

2.0 Portfolio Assessment Construction & Administration

2.1 Timeline

The Alternate Maryland School Assessment (ALT-MSA) test construction and administration timeline for the current administration is located in Appendix B.

2.2 Contributors

A number of Local Education Agency and school staff members contribute their time and expertise to ensure the success of the ALT-MSA program. A list of these contributors and an overview of their roles and responsibilities relative to the ALT-MSA test construction and administration process are provided below. In addition to students in the public schools, students who are in special placements in non-public settings but supported by public funding also participate in the ALT-MSA. (These special-placement schools are commonly referred to in Maryland as “LEA 24 Schools.”)

Local Accountability Coordinator

- Identifies students participating in ALT-MSA by grade level, submits pre- and posttest files
- Conducts local ALT-MSA training for Principals, School Test Coordinators, and Test Examiners
- Provides every test examiner a complete ALT-MSA Administration Manual, which may not be changed in any manner
- Orders portfolio materials

Principal

- Attends training on ALT-MSA
- Establishes the test examiner team for each student and monitors the portfolio development process
- Ensures compliance with test procedures
- Secures resources needed for ALT-MSA
- Reviews Test Examiner Documents, signs, and forwards to LAC

School Testing Coordinator

- Attends training provided by LAC
- Signs Nondisclosure Agreement form and returns to LAC
- Provides training to Test Examiners
- Collaborates with Principal to implement ALT-MSA
- Ensures that Test Examiners sign Nondisclosure Agreement and keeps the signed forms for three years
- Orders test materials through the LAC
- Inventories the ALT-MSA test materials upon arrival at school and distributes them to test examiners
- Notifies Principal and LAC of any irregularity in test procedures
- Ensures orderly collection and packing of test materials

- Works with Test Examiners to ensure that all eligible students participate in ALT-MSA
- Prepares portfolios for pick up at school by MSDE courier

Test Examiners

- Attends training provided by LAC or School Test Coordinator
- Signs Nondisclosure Agreement form
- Obtains test materials from the School Testing Coordinator and verifies correct quantities
- Notifies Principal and School Testing Coordinator of any test irregularities
- Works with test examiner team to plan and develop the ALT-MSA Portfolios according to stated timelines

Instructional Assistants (Under the supervision of the test examiners)

- Copies documents to be included in portfolios
- Provides appropriate support to student during assessment
- Videotapes and audiotapes student demonstration of mastery objectives
- Observes and records data of student demonstration of mastery objectives

Student

Students participate in the development of their portfolios. It is their assessment of mastery in reading and mathematics skills. The principles of self-determination are critical for students who participate in the ALT-MSA.

Parents/Guardians

Active parent/guardian participation in student learning reinforces the school instructional program. Parents/guardians are invited to review, provide suggestions, ask questions, and consider how the objectives can be applied at home and in the community. Parents are asked to sign and return the cover form and submit examples of their child's demonstration of the mastery objectives.

ALT-MSA Facilitator

- Attends in-depth training provided by MSDE
- Collaborates with the LAC to plan and implement in-depth training for principals, school test coordinators, and test examiners. Multiple training sessions may need to be provided
- Contacts appropriate MSDE staff for answers to questions
- Participates in the state review of the mastery objectives

2.3 ALT-MSA Development and Administration

ALT-MSA Portfolio Planning and Development

Several tasks and activities are conducted each fall prior to administration of the ALT-MSA to ensure that all stakeholders are well trained, informed, and dedicated to the ALT-MSA assessment effort. These activities help to ensure the validity of ALT-MSA assessment results and, to the extent possible, standardize the assessment development

and administration process. The steps in the ALT-MSA planning and development process are outlined below.

1. Attend Training

Principals and school test coordinators attend in-depth training sessions about the ALT-MSA and become thoroughly familiar with the procedures for the development of the ALT-MSA Portfolio.

2. Provide Training

The principal and school test coordinator provide in-depth training to school staff. Any staff member who teaches or is in some way involved in the instruction of a student participating in the ALT-MSA attends this training. A student's teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants may be considered members of his/her assessment team.

3. Meet with Test Examiners

The principal or designee, school test coordinator, teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants who teach students who participate in ALT-MSA meet to identify the test examiner team for each student. It is important to include each student's teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants in the test examiner team. The decisions made by this team determine the content of the student's ALT-MSA Portfolio and components of his/her reading and mathematics instructional programs. Students have more and better opportunities to learn and generalize their learning when selected skills are taught across a student's schedule and in different settings by all the student's teachers, related service providers, and instructional assistants.

4. Meet in Test Examiner Teams

(a) Plan the Pre-assessment

Early each school year, test examiner teams plan and conduct pre-assessments for each student to participate in the ALT-MSA. Students are pre-assessed to determine what indicators and objectives within selected reading and mathematics content standards they have mastered.

To formulate the content for a pre-assessment, the team first reviews the Maryland reading and mathematics content standards. These are available on http://mdk12.org/data/progress/developing/m4w2/pr2/monitoring_templates.html

Next, the test examiner team considers the information they already have about the student's skills by reviewing current formal and informal test results for reading and mathematics.

Then the test examiner team selects and downloads the indicators and objectives of the grade levels for reading and mathematics in which the student is currently being instructed. Since students who are eligible for participation in the ALT-MSA are not learning grade-level indicators and objectives, the pre-assessment typically begins at a grade level considerably lower than the student's chronological age indicates. On these lists of objectives, "M" and the date are recorded next to the objectives that have been mastered by the student. "IP" and the date are recorded next to objectives that are in progress and currently part of the student's instructional program.

Based on the pre-assessment, if it is determined that the student is not yet able to attain the reading and mathematics content standards objectives, the test examiner team conducts a second pre-assessment for access skills. Access skills are underlying skills students need to attain indicators for content standards and functional life skills. For the 2003-2004 ALT-MSA access skills were taught and assessed in the context of reading and mathematics.

(b) Conduct the Pre-assessment

Next, test examiners informally assess appropriate objectives at the selected grade level to determine if other objectives in reading and mathematics have been attained. Next to mastered objectives, "M" and the date of the pre-assessment is recorded. If objectives are part of the student's current instructional program "IP" (in progress) and the date is recorded. If the pre-assessment is constructed using access skills, similar procedures are followed.

The information gleaned from pre-assessment guides the selection of the objectives for the ALT-MSA Portfolio.

(c) Select Indicators and Objectives for the ALT-MSA

Based on the results of the pre-assessment, the test examiner team selects at least one indicator and two objectives from each of five designated content standards within a subject area (or two objectives from each of five access skills). Objectives that the student has not yet mastered are selected by the team to be assessed for the ALT-MSA. Selected indicators and objectives are recorded on the appropriate ALT-MSA test documents.

(d) Write Mastery Objectives

Using the objectives selected and recorded on the ALT-MSA test documents, test examiners write a clear statement of expected mastery for each objective. To be measurable, mastery objectives must include:

- the conditions for performing the skill;
- the observable, measurable response the student is to make; and
- the level of mastery expected (Browder, 2001).

For the ALT-MSA, the criterion for a judgment of "mastered" is 80%.

Mastery objectives are not a repetition of the state objectives. Mastery objectives include (a) the supports the student needs and the stimulus the student will respond to (conditions), and (b) the specific, observable behavior the student is expected to demonstrate in response to the conditions. The student's response must be observable (able to be seen or heard) to be measurable, and be demonstrated with (c) an 80% level of mastery.

5. Review by Principal and Send to LAC

After the ALT-MSA test documents are completed by the test examiner team and reviewed and signed by the principal or designee, a copy is sent to the Local Accountability Coordinator. The LAC then forwards the documents to the MSDE.

6. Review of Mastery Objectives

Each mastery objective submitted for a student is reviewed by the MSDE to ensure it meets the requirements outlined in the TACM, including: alignment to the selected content standard (or access skill), clear specification of performance conditions (e.g., prompts needed), and measurability. To satisfy measurability requirements the mastery objective must elicit an observable/measurable student response. That is, the scorer must be able to see or hear the student response to the stimulus and the response must be able to be converted to a percent of accuracy.

Reviewers use a yellow checklist to examine each mastery objective and indicate areas of concern (i.e., Appendix C). When necessary, hand-written comments or suggestions are also provided. When the review is complete the checklist is sent to the test examiner team so that mastery objectives can be revised as needed. Test examiners include this checklist with the final submitted portfolio.

7. Parent/Guardian Review

The ALT-MSA test documents for reading and mathematics content standards or access skills are shared with the student's parents/guardians. Parents/guardians are invited to review, provide suggestions, ask questions, and consider how they could reinforce the skills to be assessed at home and in the community. They are requested to sign the cover sheet and return it to the school.

8. Provide Instruction and Assess the Objectives

Teachers and test examiners plan for how each objective should be taught and assessed. During this process test examiners consult with general education teachers for ideas about how they teach and assess similar objectives. The general education teachers can provide a curricular context for teaching and assessing the objective. This helps test examiners teach the objectives and select the type of artifacts to be submitted as evidence of mastery.

All students tend to learn new skills more readily when they are taught in an authentic or real-life context. Linking the instruction of reading and mathematics content standards or access skills to other taught or targeted outcome areas will more likely result in student mastery of the reading and mathematics content standard or access skills objectives. Other content areas such as science, social studies, art, music, health, and physical education, and the areas of community, recreation/leisure, career/vocational, and personal management provide students and teachers the real-life, authentic context that will promote learning of reading and mathematics.

All aspects of the ALT-MSA are conducted within the context of the ongoing daily instructional program. The ALT-MSA is a focus for team meetings. Test examiners are not expected or encouraged to take any component of ALT-MSA portfolio development away from the school. The ALT-MSA portfolio is constructed within the context of daily instruction while involving the student, test examiner team members, and the parent/guardian.

Acceptable Evidence of Mastery

For each mastery objective, evidence that indicates the student has mastered the objective is included in the portfolio. For four of the objectives, two in reading and two in mathematics, an artifact that shows the student demonstrating the skill in at least one additional setting other than the classroom is also required.

The different types or categories of artifacts that may be submitted as evidence of mastery are described below. Every artifact must be dated with the month, date, and year and the mastery objective must be stated. If artifacts are not dated, or the mastery objective is not stated they will not be scored and the student will receive “not mastered” for the objective.

- **Student Work**

Student work artifacts are artifacts generated or completed by the student that clearly reflect attainment of the mastery objective and provide direct evidence that the student has mastered the objective. Test examiners are cautioned about submitting worksheets such as an activity sheet from an external source, like a workbook, textbook, or periodical, on which a student is required to recall and repeat information, select a pre-determined response, or provide limited or brief responses (e.g., circle a selection, identify a statement as true/false, fill in a blank). While commercially produced materials may be useful during instruction for the purpose of student practice, it is unlikely that they will completely align with the individualized mastery objectives written by the test examiners for a specific student.

- **Audiotape**

When appropriate, test examiners may provide audiotaped evidence of the student demonstrating the mastery objective. The student must introduce him/herself (or the test examiner may introduce him/her) and the objective being assessed and the date must be stated. If the objective is not stated, the test item on the audiotape is not scored. Audiotapes are scored by rating the

student as “mastered” or “not mastered” based on demonstration of the skill in relation to the mastery objective for the assessed objective.

▪ **Data Charts**

Artifacts that display evidence of instruction over time and document student demonstration of the mastery objective are called data charts. The student name, the objective being assessed and the date must be displayed on each data chart. Data charts are scored by rating the student as “mastered” or “not mastered” based on the recorded demonstration of the skill in relation to the components of the mastery objective for the assessed objective.

▪ **Videotape**

A videotape is a required artifact for the ALT-MSA. Each student must be videotaped demonstrating mastery of at least two objectives, one from a reading content standard or access skill and one from a mathematics content standard or access skill. The videotape is the artifact for these two objectives. Additional objectives may also be videotaped and submitted as evidence of mastery. Videotaped demonstrations of mastery objectives should last no longer than 5-10 minutes for each objective.

For videotaped artifacts, students must introduce themselves (or a test examiner may introduce them) and the objective being assessed and the date must be stated. Videotape artifacts are scored by rating the student as “mastered” or “not mastered” based on demonstration of the skill in relation to the mastery objective.

Parents/guardians are informed that (1) videotapes are required for the ALT-MSA, (2) only scorers who have signed Nondisclosure Agreements will view the videotapes, and (3) the videotapes are secured and destroyed after scoring.

If a parent/guardian states in writing that they will not allow their child to be videotaped, the following procedures must be followed:

1. Three professional staff members must observe the student demonstrate the selected reading and mathematics mastery objectives. One observer may be the student’s primary teacher, another observer may be a member of the professional instructional team who is providing direct service to the student or another teacher, and the third observer must be a district representative not working in the particular school.
2. Each observer records a detailed observation of the entire student performance of the target mastery objectives. All observers must review their written observations for accuracy and completeness to be certain that all observed components of the written mastery objective are included in their observations. Observers print and sign their names at the end of the recorded observations. The student’s name,

grade, school, and mastery objective must be included at the beginning of the observation.

Artifacts that are not scored as evidence of mastery are:

- photographs;
- a narrative description of the student demonstrating the mastery objective; and
- any artifact that does not contain all the components of a written objective as described in this manual.

Students are scored as “not mastered” for the objective if these artifacts are all that is submitted for the given objective.

Eligible Test Examiners

Eligible Test Examiners for the ALT-MSA administration must be state-certified professional school staff and related service providers. Under the supervision of the test examiners, special education instructional assistants who typically provide instruction and support to the assessed student may copy documents to be included in portfolios, provide appropriate support to a student during an assessment, videotape and audiotape student demonstration of mastery objectives, and observe and record data of student demonstration of mastery objectives.

Regular and/or certified staff who are not eligible as Test Examiners include:

- noncertified instructional assistants and aides who are not regular employees of the school district (e.g., student teachers, parents who serve as regular volunteers); and
- state certified teachers who are not regular employees of the school system and who are not on a substitute list.

2.4 Portfolio Organization

The ALT-MSA Portfolio contents are organized into four sections. Samples of all forms that must be included in the ALT-MSA Portfolio can be found in the Test Administration and Coordination Manual (TACM). They are also provided in Appendix D.

Section 1: Student Information

This section includes the list of test examiners for the student. The student writes a letter about his/her learning program and the daily schedule used. If the suggested format is not appropriate for a specific student, the test examiner or student may devise another format that provides similar information. The student should have access to appropriate supports. For the scorers, this serves as a foundation to understand the student’s learning strengths, needs, necessary supports, and instructional program.

Section 2: Parent/Guardian Participation

A test examiner sends a copy of the ALT-MSA Test Documents for Reading and Mathematics or access skills with the cover form to the parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are invited to review, provide suggestions, and consider how they

could reinforce these skills at home and in the community. Parents/guardians are requested to sign the cover form and return it to school.

Parents/guardians are invited to submit examples of their child's demonstration of the mastery objectives. These should be included in the portfolio. Parents/guardians are also asked to review the portfolio before it is submitted for scoring. The test examiner will document the occurrence of this review.

Section 3: Student Mastery of Reading Indicators and Objectives or Access Skills Objectives in the Context of Reading

The first page of this section is the pre-assessment of the selected grade level(s) for the reading content standards, or the access skills, followed by the ALT-MSA Test Document for Reading. The pages that follow this document are the artifacts that are evidence of attainment of the mastery objectives, including a videotape of the student demonstrating mastery of at least one reading objective. For each selected objective within a reading content standard, or access skill, at least one artifact must be included. To be scored, each component of the mastery objective must be clearly evident in the artifact submitted. The objective that is being assessed must be stated on the artifact. Every artifact must be dated (month/day/year), and a page number must be placed on the artifact that corresponds to the same page number in the Table of Contents. More than one artifact for each mastery objective may be submitted. Scorers do not score artifacts that do not clearly correspond to the ALT-MSA Test Examiner Document.

The appropriate columns on the Artifact Entry Form for reading must be completed.

If a written mastery objective is adjusted during the course of instruction, the test examiner must document this on the appropriate Test Document and write a new mastery objective that aligns with the reading objective.

Section 4: Student Mastery of Mathematics Indicators and Objectives or Access Skills Objectives in the Context of Mathematics

The first page of this section is the pre-assessment of the selected grade level(s) for the Mathematics Content Standards, or access skills, followed by the ALT-MSA Test Document for mathematics content standards or access skills. The pages that follow this document are the artifacts that are evidence of attainment of the mastery objectives. This includes the videotape of the student demonstrating mastery of at least one mathematics objective. For each selected objective within a mathematics content standard, or access skill, at least one artifact must be included. To be scored, each component of the mastery objective must be clearly evident in the artifact submitted. The objective that is being assessed must be stated on the artifact. Every artifact must be dated (month/day/year), and a page number must be placed on the artifact that corresponds to the same page number in the Table of Contents. More than one artifact for each mastery objective may be submitted. Scorers do not score artifacts that do not clearly correspond to the ALT-MSA Test Examiner Document.

The appropriate columns on the Artifact Entry Form for mathematics must be completed.

If a written mastery objective is adjusted during the course of instruction, the test examiner must document this and write a new mastery objective that aligns with the mathematics objective.