)
Standard 4.0: Knowledge of Statistics (B) Data Analysis
Grades 5, 8, and 10:   MOs #7 AND #8 MUST be aligned with science content standard/core learning goal and taught in the context of accurate science (see page 1-21 through 1-23)
Standard 6.0: Knowledge of Number Relationships or Computation
Standard 7.0: Process of Mathematics
(C) Communication: Present mathematical ideas using words, symbols, visual displays, or technology. Note: MOs will not be written for Process of Mathematics Content Standard. However, students will be scored based on evidence in the artifact that they communicated mathematical ideas. Mathematics objectives which are mastered by the student are assumed to meet the criteria of 7.0 (C), above.

Science Content Assessed on Alt-MSA Grades 5 and 8

Students in Grades 5, 8, and 10 participating in Alt-MSA will be assessed in science, as mandated by NCLB. Test examiners for students in grades 5 and 8 must select one SC Indicator with a corresponding SC Objective from each of the Content Standards listed below. **Grade 5 will assess from grades 4 and 5 highlighted assessment limits found in the SC in the content standard chosen. Grade 8 will assess from grades 6, 7 and 8 assessment limit areas, which are highlighted and found in the SC in the content standard chosen.** Science artifacts must reflect accurate science as found in the SC.

Refer to **http://mdk12.org** for the science SC content standards for grades 5 and 8, and the Core Learning Goals for Biology for grade 10.

Students in grades 5 and 8 are assessed in 5 science content standards: Earth/Space Science, Life Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Environmental Science. Each student will have 10 MOs and their artifacts aligned with science. 5 MOs are selected from the science MO bank, and 2 reading MO's and artifacts (1 vocabulary and 1 informational text) and 3 mathematics MOs and artifacts (1 measurement and 2 data analysis) **must also be aligned with 2 or more different science content areas.** These additional 5 MOs will contribute to the overall Alt-MSA science score. **This alignment with science content must be accurate and specifically stated and evident in the baseline and mastered artifacts**.

For grade 10 science, the skills and processes MOs are included in the Alt-MSA Online MO Bank. For science grades 5 and 8, skills and processes MOs (content standard 1 in the SC) are not included in the online bank, but instead are listed on a spreadsheet on the Resource Center tab of Alt-MSA Online. TEs may submit these as custom MOs using the process outlined in section 3-2 in the handbook. For each skills and processes MO, the artifact must reflect the content area to which it aligns (Earth/Space Science, Life Science, Chemistry, Physics, or Environmental Science) and list the alignment on the artifact (i.e. 2.E.2.b). If the TE chooses to use one of the content examples identified in parentheses in the MO on their artifact, the correct alignment to the content area for each example is listed on the spreadsheet. If a different example is used, it is the responsibility of the TE to be sure it aligns to the listed alignment notation. It is important to note that the content alignment listed on the artifact can backmap to any grade level in the SC and is not bound to highlighted assessment limits. Therefore, the content alignment on a skills and processes artifact can align anywhere within the SC regardless of the skills and processes SC grade alignment.

The artifacts for the 5 additional MOs must align with accurate science content as well as all components of the MOs. **The baseline data artifacts that accompany these 5 mastery objectives must also align with accurate science content**.

Record on these 5 artifacts the alignment with accurate science content as found in the SC and at the appropriate grade. The Science Content Standard label must be listed on the artifact, the grade at which the artifact is aligned and the science standard (earth/space science, life science, chemistry, physics, or environmental science). For example, a grade 5 student: 5.C.3.a Grade 4 Physics.

Consult with local science content specialists and general education teachers to acquire the grade-level curriculum and instructional materials appropriate for students in your grade.

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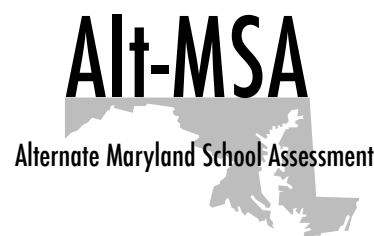
Science Content Assessed on Alt-MSA Grade 5 and 8:

> Earth/Space Science

> Life Science

> Chemistry

> Physics

> Environmental Science

Highlighting on the Science SC indicates the assessment limits used in assessment. **When referring to an assessed area in science, it is important to align the MO to the assessed objective level highlighted.** For example 2.D.1.b

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Science Content Assessed on Alt-MSA Grade 10:

> Structure and Function of Biologically Important Molecules

> Organisms are Composed of Cells

> How Traits are Inherited and Passed on

> The Mechanism of Evolutionary Change

> The Interdependence of Living Organisms and the Biosphere

When developing artifacts, TE's will want to verify that the information in the artifact can be found in the SC at the appropriate grade level and is accurate science. If skills and processes MOs are used, the artifact must state the content standard alignment (i.e. Earth/Space Science, Life Science, Chemistry...) including the topic, indicator, and objective (i.e. 2.a.1.a) the artifact will align to.

Standard 1.0 Skills and Processes (aligned to a content area 2.0 - 6.0)
Standard 2.0: Earth/Space Science
Standard 3.0: Life Science
Standard 4.0: Chemistry
Standard 5.0: Physics
Standard 6.0: Environmental Science

Science Content Assessed on Alt-MSA Grade 10

Test examiners must select or write 5 MOs for Core Learning Goal 3, Biology. MOs and artifacts must reflect the Maryland Core Learning Goals and materials used must be age and grade appropriate. Mastery Objectives selected or written for Core Learning Goal 3 can be from one or more of the Expectation areas listed below.

Grade 10 can access Biology only. The Biology SC can be used to see grades 6-8 life science connection. Each 10th grade student will have 10 science MOs and their artifacts aligned with Biology. 5 MOs are selected from the science MO bank, and 2 reading MOs and their artifacts (1 vocabulary and 1 informational text) and 3 mathematics MOs (1 measurement and 2 data analysis) must also be aligned with Biology. These additional 5 MOs will contribute to the overall Alt-MSA science score. **This alignment must be accurate and specifically stated and evident in the baseline and mastered artifacts**.

The artifacts for the 5 additional MOs must align with accurate Biology science content as well as all components of the MOs. **The baseline data artifacts that accompany these 5 mastery objectives must also align with accurate Biology science content**.

Record on these 5 artifacts the alignment with accurate Biology science content as found in the CLG and at grade 10. The Science Content Standard label must be listed on the artifact. For example, 3.1 Grade 10 Biology.

Consult with local science content specialists and general education teachers to acquire the grade-level curriculum and instructional materials appropriate for students in your grade. When developing artifacts, TE's will want to verify that the information in the artifact can be found in the SC at the appropriate grade level and is accurate science. **If skills and processes MOs are used, the artifact must state the content standard alignment to Biology (i.e. 3.1.5).**

Refer to **http://mdk12.org** for the science content standards for the grades you teach.

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Expectation 1.4: The student will demonstrate that data analysis is a vital aspect of the process of scientific inquiry and communication. (This expectation must be linked to the appropriate Biology expectation.)

Expectation 1.5: The student will use appropriate methods for communicating in writing and orally the processes and results of scientific investigation. (This expectation must be linked to the appropriate Biology expectation.)

Expectation 3.1: The student will be able to explain the correlation between the structure and function of biologically important molecules and their relationship to cell processes.

Expectation 3.2: The student will demonstrate an understanding that all organisms are composed of cells which can function independently or as part of multicellular organisms.

Expectation 3.3: The student will analyze how traits are inherited and passed on from one generation to another.

Expectation 3.4: The student will explain the mechanism of evolutionary change.

Expectation 3.5: The student will investigate the interdependence of diverse living organisms and their interactions with the components of the biosphere.

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This chart summarizes the important dates and activities for Alt-MSA.

Alt-MSA Timeline 2013–2014

[Special Placement Schools are indicated by bold italics]

Date	Task
June 11, 2013	• LACs and AMFs attend MSDE train-the-trainer session on Alt-MSA administration and development of MOs.
June 12, 2013	• *Special Placement School STCs* attend MSDE training on Alt-MSA administration and development of MOs.
June 12, 2013	• LACs and *Special Placement School STCs* place initial order of *Alt-MSA Handbooks* via the PearsonAccess Web site.
July – September 2013	• LACs and AMFs provide training or information sessions in Alt-MSA administration to principals, STCs, and TEs (STCs).
June – July 2013	• LACs and *Special Placements Schools STCs* update *Alt-MSA Online* admin site.
End of July – August 2013	• LACs and *Special Placements Schools STCs* receive *Alt-MSA Handbooks*.
August 2013	• LACs and AMFs and *Special Placement School STCs* attend Alt-MSA MO Bank Training.
September 2013	• LACs and *Special Placement School STCs* submit initial Alt-MSA materials order via PearsonAccess.
September 3, 2013 – February 26, 2014	• Test Window. There will be no extensions of the test window due to adjustments in the school calendar for weather-related closings. Dates of mastery on artifacts must be within the test window.

September 1 – 30, 2013	• Principal, STC, and TE meet to:
	  • identify TEs (teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants) who will form the TET for each participating student. Complete TE form for each student.
	  • identify roles and responsibilities for each member of the TET.
	  • develop an implementation schedule and monitoring plan to assure portfolio completion by March.

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Date	Task
September 1 – October 17, 2013 MSDE: September 13, 2012: Deadline for submitting the full physical (medically fragile) excusal	• Student's TET: • selects reading, mathematics and science indicators and objectives that will be assessed, based on Alt-MSA test results or on a pre- assessment. • completes Alt-MSA Test Documents for reading, mathematics and science (grades 5, 8, 10); selects/writes MOs for each content standard and topic. • submits for principal or designee review of MOs. • sends copy of Alt-MSA Test Documents for reading, mathematics and science (grades 5, 8, 10) to parent/guardian with cover form (see page 7-18). • determine if a student will be considered for the full physical (medically fragile) excusal and complete the IEP Team Checklist (see page 7-21).
October 18, 2013	• Submit Alt-MSA MOs for Reading, Mathematics and Science (grades 5, 8, and 10) for each student participating in Alt-MSA to test contractor for verification (MOs selected from the MO Bank) or technical adequacy review (for MOs which are newly written by the TET).
September – October 2013	• STCs receive portfolios and media.
October 21 – November 15, 2013	• Alt-MSA test contractor reviews newly written MOs (i.e., those MOs not selected directly from the bank) and posts feedback for review no later than November 15, 2013.
December 2, 2013	• List of Rangefinding schools identified.
December 6, 2013	• Last day to write custom MOs or to have MOs unlocked.
January 2014	• LAC and *Special Placement School STCs* submit pretest file for students in grades 3–8 and 10 who will participate in Alt-MSA (combined MSA/Alt-MSA file, submitted to Alt-MSA test contractor's website).
Early February 2014	• Schools receive pre-id labels and return shipping materials. • STCs verify a preprinted student label is available for each Alt-MSA student.
February 14, 2014	• Last day to request preprinted student labels.

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Date	Task
February 26, 2014	• STC collects all Alt-MSA portfolios and unused test materials and packs for pickup from school. • Schools selected for Rangefinding will be notified by MSDE through the LACs in December 2013 to allow sufficient time to complete the portfolios selected for Rangefinding. • Test contractor will pick up Alt-MSA test materials from all schools at the conclusion of the testing window. The specific pick-up schedule will be posted to Docushare and the Resource section of Alt-MSA Online no later than 20 days prior to the end of the testing window. • Last day to print final test documents.
March 2014	• Rangefinding and preparation of scoring guides by MSDE and test contractor.
March – May 2014	• Alt-MSA Portfolios are scored.
June 2014	• Alt-MSA results, home reports, and report to principals sent to central offices. Alt-MSA data is reflected on the Maryland School Report Card online at **http://www.mdreportcard.org**.

Principals, STCs, and TEs Receive Alt-MSA Training

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(JUNE-SEPTEMBER)

Between the beginning of June and end of September, the following Alt-MSA training occurs:

- LACs, AMFs, and Special Placement School STCs attend train-the-trainer sessions conducted by MSDE. (June)

- LACs, AMFs, and Special Placement School STCs attend *Alt-MSA Online* MO Item Bank train-the-trainer sessions conducted by MSDE and Alt-MSA test contractor. (August)

- LACs and AMFs conduct required training sessions for STCs about the Alt-MSA. STCs become familiar with the procedures for the development of the Alt-MSA Portfolio and using *Alt-MSA Online*.

- Principals receive information about the Alt-MSA and their role in ensuring appropriate implementation of Alt-MSA procedures, including *Alt-MSA Online*.

- The STC, LAC, and AMF, or other locally identified staff will provide in-depth training to TEs.

- **All staff members involved in the participating student's instructional program are required to participate in this training.** All of the student's teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants should be members of the Alt-MSA TET. Teachers who are providing home and hospital teaching services for students who are identified as participants in Alt-MSA must also attend training sessions about administering Alt-MSA.

Training is critical to the proper implementation of Alt-MSA. LACs and STCs should get an early start on training principals, STCs, and TEs.

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Code of Ethics

The following code of ethics conforms to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing developed by the American Educational Research Association, the American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education:

> IT IS A BREACH OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO PROVIDE VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL CLUES OF ANSWERS, TEACH ITEMS ON THE TEST, SHARE WRITING PROMPTS, COACH, HINT, OR IN ANY WAY INFLUENCE A STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE DURING THE TESTING SITUATION. A BREACH OF ETHICS MAY RESULT IN INVALIDATION OF TEST RESULTS AND LEA OR MSDE DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

However, it is expected that during the administration of the Alt-MSA, students will receive the prompts, supports, and accommodations that the student typically uses during instruction and other assessments.

The materials used to construct the Alt-MSA portfolio (binder, tabs, forms, etc.) are not secure before they contain student-specific information and student work. However, once the portfolios contain completed artifacts, the portfolios become secure documents and must be treated with the same care as other secure testing materials. As such, **portfolios should be maintained in a secure, locked area when not in use, accessible only to the members of the TET and the STC. Alt-MSA Portfolios must not be taken out of the school building by Test Examiners unless the Test Examiner is a home and hospital teacher.**

> VIOLATION OF SECURITY CAN RESULT IN PROSECUTION AND/OR PENALTIES AS IMPOSED BY THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND/OR STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COMAR 13A.03.04 AND 13A.12.05.

It is assumed that TEs and any others who handle test materials are aware of the consequences of test security violations. (See Certification of Training and Non-disclosure form on page 7-24 of this Handbook.)

Test Irregularities

Test irregularities result from an inappropriate implementation of the Alt-MSA Portfolio procedures. Sanctions for test irregularities for the Alt-MSA will be consistent with those for other Maryland State assessment programs. Examples of test irregularities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- accuracy scores wrongfully reported to indicate mastery,
- artifacts and forms from previous test years submitted for scoring,
- artifacts not completed within the test window, or insertion or organization of portfolios after test window,
- dates on artifacts misrepresented or changed, artifacts falsified, signatures falsified,
- the use of white out or erasures is prohibited on artifacts. If the TE or student makes an error on a artifact, a line should be drawn through the error with the correction written above or to the side of the error. TE must initial correction. **White out and erasures must not be used on artifacts.**

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- students "coached" instead of being provided with the appropriate prompt level to demonstrate their skills,
- portfolios not completed in compliance with Alt-MSA procedures, resulting in improper assessment of a student or a group of students, and
- incomplete portfolios submitted for a group of students or an individual student.
- artifacts reviewed for content alignment, artifact elements, etc. after a student response has been indicated. Once a student's response is indicated, the artifact becomes a secure test document and can no longer be reviewed or changed by school or district personnel. The only exception would be if a test examiner immediately notices an error and follows the guidelines above for corrections.
- dates must be hand written or stamped for all work samples and data charts on the day of the assessment. Accuracy scores must be hand written at the time of the assessment and not typed.
- a TE may not alter a pre-approved artifact. If a TE would like to adapt or make changes to the artifact to meet the assessment needs of an individual student, the TE must use the Microsoft Word version and not the pre-approved artifact with the watermark.

Testing irregularities should be reported by TEs to STCs, and by STCs to the LAC. LACs investigate and report to the State Test Administration and Security Committee as appropriate.

The use of white-out on artifacts, erasures on artifacts (not initialed by the test examiner), or dating an artifact with a date outside of the testing window, on a school closed date, or holiday is considered a testing violation and may result in the invalidation of a student's entire Alt-MSA portfolio for AYP purposes. In addition, the Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC) will receive notification of all such violations as a test security case which will require an investigation and written response to the State Test Security Officer.

Portfolios should not be removed from school premises and must be maintained in a secure, locked area when not in use, accessible only to the members of the TET and the STC. In situations such as Alt-MSA administration to a home and hospital student, the STC must work with the Test Examiner to develop a procedure for maintaining security of the portfolio while it is removed from the school.

Eligible Test Examiners

TETs are comprised of all eligible staff assigned to teach a student. The Alt-MSA is not the instructional and assessment responsibility of one TE. For students assigned to home and hospital instruction, the TET is comprised of the home and hospital teacher and assigned staff from the student's school.

Eligible TEs for the Alt-MSA administration must be state-certified professional school staff and related service providers, long-term substitute teachers, or contractual related-service providers assigned to teach a student participating in Alt-MSA. Instructional assistants may be TEs and must work under the direct supervision of state-certified professional school staff.

FAQ

Q: If a student erases his/her work to make a correction, is this considered an erasure/whiteout offense?

A: It is permissible, within reason, to allow a student to erase their work to make a correction. The TE must initial all changes made to artifacts including student eraser markings. Whiteout must not be used on any artifacts.

TETs are comprised of all eligible staff assigned to teach a student. The Alt-MSA is not the instructional and assessment responsibility of one TE.

Eligible TEs for the Alt-MSA administration must be state-certified professional school staff.

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Non-public schools that do not have Maryland State certified personnel to administer

the Alt-MSA must follow the procedures below.

1. Once the school has developed Mastery Objectives for their students, the MOs must be forwarded to the Home LAC for review and approval.
2. The LAC office in conjunction with the LEA's Special Education Department will review and return an approval sheet to the non-public school.
3. Once the portfolio is complete (near the conclusion of the testing window), the non-public school must ship the portfolio via traceable mail to the LAC office for final review and approval.
4. The LAC sends the portfolio to the vendor for scoring.
5. The Non-Public Schools Review Form is located on page 7-17.

Individuals Not Eligible to Serve as Test Examiners

Individuals who are not eligible to serve as TEs include:

- Non-employees of the LEA (e.g., regular volunteers such as parents, student interns, student teachers or volunteering community members), and
- Non-employees of the LEA who are state-certified teachers and who are not on a substitute list.

Administration Monitoring by MSDE

MSDE will send representatives to schools throughout the state to monitor and observe testing to ensure that standardized-testing procedures are being followed. Schools may not be notified in advance of a monitor's visit. All monitors will follow local procedures for reporting to the school's main office and signing the school's visitor log. Also, monitors will sign non-disclosure forms as requested by the school. Monitors will provide the school with a copy of a memorandum from the Assistant Superintendent for Accountability and Assessment giving authorization to monitor testing.
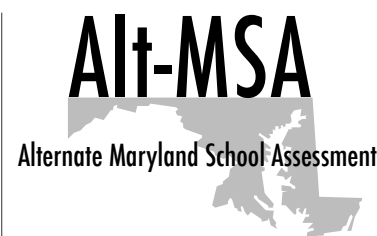
All testing documentation (Test Administration and Certification of Training Forms, Non-Disclosure Agreements, Sign-in sheets from training sessions, and Test Examiner Logs must be retained on file for 6 years after the date of the test administration as specified in COMAR Section 13A.03.04.03.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Local Accountability Coordinator (LAC)

(Note: For Nonpublic Special Placement Schools, the STC will perform the LAC duties listed below and work with the Principal/Education Director and with MSDE's Special Placement Schools Accountability Coordinator, Karla Bressant.)

The LAC in each school system has the following responsibilities:

Date	Task
June–August	• Participate in Alt-MSA training and **Alt-MSA Online** MO and Item Bank training conducted by MSDE and the test contractor and read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*.
June–July	• Review student records in Alt-MSA Online and verify that all students are assigned to the correct grade and school.
June–September	• Provide Alt-MSA training for STCs and information to principals about Alt-MSA requirements, including his or her role and responsibilities. • Ensure that STCs train TETs and TEs appropriately for the Alt-MSA administration. • Ensure that STCs, principals, and TEs have access to the appropriate and necessary materials to complete the assessment (e.g., *Alt-MSA Handbook*, portfolio supplies, etc.).
September–Mid-October	• Monitor development of Test Documents and online submission.
September	• Ensure that the appropriate quantities of Alt-MSA materials are ordered. • If applicable, submit any full physical (medically fragile) excusals to MSDE for review by September 13, 2013
January	• Submit pretest file via PearsonAccess.
September–March	• Provide ongoing training about Alt-MSA to TEs. • Answer questions from schools and TEs regarding the Alt-MSA. • Forward unresolved assessment issues to MSDE. • Ensure that the testing is administered appropriately and within the state-specified timeframe. • LAC works with STC to confirm that each Alt-MSA student has a preprinted student identification label. If additional labels are needed, they must be requested via PearsonAccess **no later than February 14, 2014.**
March	• Ensure that all materials are packed and picked up for scoring as specified in the *Alt-MSA Handbook*.
April	• Submit post-test files.

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LAC's Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24 through 1-26 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

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Principal's
Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24
through 1-26 for
specific Alt-MSA test
administration dates.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Principal

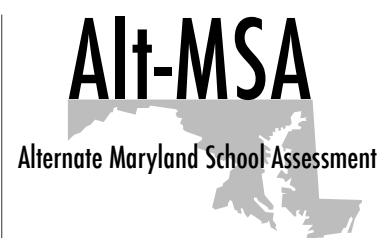*(Note: For Nonpublic Special Placement schools: Principal or Education Director)*

The Principal in each school is responsible for the tasks listed below. The Principal may assign a designee, other than an Alt-MSA TE, to perform these tasks. However, the Principal in each school has the responsibility for ensuring the completion of each task.

Date	Task
June–September	• Assure that Test Examiners participate in *Alt-MSA Handbook* and *Alt-MSA Online* training. • Become familiar with Alt-MSA procedures and requirements. • Establish the TET for each student and sign Test Examiner forms. • Meet with TETs to identify roles and responsibilities (see detailed agenda and forms, on pages 2-2, 2-3, 2-4, 2-5).
September–Mid-October	• Check the selected/written MOs. • Monitor the completion of MOs and ensure online submission of MOs for verification or technical review no later than October 18, 2013 using *Alt-MSA Online* (**http://www.altmsa.com**). • If applicable, sign any full physical (medically fragile) excusal checklist(s).
October–March	• Monitor the portfolio development process and the TET. • Identify incoming students who must participate in Alt-MSA. • Facilitate opportunities for TETs to meet and plan Alt-MSA implementation. • Ensure compliance with test procedures by the TET. • Secure resources and professional development needed for Alt-MSA by the TET.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: School Test Coordinator (STC)

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The STC in each school has the following responsibilities:

Date	Task
June–September	• Participate in *Alt-MSA Handbook* and **Alt-MSA Online** training conducted by the LAC and AMF or other local school system representative and sign Certification of Training Form. • Provide Alt-MSA training for TETs and all TEs and provide **every** TE their own copy of the *Alt-MSA Handbook*. • Meet with Principal and TETs to establish roles and responsibilities. • Read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*. • Order and provide access to necessary assessment materials and arrange for additional materials to be supplied if needed by coordinating with the LAC.
September–Mid-October	• Monitor the development of the Test Documents, review by the principal, and online submission. • Ensure that completed, approved objectives are submitted to the test contractor.
Mid-October–March	• Answer questions from TET, and TEs, and forward to the LAC questions/issues which the STC does not know the proper response. • Identify incoming students who must participate in Alt-MSA. • Send portfolio materials of transferring students to receiving school , as applicable. In addition to transferring the portfolio, the STC should notify the LAC for the receiving school by sending them a copy of the Online Transfer Request form found in Part 7. • Monitor portfolio construction during the testing period and ensure that portfolios are being constructed appropriately throughout the testing period. • Facilitate creation by TETs of videotape artifacts for at least one reading and one mathematics MO for each student portfolio. • Order additional student barcode identification labels for students not on the original pretest file as needed. • STC verifies a preprinted label is available for each student participating in Alt-MSA. If additional labels are needed, they must be requested via PearsonAccess **no later than February 14, 2014.**
March	• Collect completed portfolios from all TEs at the end of testing and apply preprinted student barcode labels to all Alt-MSA student materials. • Pack scorable portfolio materials and unused portfolio materials for shipping in accordance with the timing and instructions provided in the *Alt-MSA Handbook*.

STC's Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24 through 1-26 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

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TET's Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24 through 1-26 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Test Examiner Team (TET)

The TET in each school has the following responsibilities:

Date	Task
June–September	• Participate in *Alt-MSA Handbook* and **Alt-MSA Online** training as conducted by the LAC and AMF, STC, principal or other local school system representative and sign Certification of Training Form. • Read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*. • Meet with principal and TET to establish roles and responsibilities; plan and identify individual TE's responsibilities for the Alt-MSA Portfolios and record on Test Documents.
September–Mid-October	• Select/write appropriate MOs for each student considering the student's performance on the previous year's Alt-MSA MOs (or the pre-assessment results) and the current IEP. • Complete MOs according to the timeline as presented in the *Alt-MSA Handbook*, and submit to the principal the objectives for verification of MOs selected and review of MOs if any are newly written by TET. • Ensure that Test Documents and brochures are sent to Parents/Guardians.
October–March	• Provide guidance and support to TEs in construction of the student Alt-MSA Portfolio. • Coordinate and conduct videotaping of one reading and one mathematics MO artifact for each student. • Identify incoming students who must participate in Alt-MSA. • Give to STC transferring students' in-progress portfolios to be sent to receiving school. • Monitor construction of the Alt-MSA portfolio to ensure that it is being completed on a timely and appropriate basis by each Test Examiner Team member.
February–March	• Invite parent/guardian to review the Alt-MSA Portfolio.
March	• Submit portfolios to STC for packing.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Test Examiner (TE)

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Each TE has the following responsibilities:

Date	Task
June – September	• Participate in *Alt-MSA Handbook* and **Alt-MSA Online** training as conducted by the LAC and AMF, STC, or other local school system representative, and sign Certification of Training Form. • Read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*. • Participate as a member of the TET (special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, e.g., SLP, OT, PT; teachers of students who are visually/hearing impaired, instructional assistants) in selecting/writing, teaching and monitoring Alt-MSA MOs and collecting artifacts and assembling the Alt-MSA Portfolio for each student.
September	• Select/write appropriate MOs for each student considering the student's performance on the previous year's Alt-MSA MOs (or the pre-assessment results) and the current IEP. • Complete MOs according to the timeline as presented in the *Alt-MSA Handbook* and submit the objectives to principal for review.
October 8 – October 18, 2013	• Follow-up with principal to ensure that MOs have been submitted to the test contractor for verification or technical review no later than October 18, 2013.
October	• Ensure that Test Documents and brochures are sent to Parents/Guardians.
September – March	• Collect baseline data artifact for each MO. • Instruct students in reading, mathematics and science MOs. • Collect and assemble student artifacts which demonstrate student's mastery of the selected reading and mathematics objectives. • Conduct videotaping of one reading and one mathematics MO artifact. • Identify incoming students who must participate in Alt-MSA. • Give to STC transferring students' in-progress portfolios to be sent to receiving school. • Involve student in the development of his or her portfolio. • Complete assembly of student Alt-MSA portfolio by close of testing window.
February – March	• Invite and facilitate active parent/guardian participation to review the portfolio.
March	• Submit Alt-MSA portfolio to STC for application of pre-printed barcode labels, packing, and shipment to Test Contractor for scoring.
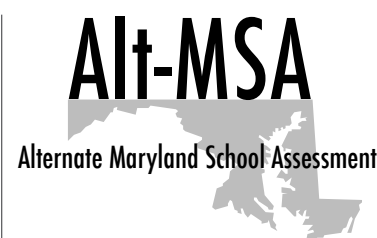
TE's Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24 through 1-26 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

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Instructional Assistant's
Responsiblities

Refer to pages 1-24
through 1-26 for
specific Alt-MSA test
administration dates.

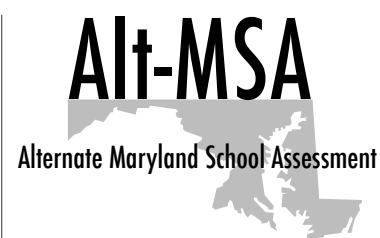## Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Instructional Assistants

Under the supervision of the TEs, instructional assistants participate as members of the TET as follows:

Date	Task
June – September	• Attend training provided by STC and sign Certification of Training Form. • Read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*.
September – October	• Photocopy documents to be included in portfolios.
September – March	• Videotape and audiotape student demonstration of MOs. • Collect baseline data for MOs. • Observe and record data on data collection forms and administer and collect student work of demonstration of MOs. • Provide appropriate instruction and instructional support to student during instruction and assessment.
February – March	• Organize materials, documents, and artifacts and place items in the portfolio, paginate portfolio, and develop Table of Contents. • Send forms to parent/guardian and document contact with parent/guardian.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities in Alt-MSA Testing: Alt-MSA Facilitator (AMF)

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Alternate Maryland School Assessment

The AMF in each school system has the following responsibilities:

Date	Task
June and August	• Participate in *Alt-MSA Handbook* and **Alt-MSA Online** training conducted by MSDE and the test contractor and sign Certification of Training Form. • Read the *Alt-MSA Handbook*.
June – September	• Collaborate with the LAC to plan and implement in-depth training for STCs and TEs and provide information to principals. Multiple training sessions may need to be provided.
September – June	• Attend AMF meetings scheduled by MSDE. • Contact appropriate MSDE staff for answers to questions. • Provide professional development relating to Alt-MSA in local school system.

AMF's Responsibilities

Refer to pages 1-24 through 1-26 for specific Alt-MSA test administration dates.

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