

# Multi-State



## Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

State assessments are an important measure of what students know and can do in relation to their grade level standards. Most students participate in general assessments, either with or without accommodations. A small population of students participate in alternate assessments, based on alternate academic achievement standards. In Maine, the alternate assessments in math, reading and science are the Multi-State Alternate Assessment, or **MSAA**.

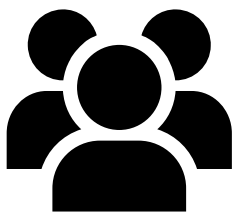
MSAA is a test designed specifically for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These students have many needs, both academic and functional. These students also must have academic goals and objectives as a part of their Individualized Education Plan or IEP. MSAA is one measure of how students with significant cognitive disabilities are performing in relation to grade level academic content.



The MSAA meets the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These laws mandate that all students participate in assessments that measure student achievement on grade-level content standards. This is one of many requirements that enable Maine to accept more than \$70 Million in federal funding for Maine schools

Federal requirements do not allow greater than 1% of the population to participate in the alternate assessment. This could also result in an impact on federal funds. Should a state exceed the 1% cap, a waiver can be requested from U.S. DOE. A pre-requisite of applying for the waiver is 95% participation in the MEAs.

Eligible students in grades 3-8 and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school are required to participate in the MSAA assessment in reading and mathematics. Students in grades 5, 8, and third year of high school are required to participate in the MSAA Science.



The majority of students eligible for special education participate in the general assessments in reading, math and science. Students can participate in general assessments with accommodations as identified in the individualized education plan (IEP). Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be eligible to participate in alternate assessments. The determination of eligibility to participate in alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) is an IEP Team decision, utilizing state eligibility guidance. Federal requirements do not allow greater than 1% of the total students assessed to participate in an alternate assessment. This could also result in an impact on federal funds.

The alternate assessment is designed to work with the way your child communicates. Teachers will provide all of the accommodations included in your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) as long as they are consistent with MSAA policies.



The MSAA test results, reported in the Individual Student Report (ISR), may be used to identify areas for needed improvement as well as areas of strength so that everyone can work together to help your child. Teachers may use this information to guide their teaching so that students learn the knowledge and skills of the grade-level academic content with appropriate supports.

MSAA assessments are only one academic measurement of how students are performing. There are many other forms of evaluation that help educators and schools determine how students are doing in school, academically, socially, and emotionally. MSAA's can be useful as one small part of a much bigger picture of student achievement and of school success