

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)
and Minnesota State Assessments (MCAs)

	NAEP	MCAs
Purpose	The purpose of NAEP is to provide state and national trend data on student achievement in several subjects. It allows comparisons between states and the nation. The NAEP results are considered the “Nation’s Report Card”.	The purpose of the MCA-IIIs is to measure school and district Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and how well students understand and know MN’s content standards.
Who is tested?	A representative sample of grade 4 and 8 students from each state. Testing is voluntary for students, although districts that accept Title 1 funds must participate if chosen.	All 3-8, and high school students must take the assessments for NCLB.
What is tested?	Reading and Math in grades 4 and 8 every other year, Science in grades 4 and 8 every 4 years, as well as field testing and/or special studies in grades 4, 8 and/or 12 every year in reading, math, science, arts, music, US history and civics.	Math and Reading in grades 3-8, Reading in grade 10 and Math in grade 11. Science in grades 5, 8 and once in high school.
Content Standards Frameworks	The NAEP frameworks have been developed by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) and are not aligned to any particular content standards. A diverse group of stakeholders from across the country were involved in writing these frameworks.	The MCA-IIIs are based on the Minnesota content standards which are written specifically for Minnesota by Minnesota teachers and experts in the field.
Achievement Levels	The NAGB sets the achievement levels and uses Basic, Proficient and Advanced. These levels are independent of any state achievement levels. Proficient on NAEP and MCA-II do not necessarily mean the same thing, as NAEP proficient does not refer to “at grade” performance.	The levels are set by Minnesota and are based on the standards. These levels are used to determine AYP and are specifically “at grade” performance.
About the Assessment	NAEP assessments include multiple-choice, short and extended constructed response questions. Many accommodations are offered for Special Education and English Language Learner students. The assessments are administered by NAEP field staff.	MCA-IIIs include multiple-choice and constructed response questions. Math assessments also include gridded-response in grades 5-8, 11. All students are assessed using accommodations, alternate assessments, or alternate formats as needed.
Data Uses	The President, Congress and state leaders use NAEP results to set education policy. Data is used to compare across states and the nation and make trend comparisons over time. States are neither rewarded nor sanctioned based on NAEP performance.	Schools and Districts use data to improve instruction and evaluate local programs. The state uses data to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress as required by NCLB.
Scoring and Reporting	Results are reported at the state and national level. There are no individual, school or district results.	Results are reported at the individual, school, district and state level.