Structure of the Maine Through Year Assessment

The Maine Through Year Assessment consists of three administrations: fall, winter (optional), and spring. Students access all administrations of the Maine Through Year Assessment through the NWEA State Solutions Secure Browser, and school personnel can monitor testing progress and access score results in the Acacia platform.
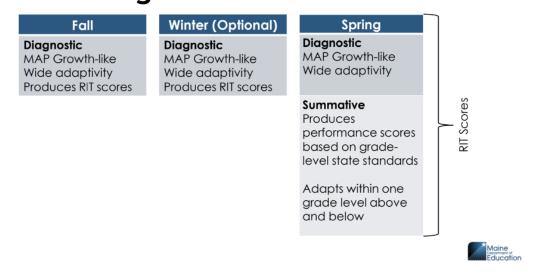
Fall and Winter Administrations

The Fall and Winter Maine Through Year Assessment administrations are fully diagnostic assessments. Although administered through the NWEA State Solutions Secure Browser, the questions on the Fall and Winter Maine Through Year Assessments are all from the MAP Growth question bank.

Spring Administration: One Test with Two Purposes

The Spring administration of the Maine Through Year Assessment is one test with two purposes: to generate two distinct types of scores, RIT scores to measure growth over time and a Maine-specific scale score, also known as the Maine scale score, to measure performance according to grade-level state standards. As a result, the Spring Maine Through Year Assessment contains two types of questions: diagnostic and summative. The Maine scale score is determined based only on the summative portion of the assessment.

Maine's Through Year Assessment Model

Fall	Winter (Optional)	Spring	
Diagnostic MAP Growth-like Wide adaptivity Produces RIT scores	**Diagnostic** MAP Growth-like Wide adaptivity Produces RIT scores	**Diagnostic** MAP Growth-like Wide adaptivity	RIT Scores
		Summative Produces performance scores based on grade-level state standards Adapts within one grade level above and below	

The Maine Scale Score

How were the cut scores for the Maine Through Year Assessment Maine-specific summative scores determined?

Every question on the summative portion of the Through Year Assessment is written to align to both a standard and an achievement level of Well Below, Below, At, or Above State Expectations. General, or policy, achievement level descriptors (ALDs) were written by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) with feedback from NWEA and approved by Maine DOE leadership. The complete text of the general achievement level descriptors can be found here.

Each Common Core State Standard has also been rewritten to align to each of these four achievement levels. These are known as range ALDs. Range ALDs for the Common Core State Standards can be found in the Achievement Level Explorer Tool: https://ald-explorer.nwea.org/. The ALDs were written by NWEA content experts and reviewed and revised by Maine educators and curriculum coordinators in fall 2022. (*Note*: In Summer 2025 based on feedback from the federal assessment peer review process, ALDs were re-reviewed and some were updated to improve clarity.)

The cut scores between achievement levels are determined during standard setting. Although the goal of standard setting is always the same—to determine the cut scores between achievement levels—there are different standard setting methodologies in the field of psychometrics for accomplishing that goal. For the Maine Through Year Assessment, *embedded* standard setting was used, and this was conducted at same time as the alignment study, in July 2023. During the alignment study and embedded standard setting, the item (i.e., question) writers' standard- and ALD-item alignments are reviewed by a panel of Maine educators and verified or corrected as needed. In some cases, the ALD may need to be reviewed and re-written.

After the educator panel has finalized the item-ALD alignments, response probabilities are used to determine exact cut score values. The two most common response probabilities (RP) for large-scaled standardized assessments are RP50 and RP67; the Maine Through Year Assessment uses RP50. RP50 signifies that a student at the very lowest end of the Below, At, or Above achievement level score range has a 50% likelihood of answering questions within that achievement level score range correctly. For example, the position of the cut score between Well Below and Below will be the score at which a student has a 50% likelihood of correctly answering questions aligned to the Below range ALDs. RP50 is a commonly used response probability for computer-adaptive assessments. Computer-adaptive assessments work by adjusting the difficulty of the questions a student sees based on their previous responses, with the ultimate score representing the question difficulty at which a student has a 50% probability of answering the question correctly. Selecting a response probability of 50% for achievement level cut scores aligns with the process used by the constraint-based engine that adapts the assessment for the student in real time.

Whereas the item-ALD alignments are developed based on state standards and the input of subject matter experts, the selection of a response probability value is a policy-based decision.

The selection of a response probability does not change the ALDs or the item-ALD alignments, but it does impact the percentage of students reported at each achievement level.

This combined process of the alignment study, embedded standard setting, and response probability policy decision determines the cut scores within the designated score range.

> *Note: Just as the 100-350 RIT score lowest and highest values do not hold any special, inherent meaning (it could have easily been 0-250 or 500-750), the specific values of 1400 and 1600 don't hold any special meaning. The lower and highest values were suggested by Maine's Technical Advisory Committee so that 1) the range would sufficiently wide enough to allow more meaningful differentiation of student results and 2) the number would not be confused with a RIT score. The Maine-specific scale score four digits rather than three, and it's also not possible to interpret the Maine-specific scale score just as a RIT score + 1,000.

The pattern of a student's responses is used to place the student's score along that scale. For example, if a student answers almost all of the Well Below questions correctly, most of the Below questions correctly, and very few of the At questions correctly, we would expect that their final scale score would be in the Below Achievement Level, close to the cut score between Below and At. If a student answers all of the Well Below questions correctly, most of the Below questions correctly, and half of the At questions correctly, they will be at the lower end of the At score range.

Does the Maine-specific scale score reflect the number of questions a student answered correctly vs. incorrectly?

Because the Maine Through Year Assessment is adaptive, the questions a student sees and the difficulty of those questions vary. Based on the constraint-based engine that drives the adaptivity of the assessment, if the students' answers follow a pattern and are not erratic (i.e., the student is not guessing) and the assessment is of sufficient length, we would expect each student to answer about 50% of questions correctly.

Other Questions

Will the Maine Through Year Assessment scores be accessible in the MAP Growth platform?

Maine Through Year Assessment RIT scores are accessible in MAP Growth reports within the MARC (MAP Growth) platform *if an SAU rosters their students in MAP Growth prior to the end of the administration window*.

Are state-level Through Year Assessment proficiency percentages for each grade level available? If so, where can they be accessed?

Preliminary statewide achievement level percentages are available within the Comparison report in Acacia, which is available to school- and SAU-level users with the appropriate user roles. Educators should reach out to their building leaders for more information.

Reports for public consumption will be available in the ESSA Dashboard in the fall following the spring assessment administration.