

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 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 proposed ways to pass:

- Have a proficient score on the MCA-II
- Have a passing score on the GRAD portion of the MCA-II
- Demonstrate proficiency in other ways
- Obtain an individual pass (IEP, 504 Plan, ELL)

The policy will be finalized by the summer of 2007.

Are the reading and mathematics GRAD tests harder than the BSTs?

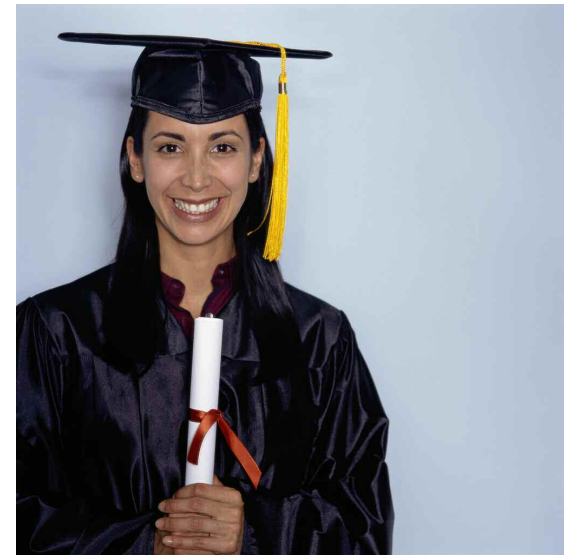
Yes. The BSTs were essentially grade 8 tests. The grade 10 reading and grade 11 mathematics MCA-IIs are more difficult than their BST counterparts. The GRAD component of these MCA-IIs measures many of the MCA-II skills plus other essential learning.

What happens if a student doesn't pass?

Students who don't pass the reading or mathematics 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 sessions. The school counselor is familiar with the options available in your district.

Graduation-Required Assessments for Diploma

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



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October 2006

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. GRAD component of the MCA-II 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 2009-10 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 given to all students in grade 9, not grade 10, under the name "GRAD 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 also take 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?

The No Child Left Behind law (NCLB) requires all students to take the grade 10 reading MCA-II and the grade 11 mathematics MCA-II. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 04) requires all students with disabilities to participate in statewide assessments. For students with a disability, the IEP Team decides whether and how the student participates for accountability and/or graduation: 1) in the MCA-IIs, with or without accommodations, 2) in the GRAD only retests, with or without accommodations and with or without an Individual Passing Score, 3) in the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS) (see the 2006-07 Procedures Manual at <http://education.state.mn.us/mde/static/008419.pdf>.)

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 end of April and the beginning of May. The first group of students to take the MCA-II/GRAD will be the Class of 2010, and they begin with the GRAD 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 mathematics 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.