



2008-09 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT TO THE ME A GRADES 3-8

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act mandates that all students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 be included in state assessments. In addition, Maine *Learning Results* legislation requires that all students be included in a state assessment at the fourth and eighth grade levels. All students in Maine will participate in these state level assessments through one of three avenues: standard administration, administration with accommodations, and/or through alternate assessment. The 2008-09 Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) measures Maine Department of Education Regulation 131: The Maine Federal, State, and Local Accountability Standards at all grades 3-8. Legal requirements for students identified for federally funded programs have been taken into account in the development of this document.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE ME A

An accommodation is a change in the way an assessment is given or taken that does not alter what is being measured. These policies and procedures for accommodations are designed so that students with unique learning needs have a fair opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do on the ME A. All Maine students participating in state assessments required under the NCLB Act have access to the same accommodations, regardless of grade level.

PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINATION OF NEED FOR ACCOMMODATION

Students who may be considered for accommodations include, but are not limited to, those who are ill or incapacitated in some way, who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), who have an identified disability under IDEIA-2004, who are identified as having disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or for whom classroom accommodations are necessary on a daily basis to measure academic achievement.

All students being considered for accommodations on the ME A must have their individual situations reviewed annually by a team prior to the time of assessment. This team should include at least one of the student's teachers, the building principal, related services personnel, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and, whenever possible, the student. If it is not possible for the parent and student to attend the meeting, they should be consulted regarding the committee's recommendations for accommodations prior to the time of the assessment.

For a student who has an Individual Educational Program (IEP), schools are required to address needed accommodations at an IEP Team meeting. Membership for this meeting is prescribed in Maine Unified Special Education Regulations, Chapter 101, May 16, 2008, which is located at: <http://mainegov-images.informe.org/education/speced/rules/07regs.pdf>.

For an LEP/ELL student, schools should address needed accommodations at a Language Acquisition Committee meeting. Membership for this committee is prescribed in the School Administrative Unit's School Board-adopted *Lau Plan*.

Recommended accommodations should be consistent with accommodations already being employed in the student’s instructional program, with the exception of unforeseen circumstances such as those described below. Any accommodations recommended for a student will be reflected in a statement in the cumulative folder of the student (in the IEP for a student with an identified disability under IDEIA-2004). See the section on documentation for a suggested format.

Under unforeseen circumstances, the use of approved accommodations may be allowed for a student who does not generally receive them in the classroom (e.g., broken arm preventing handwritten responses, extreme emotional response to test situation). In such instances, a team decision and documentation is still required. Parents should be notified of the approved accommodations.

ADMINISTRATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

School personnel identified to administer test accommodations, must be trained locally as part of preparation for test administration. They must be familiar with all allowed accommodations and related details as found at the end of this section.

DOCUMENTATION OF ACCOMMODATIONS

At the time of MEA testing, coding of accommodations provided for students by content area(s) should be documented in the students’ MEA answer booklets in accordance with directions in the MEA test coordinator and test administrator manuals. This information is to be coded in by staff - not students - **after** testing is completed. Information for students identified as SPED, LEP/ELL, or 504 should be documented in the school’s MEDMS system.

As stated earlier, any accommodations made for a student and the justifications for these choices must also be reflected in a statement in the cumulative folder of the student (in the IEP for a student with an identified disability).

The following is sample documentation.

* Refer to the following two pages of this document for the allowable accommodation codes T, S, P, R, O.

** Assessed only at grades 5 and 8.

Section	Justification for Accommodation	Accommodation Code*
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small group to minimize distractions for student and others</i> • <i>Human reader for questions and answer choices only (not allowed for passages) to prevent low reading levels from interfering with understanding of the reading items</i> 	P2, P3
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small group to minimize distractions for student and others</i> • <i>Human reader to prevent low reading levels from interfering with demonstration of math skills and knowledge</i> 	P2, P3
Science **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Small group to minimize distractions for student and others</i> • <i>Human reader to prevent low reading levels from interfering with demonstration of science skills and knowledge</i> 	P2, P3

REPORTING STUDENTS’ SCORES

All students will be included in the school’s accountability system, and their scores will be included in the state assessment reports, regardless of the avenue of participation (standard administration, administration with accommodations, or alternate assessment).

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All accommodations used must:

- ◆ *not change what is being measured,*
- ◆ *be approved for individual students by a team, and*
- ◆ *be a regular part of the student's daily instructional program.*

Code	Accommodations Category	Details on Delivery of Accommodations
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T. TIMING Tests were administered:

T1.	with time extended beyond standard administration (same day).	Extended time may be needed by students who are unable to meet time constraints, are easily fatigued, or unable to concentrate for the length of time allotted for test completion. Testing may be extended until student can no longer sustain the activity.
T2.	with time extended beyond standard administration (several days) within the MEA test administration window.	
T3.	with multiple or frequent breaks.	Multiple or frequent breaks may be required by students whose attention span, distractibility, or physical condition, require shorter working periods.
T4.	at a time of day or a day of the week most beneficial to the student.	Individual scheduling may be used for students whose school performance is noticeably affected by the time of day or day of the school week on which it is done.
T5.	using flexibility in the order in which content area tests are given.	Flexibility in the order of presentation may be used, for example, to build confidence in the student by testing those content areas in which they are strongest first, or to alleviate concerns by allowing them to complete the content area about which they are most apprehensive first.

S. SETTING Tests were administered:

S1.	in school site other than regular classroom.	Students may be tested in an alternative site to reduce distractions for themselves or others, or to increase physical access to special equipment.
S2.	in out-of-school setting by trained school personnel. (Parents may not be used.)	Out-of-school testing may be used for students who are hospitalized or tutored because they are unable to attend school.

P. PRESENTATION Tests were administered:

P1.	individually.	Individual or small group testing may be used to minimize distractions for students whose test is administered out of the classroom or so that others will not be distracted by accommodations being used (ex., dictation).
P2.	in a small group.	
P3.	using a human reader (<i>NOT allowed for reading passages</i>).	A human reader may be used for a student whose inability to read would hinder performance in Mathematics and/or Science. For the Reading sessions of the assessment, a human reader may be used only for questions/answer choices and directions, not for the reading passages. Words must be read as written. No translations or explanations are allowed.
P4.	using sign language (<i>NOT allowed for reading passages or content related vocabulary</i>).	Trained personnel may use sign language to administer the test. For reading sessions, sign language may be used only for directions and most questions/answer choices, not for reading passages. Questions/answer choices assessing vocabulary in any content area may NOT be signed.
P5.	with opportunity for student to move, stand, and/or pace during assessment.	This opportunity may be used in a setting other than the classroom for a student who cannot focus when seated for sustained periods of time.
P6.	using alternative or assistive technology that is part of the student's communication system.	The test may be presented through his/her regular communication system to a student who uses alternative and assistive technology on a daily basis. Technology may not be used to read the reading passages for the student.
P7.	by school personnel known to the student other than the student's classroom teacher (e.g., ESL, Title I, Special Education).	The test administrator may be a member of the staff who works with the student from time-to-time or on a daily basis, but is not the student's regular teacher for general curriculum.
P8.	using large print version of assessment.	Both large print and Braille versions of the assessment require special processing. Directions for ordering these materials will be included in communications sent to school principals prior to the test.
P9.	using Braille version of assessment.	
P10.	with LEP/ELL student use of a word-to-word bilingual dictionary as needed.	The student may have a word for word dictionary available for individual use as needed. A word for word dictionary is one that does not include any definitions. Dictionaries used must be among those listed at http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/admininfo.htm .

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Code	Accommodations Category	Details on Delivery of Accommodations
P11.	using simplified English for non-content specific terms for an LEP/ELL student in a manner that does not compromise test integrity.	Simplification of content specific terms (ex., congruent or parallel in mathematics; setting or character in reading) is NOT allowed in any part of a test session. Such simplification would change what is being measured. The content-specific vocabulary list can be found at http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/admininfo.htm .
R. RESPONSE Tests were administered:		
R1.	using a scribe or recording device.	The student may dictate answers to locally trained personnel or record oral answers in an individual setting so that other students will not benefit by hearing answers or be otherwise disturbed. Recorded answers must be scribed prior to the return of test materials.
R2.	using alternative or assistive technology/devices that are part of the student's communication system (<i>except text reading devices for Reading passages</i>).	The technology is used to permit the student to read and/or respond to the test. In addition to computers, such devices might include, for example, text enlargers, speech-to-text, amplification devices, Dynaboxes, Alpha-Smart, electronic dictionaries and translation programs for LEP/ELL students, etc. Use of web-based technology is not permitted.
R3.	other assistive devices.	To enable a student to organize thinking, focus, and/or use a device that serves as a specific strategy related to a test item, other assistive devices may be used. They might include such things as templates, graphic organizers, arithmetic tables (<i>only in the calculator allowed session of the Mathematics test</i>), an abacus (<i>for visually impaired only</i>), noise buffers, place markers, carrels, etc.
R4.	with student use of a word processor.	A student may use a word processor for constructed-response items. Access to the Web is not allowed at any time during testing.
R5.	with student use of a braille.	A student may use a braillewriter, a slate and stylus, and/or an electronic braille to respond to questions. Responses would need to be submitted in standard format by a scribe.
R6.	with student use of visual aids.	Visual aids include any optical or non-optical devices used to enhance visual capability. Examples include magnifiers, special lighting, markers, filters, large-spaced paper, color overlays, etc.
R7.	with LEP/ELL student use of a word-to-word bilingual dictionary as needed.	The student may have a word for word dictionary available for individual use as needed. A word for word dictionary is one that does not include any definitions. Dictionaries used must be among those listed at http://www.maine.gov/education/mea/admininfo.htm .
R8.	using administrator verification of student understanding following the reading of test directions.	After <u>directions</u> have been read, the test administrator may ask the student what he/she has been asked to do. If directions have been misunderstood by the student, <u>the directions may</u> be paraphrased or demonstrated. Test <u>items may not</u> be paraphrased or explained.
R9.	using side-by-side placement of two test booklets.	All responses must be recorded in a single test booklet (gr. 3 only) or answer booklet. This accommodation is designed to allow students to see all sections related to the same item at the same time, regardless of the booklet configuration.
R10.	using test administrator to rewrite word for word those portions of a written student response that are illegible.	Test administrator may rewrite an illegible student response word for word in a legible format immediately above the student's words inside the answer box prior to return of test materials. The rewrite may contain no changes in content or mechanics from the student answer.
O. OTHER		
O1.	Accommodations needed by student that are not on the MEA Approved Accommodations list.	<p>MUST BE DOCUMENTED AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN ADVANCE</p> <p>Contact Susan Smith, MEA Coordinator susan.smith@maine.gov 207- 624-6775</p>

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS IN ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT TO THE MEA GRADES 3-8

The very few students who will require an alternate assessment are the students needing a measure of academic performance in a content area that is modified to the point that what is being measured is changed. Such students require extensive modifications because their exceptionality is so significant that it does not allow access to the standard assessment even with a combination of accommodations. Every effort must be made to assess students through standard administration or through administration with accommodations. (Refer to the previous section of this document for further guidance on accommodations.)

The United States Department of Education approved Maine's request to allow a return to the use of "partial PAAPS", which was rejected during the federal Peer Review process. This change will allow decisions regarding the appropriate avenue for student participation in 2008-2009 state assessments to be made **by content area**. For example, a student may participate in the PAAP for Reading and in the MEA with accommodations for Mathematics.

Maine's alternate assessment at grades 3 through 8 is the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP). Tasks designed for use in the PAAP are available at www.mecas.org/paap/taskbank. The PAAP assesses the same content areas as the MEA at grades 3 through 8. Students must be assessed in all content areas included in the MEA, but may participate through any combination of administrative avenues.

PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINATION OF NEED FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

Students who may be considered for alternate assessment include only those special education students who have an identified significant or profound disability under IDEIA-2004. Federal guidelines suggest that only 8% or 9% of all special education students within the test population are appropriate for participation through alternate assessment.

All students being considered for alternate assessment must have their individual situations reviewed annually by an IEP team prior to the time of assessment, allowing sufficient time for components of the PAAP to be administered throughout the school year. This team should include at least one of the student's teachers, the building principal, related services personnel, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and, whenever possible, the student, as prescribed in Maine Unified Special Education Regulation, Chapter 101, May 16, 2008, located at: <http://www.maine.gov/education/speced/rules/07regs.rtf>. If it is not possible for the parent and student to attend the meeting, they should be consulted regarding the committee's recommendations. The PAAP, made up of student work gathered throughout the year, will be submitted on March 25, 2009.

The recommendation for a student to take an alternate assessment will be reflected in the student's IEP.

ADMINISTRATION OF ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

Locally trained school personnel should administer PAAPs in accordance with Maine's 2008-09 Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP) Training Manual, available at <http://www.mecas.org/paap/manual>. Schools that have students requiring alternate assessments who are in out-of-school in-state placements must ensure that all information regarding the administration and submission of PAAPs is forwarded to the students' schools/programs.

DOCUMENTATION OF ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

All student level data, including name, grade level, birth date, and disability code for those participating in the PAAP must be documented in the local and MEDMS data systems. The justification for the decision to have a student participate in the MEA through alternate assessment must also be reflected in a statement in the student's IEP.

Note: Guidance on PAAP development, content, and scoring is available through a series of regional workshops. For details, please refer to the DOE web site at <http://www.mecas.org/paap/updates>.

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT SCORING AND REPORTING OF STUDENT SCORES

The assessment contractor will arrange for pickup of completed PAAPs from Maine schools on March 25, 2009. PAAPs received after March 30, 2009 **will not be scored** and the students for whom a late alternate assessment is submitted will be counted as non-participants in the MEA. All student PAAP score reports will be sent to schools following alternate assessment standard setting in the summer of 2009.

Contact Kim Schroeter, Alternate Assessment Coordinator, at 624-6774 or kimberly.schroeter@maine.gov.