

MCA-III Mathematics Benchmark Report "How To" Quick Guide

Assessments are designed to provide information about student learning, but there is no single assessment that can provide the full perspective of what a student has learned. These assessments provide one data point that should be considered in the context of additional evidence of student learning.

The MCA-III Benchmark Report is a guidance tool educators can use to learn about performance at the school and district level on each benchmark from the Minnesota Academic Standards. The Minnesota Academic Standards identify the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to learn in each content area by the end of a grade or grade band. These standards are divided into one or more benchmarks which provide details about what students are taught in that content area.

Benchmark performance for Mathematics MCA-III is calculated by comparing students' observed performance on test content aligned to a benchmark to the expected performance of the "Meets" achievement level cut score for a benchmark at the school or district.

Report Considerations

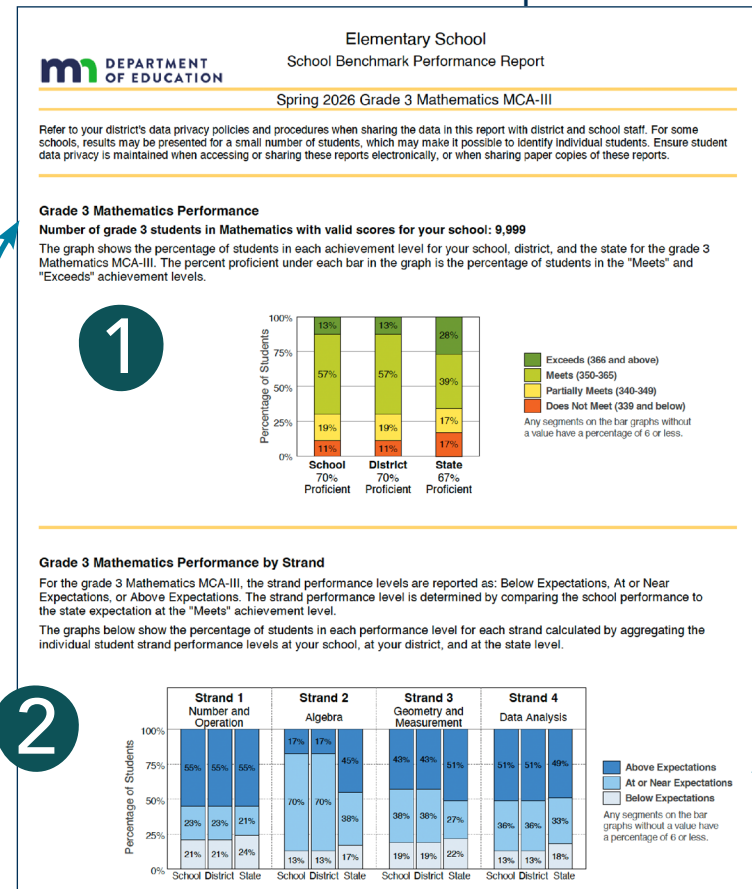
Mathematics MCA-III Benchmark Reports are created by grade at the school and district levels.

The Mathematics MCA-III is an adaptive assessment at the "item" level, meaning test questions (items) are chosen based on the student's responses to the previous items.

- All tests meet the "blueprints" or requirements in the test specifications, which describe how the standards are assessed on the test and in what proportions. However, not all students see items for each benchmark, and other students may see more than one item for the same benchmark.
- Benchmarks not assessed on the MCA-III are noted on the report.

Note: Mathematics MCA-III Benchmark Reports for 2019 and 2021-2026 are available in PearsonAccess Next. Mathematics MCA-III Benchmark Reports for 2022-2026 will be posted to the new ADAM platform in mid-October.

Sections of the Benchmark Report



1. Overall performance, including:
 - The number of students with a valid, reportable score at the organization level for the grade and subject combination of the report.
 - An achievement level bar graph at the school, district, and state level, with the percentage of students at each achievement level.
 - The percent proficient, shown under each bar graph, is the combined percent of students at the "Meets" and "Exceeds" achievement levels.
2. Substrand performance, including:
 - Content area strand names and performance level percentages at the school, district, and state level.
 - Performance level categories include: Below Expectations, At or Near Expectations, and Above Expectations. Expectation is defined as the school's performance on each strand compared to the "Meets" performance level cut score.

Mathematics Benchmark Report		Spring 2026 - Grade 3
Grade 3 Mathematics Performance by Benchmark School performance on each benchmark is compared at the "Meets" achievement level to the expected performance on a benchmark. Performance is calculated by comparing school performance on a benchmark to the expected performance on a benchmark.		
School performance on this benchmark is less than the "Meets" achievement level.	School performance on this benchmark is similar to the "Meets" achievement level.	School performance on this benchmark is greater than the "Meets" achievement level.
Strand 1: Number and Operation Compared to "Meets" Achievement Level Benchmark		
Standard 1 Compare and represent whole numbers up to 100,000 with an emphasis on place value and equality.		
3.1.1	Read, write and represent whole numbers up to 100,000. Representations may include numerals, expressions with operations, words, pictures, number lines, and manipulatives such as bundles of sticks and base 10 blocks.	
3.1.1.2	Use place value to describe whole numbers between 100,000 and 10,000 in terms of ten thousands, thousands, hundreds, tens and ones.	
3.1.1.3	Find 10,000 more or 10,000 less than a given five-digit number. Find 1000 more or 1000 less than a given four- or five-digit number. Find 100 more or 100 less than a given four- or five-digit number.	
3.1.1.4	Round numbers to the nearest 10,000, 1000, 100 and 10. Round up and round down to estimate sums and differences.	
3.1.1.5	Compare and order whole numbers up to 100,000.	

- Benchmark performance description.
 - Three performance symbols specific to the benchmark report are used to represent school or district performance on each benchmark, including less than, similar to, or greater than the "Meets" achievement level.
 - Strand number and title.
 - Minnesota Academic Standards code reference and description
 - Benchmark, performance, benchmark code reference, and description.
- An asterisk (*) indicates there were less than 20 student responses for that benchmark and results are not available.
- For mathematics, the four-digit code (such as, 3.1.1.3) lists, in order, the grade (3), strand (1), standard (1), and benchmark (3).

Note: Refer to the Minnesota Academic Standards for exact formatting of the math benchmarks and examples, as slight adjustments were made to fit the report.

Cautions When Interpreting the Benchmark Report

- For Mathematics MCA-III, the number of items for each benchmark will vary because the test is adaptive at the "item" level.
- The data displayed on the report are based on the student responses to the items from a particular benchmark that were administered to students in a school or district.
- Benchmark performance symbols do not correspond to overall achievement levels for Mathematics MCA-III (Does Not Meet, Partially Meets, Meets, or Exceeds the Standards), and the color/shape of each symbol does not reflect benchmark difficulty.

Minnesota Academic Standards are being revised across all subjects. As standards are revised, new assessments are developed to align with them. The first administration of the new Mathematics MCA/Alt MCA will be in 2027-2028.

Use of the Benchmark Report in Your Classroom, School, or District

The MCA-III Benchmark Reports are an additional resource educators can use to evaluate and compare performance on benchmarks at the school, district, and state levels on the current year's test. Teachers and district staff can use benchmark report data as a starting point for discussions about strengths and gaps in curriculum.

Guiding questions when reviewing and discussing benchmark reports:

- Are the students who completed the assessment representative of the total student population at your school or district?
- Where and how are specific benchmarks taught in a course's scope and sequence?
- What do you notice about the benchmark data? What surprises you?
- How does the data compare with what you saw in the classroom?
- What additional information do you have about student learning of the benchmarks?
- What may be some reasons for the benchmarks that have symbols indicating performance above the "Meets" achievement level?
- What may be some underlying causes for benchmarks below the "Meets" achievement level?
- Are there additional emerging themes in all the information?
- What are your next steps after reviewing your benchmark data?

Additional Resources

View the [Minnesota Academic Standards](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Academic Standards (K-12)).

View the [MCA test specifications](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Test Specifications).

View the [Frameworks for the Minnesota Science & Math Standards](#) (www.scimathmn.org > Minnesota STEM Teacher Center).

View the [Minnesota Questions Tool](#) for released items from MCA test (MDE Testing 1, 2, 3 > Assess > Minnesota Questions Tool).

View [Appendix A: Benchmark Report Calculations Resource](#) in the [Technical Manual for Minnesota's MCA and MTAS Assessments](#) (MDE website > Districts, Schools and Educators > Teaching and Learning > Statewide Testing > Technical Reports > Technical Manual).