Welcome to the 2020 Special Considerations Request module found in the NEO portal under Maine Educational Assessments
A Special Consideration is a request for a student to be exempt from participation in a required Maine Educational Assessments (MEA) for medical reasons.

Special Consideration requests must be submitted within the open assessment window of each specific applicable Maine Educational Assessments (MEA) assessment window.

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Special Consideration requests must be submitted within the open assessment window of each specific applicable MEA as shown on next slide.
## Assessments and Administration Windows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Assessment Window</th>
<th>Special Consideration Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS for ELLS &amp; Alternate</td>
<td>1/6/20 – 2/28/20</td>
<td>2/28/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eMPowerME</td>
<td>3/16/20 – 4/10/20</td>
<td>4/10/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science High School</td>
<td>3/30/20 – 4/10/20</td>
<td>4/10/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAT</td>
<td>4/14/20 and m/u 4/28/20</td>
<td>4/28/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSAA</td>
<td>3/16/20 – 5/1/20</td>
<td>5/1/20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*SAT Special Considerations requests can be made from 3/31/20 – 4/28/20.

For all assessments with the exception of the *SAT, the window for requesting Special Considerations is based on the corresponding dates the assessment is open.

As the high school Math and ELA/Literacy SAT assessment is one day April 14, 2020 for school-day, and one day for make-up April 28, the Special Consideration module will be open for SAT requests from March 31 through April 28, 2020.
Students receiving academic instruction in grades 3-8 and 3rd year of high school must participate in a state assessment.

In rare instances, a student is unable to participate in either instruction or assessment. In these cases, a request for Maine DOE approval of non-participation, a Special Consideration, in the MEA must be requested.

Absence due to behavior issues, suspensions, and truancy does not meet the definition of a medical emergency, and therefore is not eligibility criteria for a Special Consideration exemption request.
Special Consideration requests must be based on a decision made by an educational team that may include the following, as appropriate:

- The student’s teachers, English as a Second Language endorsed educator, school counselor, principal, parent or legal guardian, and, if possible, the student.

This educational team collects and reviews information, and documents the decision to make a request.
Criteria for Exemption: Medical Emergency Only

- This includes long-term hospitalization without access to academics, severe trauma, mental health crisis (student is in danger to self or others), or placement in hospice care.

- A Medical Emergency may also include medically fragile students that are not able to participate in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment due to a debilitating disease.
• Consider all 504 or Special Education Accommodations that may be used such as:
  – Paper version request
  – Extended time
  – Multiple assessment sessions
  – Scribe
  – Complete assessment in an alternate setting

• Be familiar with the supports that are available within the assessment system.
Parental Consent

Parental Consent is a criteria of Special Considerations. This is an important part of the request, especially as medical documentation is required for the request.

Principals may access a copy of the Parental Request within the module. This consent form is to be placed in the student’s cumulative file.

Parents are a necessary part of the request for exemption. If parents do not agree that their student be exempt from testing, the student will participate in the MEA.

Parents must also be aware that a medical document is required that contains student’s private information. Parents should be reassured that this information will be viewed by the DOE Special Consideration committee only.

This document is available within the Maine Educational Assessments module and will be displayed as we go through this training. Please print the consent form for parent signature and place the form in the student’s cumulative file for future reference as to why a student will not have a 2020 MEA student report.
When you have completed your request, go back to the welcome page to find your District Summary or school requests. In the *Navigation column you will find *View Request/Consent Form.

The Consent form tab provides the option to open or download a prepopulated Parent Consent Signature Form. This form must be signed by parents/guardians and kept on file at the school. Please do not send the consent form to Maine DOE.
Principals are authorized to submit Special Consideration requests and must have login credentials to the NEO Maine Educational Assessments module. If a Principal does not have login credentials, contact the MEDMS.helpdesk@maine.gov or 624-6896.

Once NEO portal/MEA module login credentials are obtained, log into the NEO portal at the URL on the top of the slide.
Accessing a Special Consideration Request

- Select “Maine Educational Assessments”

Welcome

Please select an item in the menubar to access the corresponding NEO module.

Your dashboard may look different, depending on how many modules you have been given access/permission to. Select *Maine Educational Assessments which is the module for Special Considerations.
This opens an MEA Special Consideration Message with an overview of the process and contact information. The criteria needed to apply for an exemption is stated here.
Assessment Specific Contacts

• General Assessments (eMPowerME, SAT & MEA Science)
  Nancy Godfrey at 207 624-6775

• Alternate Assessments (MSAA & SAA) and ACCESS for ELLs & Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
  Interim Contact Regina Lewis at 207 624-6715

• Chief of Learning Systems
  Janette Kirk at 207 624-6707

Additionally on this welcome page you will see a list of each individual DOE MEA assessment coordinators for any questions about special considerations.
The bottom of the welcome page provides three direct links.

The first *Click Here takes you to the MECAS assessment home page.

The second *Click Here takes you to summaries of submitted requests and we will review that later.

The third *Click Here takes to a new Special Consideration request.
One page
Self populates with student SSID #
Signifies Alternate Assessments when appropriate
Requests are only available during the assessment windows
Allows for partial requests

When you select to enter a new request, this one page request self populates with student, school and district information when a student’s SSID number is entered in section one.

A student’s enrollment information regarding participation in an alternate assessment is provided to assist you in your request for an exemption of a specific alternate assessment. Only students with a Y, or a yes are available for an alternate assessment choice.
Section 1 is Student Information:
By entering the State Student ID number in the *blank box shown in the upper screenshot, the student’s name and grade will self populate.

Before proceeding, make sure this information is correct. The lower screenshot shows by entering this student’s SSID number it prepopulated student *Adam SampleStudent-Ten, enrolled as a 12th grader, and is not an alternate assessment taker shown by the *N for no.
Section 2 is Enrollment Information:

If section 2.0 does not self populate after entering SSID number in Section 1.0, the student enrollment may not be correct in Synergy. Check your enrollment data and/or contact MEDMS.helpdesk@maine.gov or 624-6896.

Next, we will describe 3 scenarios of different enrollment examples.
This slide shows scenario 1 as the sample student has one enrollment that is both the responsible SAU as well as the attending SAU.

2.1 *Responsible district is Maine Public Schools

2.2 *Attending district in this case is the same as the responsible SAU; Maine Public Schools / MPS High School

2.3 *Primary Contact at Maine Public Schools / MPS High School is Sally Smith
Scenario 2 has a responsible district/school enrollment with concurrent/secondary enrollment at a Special Purpose Private School, or SPPS.

2.1 *Responsible district is Winthrop Public Schools

2.2 If the student were attending a school in the Winthrop Public Schools, he/she would be attending the primary *Winthrop High School. Instead, this student has a secondary/concurrent placement at *SPPS Spurwink School in Chelsea.

2.3 Shows both Primary Contacts at *Winthrop as well as *Spurwink.
Scenario 3 shows Responsible SAU A – Attending SAU B – Concurrent SPPS C

2.1 *Responsible district is RSU 12

2.2 Although RSU 12 is the responsible SAU, the student is sent to *Augusta Public Schools/Cony High School as the primary attending SAU in addition to having a secondary/concurrent placement at SPPS *Spurwink School in Chelsea.

2.3 Shows both Primary Contacts at *Augusta Public Schools as well as *Spurwink.
Section 3 is the Assessment

Choose the assessment you are requesting an exemption from. Only assessments that are open at the time you login will populate as you can only submit requests while that specific assessment window is open. The Math/ELA high school assessment SAT is the only exception because it is a one-day test on April 14th. Therefore requests for SAT exemption open 2 weeks prior on March 31st through the SAT make-up date April 28th. All available assessments are listed in section 3. If requesting multiple assessment exemptions, such as 5th grade eMPowerME and MEA Science, you must submit two separate requests as you cannot check two boxes in the portal at the same time.
3.0 Assessment

- English Language Proficiency ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 - Grades K-12 (01/06/20 - 02/28/20)
- English Language Proficiency Alternate ACCESS - Grades 1-12 (01/06/20 - 02/28/20)
- Science Alternate Assessment – SAA- Grades 5, 8 and 3rd year high school (04/06/20 - 05/22/20)
- Mathematics & ELA Literacy Multi-State Alternate Assessment - MSAA - Grades 3-8 (03/16/20 - 05/01/20)
- Mathematics & ELA/Literacy – eMPowerME - Grades 3-8 (03/16/20 - 04/10/20)
- Science MEA H.S. - 3rd year high school (03/30/30 - 04/10/20)
- Science MEA – Grades 5 & 8 (04/27/20 – 05/08/20) (04/14/20)
- Mathematics & ELA/Literacy – SAT H.S. - 3rd year high school SAT Make up (04/28/20)

All MEA assessments that are currently available for request will appear. Please note the different dates that each assessment is available for request, not just the assessment window. The opportunity for submission ends with the close of that particular assessment window.

For example a Special Consideration request for *grades 5 and 8 MEA Science must be made between *April 27th and May 8th as these are the assessment window dates for this assessment. You can only click ONE assessment box. If making requests for more than 1 assessment, you must start a new request.
Partial requests may be made for *Math and ELA/Literacy assessments for both eMPowerME and it’s alternate, MSAA.

As shown on this slide, eMPowerME is listed 3 times to:
- Request *Mathematics only
- Request *ELA/Literacy only, or
- Request both *Math and ELA/Literacy

Alternate Math & ELA/Literacy MSAA is also listed 3 times:
- Request *Mathematics only
- Request *ELA/Literacy only, or
- Request both *Math and ELA/Literacy

Partial requests may be made when a student has a medical emergency during a specific time within the assessment window that only impacts ELA/literacy or math only.
4.0 Reason

1 category for exemption reason is available

Section 4: Reason

This section shows you there is only one reason for a Special Consideration request. An exemption may be approved when a *significant medical emergency has rendered a student incapable of participating in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment. This includes long-term hospitalization without access to academics, severe trauma, mental health crisis (student is in danger to self or others), or placement in hospice care. A Medical Emergency may also include medically fragile students that are not able to participate in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment due to a debilitating disease.

Hovering over the *question mark will show this *definition. As this is the only reason, Significant Medical Emergency is the default choice.
### Section 5: Assurance by Principal

These yes/no questions are required and ‘yes’ to all is recommended. If a student cannot communicate an agreement, please mark this as no. The *third question denotes that a parent has consented to this request for exemption. The fourth and fifth questions denote that the Principal certifies that the student cannot participate in instruction or assessment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did a team convene to discuss this request?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the student agree with this request?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is parent aware of the request and agreed to share relevant information with the Maine DOE Special Consideration Review Team as needed?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I certify that this student cannot participate in INSTRUCTION, even with accommodations, during the test window.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I certify that this student cannot participate in this ASSESSMENT, even with accommodations, during the test window.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.0 Justification (required)

- Principal is required to provide a written explanation upload supporting documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation for all requests are required. Documentation may include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Medical Professional or Doctor’s note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Admittance to a hospital or other placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Narrative from a medical professional explaining the need for exemption</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 6: Justification:

Justification documentation for each request must be provided to the Department. Please provide a *narrative explanation of the request in the box. Examples of documentation include doctor’s notes, medical records, hospital or other placement, e-mails justifying medical emergency, etc.

After typing in the justification text box, press your *TAB instead of ENTER
After entering the narrative justification in the box:
• Select *Choose File to search for files on your hard drive you’d like to upload
• Once you’ve browsed for any file or files you want to upload, double click to add file(s).

Documentation must be uploaded to continue with the request. This documentation must be from a medically trained professional on an official letterhead.
Examples of Accepted Justification

(Student) has been placed out of school due to potential safety concerns, and is not currently permitted to engage in educational activities in your school setting until this student has been reassessed and deemed safe to return.

(Student) was admitted to Acadia Hospital on month/day/year.

I have seen (student) for many years as a patient with severe cognitive disabilities, holoprosencephaly and epilepsy.

(Student) was admitted to Sweetser Children’s Crisis Stabilization unit on month/day/year.

These are examples of accepted justifications that may be included with your uploaded documentation.
Example of Incomplete Justification

Principal Justification = “(Student) sustained a severe concussion just prior to the MEA testing window. She has not been in school for the past 7 school days. Her doctor has provided documentation that she will not be medically cleared to take the MEA assessment during the testing window.”

Physician Documentation = “The above named patient was seen in this office on dd/mm/yyyy. Please excuse this student from MEA testing for this testing period.”

Denial Reason = Not a formal concussion evaluation. Doctor has not outlined in the note the reason this student cannot participate in academics or assessment and no time frame included.

This slide shows a sample of a request for a student exemption due to a concussion that was sent back incomplete due to not enough information. The *Principal Justification and *Physician Documentation was not complete, with the DOE narrative of the *Denial Reason.
Examples of Incomplete Justification

Principal Justification = “(Student) has been unable to access his education since September. He has not attended school since that date because of a diagnosis of severe anxiety”

504 Plan Meeting October = “Student has missed 10 days of school. A modified day was discussed, but tutoring needs are immense.”

Denial Reason = The attached document is not the required information from a medical professional indicating the reason for student being unable to participate in instruction or assessments. Please include medical documentation as obtained, or formal 504 Plan.

This slide shows another sample of a request that was sent back incomplete due to not enough information regarding the exemption request for anxiety and attendance.
Example of Incomplete Justification

Principal Justification = “(Student) has been out of school for a physical evaluation/risk assessment. As noted in the report by a licensed psychologist, he is in need of significant case at this time. A referral was made to a hospitalized program to meet his needs. When the student does return to school, the evaluator recommended partial days. Due to these circumstances, the student is unable to sit for the MEA.”

Physician Documentation = none provided

Denial Reason = Medical documentation indicating a medical emergency from a licensed medical professional is required or evidence of admittance to a hospital program.

This third example provides a possibly acceptable Principal justification, however no medical documentation was provided and the request was sent back incomplete.
The Department receives many requests for an exemption due to concussions. The most common and acceptable medical form is an Acute Concussion Evaluation or ACE. This example provides a document that does indeed state that a student had a concussion and should not participate in standardized testing. Unfortunately, this document is dated *February and the assessment did not begin until mid-March. Given that the medical professional suggested a 504 plan for extended assessment time in February, the Special Consideration committee requested that a more up to date, or follow up document be submitted.
This is a snapshot of sections 7-10:

* 7.0 Requesting SAU Certification
* 8.0 Responsible SAU Authorization
* 9.0 Status Determination
* 10.0 Comments
7.0 Requesting SAU Certification

7.0 Requesting SAU Certification (Required)

“I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this request is correct; and that I am authorized to provide this general assurance. I also assure the Maine Department of Education that all documentation, if applicable, supporting this request complies with all state requirements.”

Section 7 requires that all Principals provide certification of each request, certifying that to the best of your knowledge, the information contained in this request is correct, and that you are authorized to provide this general assurance. You also assure the Maine Department of Education that all documentation supporting this request are exact and truthful.
Section 7.0 Requesting SAU Certification, and 8.0 Responsible SAU Authorization go hand in hand. Remember our 3 enrollment scenarios.

In scenario 1, the responsible SAU is the same as the attending SAU. Section 7.0 will show the requesting SAU certifying, and the 8.0 responsible SAU appears as *Not Applicable because they are one in the same.
For enrollment scenarios 2 & 3, section 8.0 responsible SAU authorization comes into play.

In scenario 2 with the responsible and primary enrollment the same (Winthrop), with a secondary/concurrent enrollment out of district such as an SPPS, in this example Spurwink:

• Winthrop can submit directly, and Winthrop will certify and authorize.

• Or if Spurwink initiates the request, it will show Spurwink requesting SAU certification from Winthrop as *Certify and Submit to Responsible SAU. In this case, Winthrop as responsible SAU will NOT get an email notification that a request for a student attending the SPPS has been initiated by the SPPS. It is the out of district responsibility to communicate to responsible Winthrop that a request needs their authorization.

• Subsequently if Winthrop authorizes, it gets pushed to DOE as a new submission, but again the secondary SPPS gets no email notification of this.

• If Winthrop declines, they need to communicate to the SPPS the reason for decline.
Scenario 3 included 3 entities: RSU 12, Augusta, and Spurwink.

• If RSU 12 initiates the request, it will be certified and submitted to DOE.

• If either attending primary Augusta, or concurrent Spurwink initiates the request, it must be authorized/certified by responsible (RSU 12) in order for it to be submitted to DOE.

• The same rules for declining described above applies.
Again, in scenario #2 and #3, if the requesting SAU certifies and submits to the responsible SAU for authorization, 8.0 will show for the responsible to either *Authorize to auto submit to DOE, or *Decline.

If the responsible SAU declines, they must communicate that decision to the requesting school the reason for the denial to determine if further action is needed.

In the status column of your list of submissions, any request declined by a responsible SAU will show as *rejected. Communication between the two entities must occur to clarify this status.
Section 9: Status Determination

The status determination definitions are as follows with corresponding definitions:

- **Authorize** = only applies to student with secondary/concurrent enrollment where the sending/responsible district needs to authorize before submitting to DOE.
- **Reauthorize** = If a secondary school submits a request, it has been authorized by the responsible SAU and submitted to DOE, but DOE determines it is incomplete and needs more information, then it must be authorized again (reauthorized) by the responsible SAU after changes are made.
- **Rejected** = If a responsible SAU declines a request from another entity
- **New** = automatic status when a new request is certified/authorized and submitted.
- **Incomplete** = This status occurs when DOE has reviewed documentation and communicating to the SAU that further information is needed. You may add/upload additional documentation in Section 6 at any time. A notification email is sent for this status.
- **Pending** = This status occurs when a request was initially marked as incomplete, DOE asked for further information, and the SAU has now resubmitted additional information.
- **Denied** = request is denied by DOE and case is closed. A notification email is sent for this status.
- **Approved** = request is approved by DOE and case is closed. A notification email is sent for this status.
Once a request is submitted to DOE, a status will be determined. If Incomplete, a narrative in the Section 10.0 Comments box should appear indicating the reason and what further information is needed.
Section 10.0 is available for back and forth SAU and DOE comments, with separate comment boxes for each entity, and can be used to expand on the justification.

As new comments are added, DO NOT delete previous comments

As new comments are added the date is automatically populated

Once a new comment is added, you must click *Save Comment, and you’ll need to return to your submission for any further action.
This shows a sample request that was *Denied, and one that was *Incomplete, with the DOE *Comment **boxes including narrative. If incomplete, it will be kicked back to whoever initiated the request requiring more information and an automatic email will be sent indicating the incomplete status.

In enrollment scenario #1 the responsible SAU will make changes and submit directly to DOE.

In enrollment scenarios 2 & 3, the requesting SAU must be notified by the responsible district that the request is incomplete, the requesting SAU will make changes, add justification or support documentation, and the request must again be re-authorized by responsible in order to be resubmitted to DOE for second review.
• All requests will receive an e-mail stating the DOE determination of approved, denied, or incomplete.
• The SAU may view individual determinations by logging back into the system.

The person requesting the Special Consideration will receive an automatic e-mail once the DOE has made a determination..
You may check the status of your request(s) by going back to the welcome page and 
*Click Here for the Summary of District Requests.
If you are a principal associated with one school, that will be the only school you have access to.

If you are assigned to more than one school, they will appear in the school dropdown.

The DOE determination will be displayed under Status and can be filtered by determination.
A list of all students that you have made a Special Considerations request for will appear. You can sort by Attending SAU, Attending School, Student Name, State Student ID, Grade, Resident SAU, Test, or Status by selecting any column header. You can also enter a specific *SSID number into the search box.

In the *Status column, you can sort by all status: *New, Incomplete, Approved, Pending, Authorize, Reauthorize, or Denied.
Look at the *Navigation column on the right. Here you may choose *View Request or Consent Form.

To review all sections the Special Consideration request form that have been completed, click View Request.
Click “View Request” to view an individual summary page.

This is a snapshot of an individual student summary page. This can be downloaded and printed for your records. Please review all of your information before you submit.
Thank you for participating in the MEA Special Consideration request training. For any questions or clarification, please contact the assessment team.