

computer while the constructed response items are scored by trained scorers.

What does it take to pass the reading and math tests?

There are four ways to pass:

- Have a proficient score on the MCA-II/GRAD
- Have a passing score on the GRAD portion of the MCA-II
- Obtain a waiver (Special Ed or ELL)
- Demonstrate proficiency in other ways

Are the reading and math tests harder than the BSTs?

Yes. The reading and math BSTs were essentially grade 8 tests. The grade 10 reading and grade 11 math MCA-IIs are more difficult than their BST counterparts. The GRAD component of these MCA-IIs measures many of the MCA-II skills plus other essential learning.

What happens if a student doesn't pass?

Students who don't pass the reading or math MCA-II/GRAD will have many future chances to take the GRAD component of the test, most likely on a computer. Students who don't pass the Test of Written Composition in grade 9 will be able to take the test during subsequent years, either during the regular testing window or during retest windows.

Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma

What You Need to Know about the MCA-II/GRAD



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What is the MCA-II/GRAD?

The MCA-II/GRAD is a set of high school tests in reading, mathematics and writing that all students entering 8th grade in 2005-06 or later must pass in order to graduate from a public high school in Minnesota. The MCA-II/GRAD has replaced the BST for these students.

What happened to the Reading and Math BSTs?

The BSTs are still around, but only for students who were in 8th grade in 2004-05 or earlier and still have not passed them. After the 2008-09 school year the test will no longer be used.

What happened to the Writing BST?

This test is also still around, but starting with students in the Class of 2010 it will be first given in grade 9, not grade 10. Its name will change to the Test of Written Composition.

What does GRAD mean?

The GRAD (Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma) is a component of the 10th grade reading MCA-II and the 11th grade mathematics MCA-II. Students in these grades take the MCA-IIs, and in the process are also taking the GRAD component. Students who are not proficient on these tests or who don't pass the GRAD component will retake the GRAD component at a later date.

What's on the MCA-II/GRAD?

These tests measure proficiency on the Minnesota Academic Standards and other essential skills. The Reading test requires students to read a variety of passages and answer multiple choice and constructed

response questions. The Mathematics test requires students to solve a variety of problems and answer multiple choice, gridded, and constructed response questions. The GRAD retests will contain only multiple choice questions.

Which students must take these tests?

With a few exceptions all students starting grade 8 in 2005-06 who want to graduate from a Minnesota high school must take the test. A few Special Education students whose Individual Education Plan waives the requirement do not have to take it. The policy regarding ELL students has not yet been established. Both Special Education and ELL students may take it.

What time of year do students take them?

The MCA-II/GRAD and Test of Written Composition are given during the same testing window that other state tests are given, usually the last two weeks in April and the first week in May. The first group of students to take the MCA-II/GRAD will be the Class of 2010, and they begin with the Test of Written Composition in the spring of 2007.

How can students prepare for the tests?

The best way to prepare for these tests is to take English and math courses that address Minnesota's academic standards. Most schools will also make appropriate educational opportunities available to students who are at risk for not passing these tests. The school counselor or dean is usually the appropriate person to suggest special preparations that may be available in the local school.

How will the tests be scored?

The multiple choice and gridded response items in the Reading and Mathematics tests will be scored by