

Understanding the 2009-2010 PAAP Standards

Introduction

Students may participate in Maine's State Assessments – the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) for students in grades 2 through 7, the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) Science tests at grades 5 and 8, the Pre-SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) for students in their second year of high school, and the Maine High School Assessment (SAT, Math augmentation, and Science) required for students in their third year of high school – through any of three avenues: standard administration, standard administration with accommodations, or alternate assessment. A team must determine which avenue is appropriate for an individual student. Lists of approved accommodations for each of the assessments may be found in documents on the Maine Department of Education website. The same accommodations may be used for students who are participating in testing through alternate assessment.

Maine Alternate Assessment Standards are designed for planning and implementing the State's alternate assessment, the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP), for NECAP and MEA Science (grades 5 and 8, and 3rd year high school), PSAT/NMSQT, and MHSA. The PAAP is used to allow participation in State assessments for those students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) who need a modified measure of performance because their exceptionality is so significant that it prevents access to the standard assessment, even with a combination of accommodations. The PAAP, like NECAP and MEA Science, PSAT/NMSQT, or MHSA, will provide a snapshot in time of the individual student's performance. A broader picture will emerge as the student results on the PAAP are reviewed along with results on other assessments in and beyond the classroom. The population appropriate for inclusion in this alternate avenue to assessment is made up of those students with IEPs who have significant cognitive disabilities. The results of the alternate assessment will serve as the basis for reporting under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act for the student participants.

The PAAP is a portfolio assessment that assesses students in Reading and Mathematics at grades 2 through 7, 2nd year high school, and 3rd year high school; Writing at grades 4, 7, and 3rd year high school; and Science at grades 5, 8, and 3rd year high school. The administration window for the PAAP is the first week of December through the first week of May. Local teachers select tasks from the online PAAP task bank based on the student's individual learning program. The five-month administration window provides opportunities for instruction to be embedded in the student's daily work over the course of the school year then assessed using PAAP tasks.

Maine's Alternate Assessment Standards for 2009-2010 are written on a continuum of Levels of Complexity (LoC). The LoC's for Science are linked to

Maine's Accountability Standards (Chapter 131) for grades 5, 8, and high school, whereas the LoC's for Reading, Writing, and Mathematics are linked to the NECAP Grade-Level Expectations for grades 2 through 7 and high school. The LoC descriptors, which represent a learning continuum, are written with the high school performance standards and developmentally backed down to ensure access to instruction and assessment for all students.

The Maine Alternate Assessment Standards provide a common basis for the planning and assessment of standards-related instruction and assessment in a system that allows students to work on the Content Standards, LoC descriptors, and tasks best suited to their individual needs. PAAP tasks can be found in the PAAP Task Bank, online at www.mecas.org/paap/taskbank; all tasks submitted in 2009-2010 must come from this source. Tasks within the Task Bank are aligned with the Maine Alternate Assessment Standards, Levels of Complexity 1–8. Students working above the grade-appropriate LoC should participate in the State assessment for their grade-level placement with appropriate accommodations.

Format of the PAAP Standards

Maine's Alternate Assessment Standards are formatted by Content Area, Content Standard, and LoC descriptor. There are three Content Area sections that are color coded: 1) Reading & Writing (yellow); 2) Mathematics (blue); and 3) Science (green). White pages within each color-coded section include standards for which tasks are NOT available for assessment in 2009-10. Please note that there will be no matching tasks in the Task Bank for the standards on white pages. However, they are available for instructional purposes and future planning. The intent is to provide tasks for these standards in the future. At the top of each page, there is a header with the Content Area, Content Standard, and Performance Indicator/Grade-Level Expectation (as written in Maine's Accountability Standards, Chapter 131 or NECAP Grade-Level Expectations) along with a letter-number to indicate the Alternate Assessment Standard. The student expectations for that Content Standard, as defined in Maine's Accountability Standards, Chapter 131 or NECAP Grade-Level Expectations, are written in italics below the Content Standard.

The header of each page is followed by a four-column table. The fourth column, Level of Complexity 4 and 8, is directly linked to the end-of-grade-span Performance Indicators for the Content Standard in measurable form. Performance Indicator descriptors are backed down developmentally as the Level of Complexity rows are read from right to left (starting at LoC 8 and working backward to LoC 1). The descriptor for each Level of Complexity provides measurable targets for specific Performance Indicators. The developmental Levels of Complexity (LoC) provide a continuum of cognitive demand from Level of Complexity 1, the access point for each Performance Indicator, to Level of Complexity 8. At the top of each column within each Level of Complexity, the grade levels appropriate for participation are identified. The Maine Alternate

Assessment Standards for the PAAP can be found online at www.mecas.org/paap/rubrics.

Since all students must be involved in general curriculum, teachers are asked to plan instruction aligned to the PAAP Level of Complexity descriptor for each Content Standard and Performance Indicator selected as appropriate for inclusion in a student's instructional program (i.e., IEP). Assessment of the student's related knowledge and/or skills using downloaded PAAP tasks aligned to that Level of Complexity descriptor should be completed following delivery of the planned instruction. The completed tasks, along with the accompanying forms required, will make up the student work that serves as the contents of the PAAP.

Acronyms

CS – Content Standard: Maine's Alternate Assessment Content Standards are designed to encourage the highest achievement of every student, by defining the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students should acquire at each LoC. Within the standards document, each Content Standard is assigned a letter for organizational purposes (e.g., Reading Content Standard A).

GLEs – Grade Level Expectations: What all students should know and be able to do at the end of a given grade level.

LoC – Levels of Complexity: Continuum of complexity descriptors, of which there are eight within each standard.

Maine's Accountability Standards, Chapter 131: Identifies the knowledge and skills essential to prepare Maine students for work, for higher education, for citizenship, and for personal fulfillment. This document defines only the core elements of education that should apply to all students without regard to their specific career and academic plans.

MEA – Maine Educational Assessment: Science assessment required of students in grades 5 and 8.

MHSA – Maine High School Assessment: Assessment required of students in their third year of high school.

NECAP – New England Common Assessment Program: Assessment program required for students in grades 2 through 7.

PAAP – Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio: Maine's alternate assessment program for students with significant cognitive disabilities and who therefore cannot participate with accommodations in the general assessment in Maine.

PI – Performance Indicator: For Maine's Alternate Assessment Standards, a Performance Indicator is the number assigned within a content standard (e.g., A1) for organizational purposes.

