



# Assessment Team Office Hours Q&A

## September 11, 2024

### Resources

- [Slides](#)
- [Recording](#)
- Maine DOE professional learning calendar: [Event Calendar | Department of Education \(maine.gov\)](#)

### General

#### ***Is there still a 90% participation rate per assessment for each school?***

The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, or ESSA, requires states to have 95% or higher participation in state assessments, across student subgroups and including all content areas.

***I have asked this question before and continue to ask this question every year to best support our students at the local level. Will it ever be a consideration for the Department of Education to look at changing the spring assessment to make it more adaptable, rather than one grade below or above [the student's enrolled grade] and instead potentially look at the types of questions after an assessment is given to align those to grade level expectations. Has thought been given to making the spring assessment more like the fall with regard to adaptability?***

The inclusion of summative items with limited adaptivity, within one grade level of the student's enrolled grade, is designed to meet the requirements of federal statute under Title I Part A. In our assessment design, we have intentionally limited the number of summative items to the minimum necessary to meet the federal requirements for producing a scale score measuring student ability according to grade-level state standards.

Federal peer review for state summative assessments requires:

- Test blueprints that describe the structure of each assessment in sufficient detail to support the development of assessments that are technically sound [and] measure the depth and breadth of the State's grade-level academic content standards.
  - The test blueprints may include the number of items, item types, the proportion of item types, response formats, range of item difficulties, types of scoring procedures, and applicable time limits
  - The test blueprints must align to the depth and breadth of the State's grade-level academic content standards.
- If the State administers a computer-adaptive assessment, the assessment makes proficiency determinations with respect to the grade in which the student is enrolled.
  - Technical documentation must show that the item selection procedures are designed adequately to ensure test forms that adequately reflect... the depth and breadth of the State's grade-level academic content standards.

In order to meet the blueprint requirements for a computer-adaptive assessment, the Maine Through Year Assessment blueprints specify both the minimum percentage of on-grade items students will receive as well as the approximate percentage of items from each reporting category (i.e., Instructional Area).

***Is a homeschool student permitted to take Maine Educational Assessments at home, as long as the parent participates in the appropriate training online, follows the manual, etc.? Or is it required to be proctored IN the local school regardless of homeschool status?***

Assessment of home-instruction students is a joint parent and resident or responsible SAU decision. Per Home Instruction Law: M.R.S. 20-A §5001-A(3)(A)(4)(i), the administration of a standardized achievement test through the resident SAU must be agreed to by the school officials of the resident SAU prior to submission of the written notice of intent to provide home instruction. The resident SAU is not required to assess students enrolled in home instruction.

If home instruction students participate in the state assessment, they must do so in the local school under the supervision of a school/SAU employee who has been trained in the administration and has signed the MEA Security & Data Privacy Agreement.

Allowing families to administer the state assessment remotely is a significant assessment security violation that could result in the invalidation of numerous student results in the school/SAU, or even State, dependent on which items the home instruction student viewed outside of the secure, school-based testing environment.

***If there is a parent letter (informing of upcoming testing), can you point us in that direction?***

A letter for families regarding the Maine Educational Assessments administered in 2025 is currently being drafted by the Assessment Team. Please see the additional resources for families below, including assessment-specific communications for families for both the Maine Through Year Assessment and MSAA:

- [Maine Through Year Assessment Parent Letter](#) - Translations are currently in progress.
- [MSAA One-Pager](#)
- [Why Participation Matters](#) – Translations in Maine’s top languages are available on our [Resources webpage](#).
- Assessment Calendar PDF – Please reach out to Daniella Crone at [Daniella.M.Crone@maine.gov](mailto:Daniella.M.Crone@maine.gov) for a copy of this resource.

***When will assessment data from 2023-24 be posted on ESSA Dashboard?***

The Maine DOE Data Team is currently working on the population of the ESSA Dashboard with SY23-24 data, including assessment data. For additional information about the timeline for availability, please reach out to Education Data Systems Manager Katherine Warren at: [katherine.warren@maine.gov](mailto:katherine.warren@maine.gov)

***Can I share those links to trainings for the MEAs with teachers? Or are those sessions just for DAC/SACs?***

Teachers are welcome to attend all trainings related to the Maine Educational Assessments (MEA).

***The last security [webisode on testing irregularities](#) cuts off at the end - was that intentional?***

Our team had requested that the outdated contact information be trimmed from the video. Although we had not intended for the last word to be cut short, we did intend for the video to end on that slide.

## Maine Through Year

### Resources

- [NWEA Maine Connection Page](#)
- [NWEA Professional Learning Fall 2024 Flyer](#)
- “Understanding Scores” Session:
  - Tuesday, September 24, 3:30-5:00 PM [[Registration link](#)]
  - Thursday, October 10, 3:30-5:00 PM [[Registration link](#)]

### Questions:

#### GENERAL

***Comment: There are some of us in the field who would be very willing to lean in and assist with [contract negotiation and assessment development]... I think members from the field can offer a unique level of accountability and urgency. Please bring us to the table.***

#### PRE-ADMINISTRATION & ADMINISTRATION ACTIVITIES

***If we have requested access to the Maine Through Year Assessment Coordinator Training Module, how will we know when we get access? An email? How do we let you know if we do not have access?***

The training module email went to all educators with an Assessment Coordinator role in NEO on 8/26.

You will receive an email from [MaineTYProgram@nwea.org](mailto:MaineTYProgram@nwea.org) with information for accessing the training module. The email may be sent to your junk/spam folder, so please check there as well. If you completed the request form but do not receive information within 4 business days, please reach out to [MaineTYProgram@nwea.org](mailto:MaineTYProgram@nwea.org). Please do not resubmit the request form.

***Is there a way to mass print all testing group tickets at once?***

NWEA: No, there is not currently. In Manage Online Testing, it is broken out by content area and grade. You can print all students within that grade and content area, but not the whole school at one time.

*Educator Response:* That’s unfortunate and really time consuming about printing.

*NWEA Response:* NWEA appreciates the feedback regarding the time it takes to print test tickets. We do take assessment security into consideration with these types of scenarios but we will take this back to our internal teams.

***When a reporting group is created in Acacia, does it transfer over to NWEA MAP side for teacher access?***

Reporting groups and Online Testing groups created in Acacia do not transfer over into MAP Growth. As a reminder, in order for teachers to have access to their students’ scores in Acacia, they do need to be assigned to a Reporting group.

***If a teacher is assigned to a reporting group, can they print the test tickets for those students?***

Teachers do not have access to print test tickets. Roles that can print test tickets are System Admin, District and School Assessment Coordinators, and Proctors. Proctors can access test tickets for students within their Online Testing group.

See Part 7 of the [User & Student Management Guide](#) for information regarding creating student groups.

See Part 3 of the [Manage Online Testing Guide](#) for information regarding downloading and printing test tickets.

***In mixed classrooms at the high school level, can teachers log in for MAP Growth and Through Year testing at the same time?***

Yes, proctors can administer both the MAP Growth and Maine Through Year Assessments to students in the same room as long as the required assessment procedures for the Maine Through Year Assessment continue to be followed with fidelity, including, but not limited to, the distribution of test tickets by the proctor, the reading of administration scripts, active monitoring of all students (including those taking MAP Growth), and students not having access to devices once they have concluded their testing (including those taking MAP Growth). At this time, students may not participate in other computer-based or interim assessments not provided by NWEA while the Maine Through Year Assessment is being administered.

It may be helpful to start the session with two proctors so that one proctor can read the administration script to students participating in the Maine Through Year Assessment while the other confirms students in the MAP Growth platform.

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

***When the Human Reader for Reading Passages accommodation is added for grades 6+, is that still only for students with paper-based assessment accommodations (visual impairments)?***

For clarification, there are two different human reader accommodations with distinct purposes:

1. Human Reader: The Human Reader accommodation is solely for students whose IEP or 504 plan requires that the assessment be paper-based. Human Reader is intended to be a replacement for text-to-speech (TTS) when TTS is unavailable. Students who have read aloud on their IEP or 504 plan taking a computer-based assessment are expected to utilize TTS. Like TTS, Human Reader will read aloud the directions, questions, and answer choices but not the reading passages.
2. Human Reader for Reading Passages: This is an accommodation limited to students in grades 6+ with a print disability identified in section 3 of their IEP and who require accessible educational materials throughout all content areas. At this time, TTS is not available for reading passages, and so Human Reader for Reading Passages can be provided to students taking either computer-based or paper-based assessments.
  - a. [Print Disability Flowchart](#) – This resource will help you determine if Human Reader for Reading Passages is an appropriate accommodation for a student.
  - b. [Print Disability Checklist](#) – This checklist must be completed and kept with the student's special education record if the Human Reader for Reading Passages accommodation is provided.

***Can Universal Tools be toggled off? Some of our teachers in the district have found that this created attention/focus issues, especially for students with documented IEPs for such diagnoses.***

At this time, the universal tools cannot be turned off for specific students. NWEA will take the suggestion back to their team to see if an adjustment or change such as this is on the product development roadmap.

***Is TTS for students without an IEP, 504, or ILAP still an available designated support for students that a team of two have deemed is necessary?***

Yes, text-to-speech is an available designated support for students if the following two criteria are met:

1. The provision of the support is consistent with student’s routine instruction and assessment. Please note that this includes read aloud of classroom assignments and assessments for which TTS cannot be provided.
2. A team of two or more education professionals with knowledge of the student’s performance has determined that the support is appropriate for the student.

Students do not need to have an IEP, 504 plan, ILAP or any other support plan to be provided TTS.

More information about TTS as a designated support can be found on page 9 of the accessibility guide: [The Maine Through Year Assessment Accessibility Guide](#)

## SCORING & REPORTING

***Is there a letter explaining the results of generated reports? i.e. growth, achievement, for example what a score of 1500 means, etc.***

A supplemental page for families has been developed by Maine DOE for the Individual Student Report (ISR) in Acacia, which is required to be provided to the parents/guardians of all students who participate in the Maine Through Year Assessment. The supplemental page is specific to each grade level and can be found on the Maine Through Year Assessment webpage, under *Individual Student Report (ISR) Templates*.

The ISR itself also contains information for parents including the achievement level descriptors and answers to the following questions:

- What is this report?
- What is the Maine Through Year Assessment?
- Why is my child taking the Maine Through Year Assessment?

NWEA has additional resources to help families understand computer-adaptive assessments and RIT, including the following:

- [Video: What is a computer-adaptive test?](#)

***Are these supplemental pages grade specific?***

Yes, the supplemental pages for parents for the Individual Student Reports are grade-specific as they each highlight the important skills being assessed at the student’s grade level.

***We hope to send out the scores digitally. Can those supplemental pages be posted on a website and linked so parent/guardians can access them that way? Can a link go out with the student report to the supplemental pages or does the supplemental page have to be appended to the report?***

Thank you for this suggestion. A meeting has been scheduled with Maine DOE’s Website and Technology Coordinator to explore this possibility. If we are able to create a separate page with this information, we will be sure to share the URL with SAUs.

***What specific efforts are under way to address accountability for the calibration error and communication support not directed to the SAU/LEA to address the errors? I’m feeling really uncomfortable with the proposed letter directing concerns back to the LEA.***

The [Spring 2024 RIT Score Recalculation: Notice for Families](#) is intended to provide parents/guardians with a plain-language explanation of why their children’s RIT scores have changed. The last line of the notice is “If

you have any questions regarding your child’s academic achievement, please reach out to your child’s teacher or school.” This sentence is intended to provide support for parents in understanding their child’s current academic strengths and needs.

If parents have questions regarding the RIT score recalculation or recalibration, however, please direct them to Krista Averill at [Krista.Averill@maine.gov](mailto:Krista.Averill@maine.gov). SAUs are welcome to append Krista’s contact information to the Parent Notice.

## ASSESSMENT DESIGN & PSYCHOMETRICS

***On the spring Maine Through Year Assessment, does the student’s past performance impact the questions selected on the diagnostic portion of the assessment? For example, if a third grader is working on a first-grade level on the previous fall (or winter) administration, when they reach the diagnostic portion, will the questions adapt immediately to the student’s lower performance level from the previous administration?***

A student’s prior RIT score will inform their starting place (known as the initial theta) on the spring assessment. If the student tested in winter, the winter RIT score will be used and if they did not test in winter, the fall RIT score will be used to start the spring assessment off. This determination is not affected by whether the spring item is summative or diagnostic. [Please see the *important note* below for clarification.] Once the assessment is started, the test will adapt based on a student’s responses to these questions.

### *Important note:*

The difficulty of a question and its grade-level alignment are not the same, and there does not exist a one-to-one correspondence between difficulty and grade level. The difficulty of an item, or question, is based on empirical evidence from previous students’ answers to that item and the probability of students’ answering the question correctly. The grade-level alignment of an item is determined when the item is written by NWEA’s content experts, before students ever see or interact with the item. As a result, it is possible for questions at lower grade levels to be more difficult than items at higher grade levels, and vice versa.

The selection of questions based on a student’s prior RIT score is aligned to the question’s **difficulty, not grade level**. The selection of summative questions prioritizes on-grade items, but if there are not any at the difficulty level determined by the student’s prior theta, the algorithm will then look at the pool of items one grade level above or below, as appropriate.

This distinction between difficulty and grade-level is also reflected in NWEA’s new MAP Growth enhanced item selection algorithm currently being rolled out, at varying speeds in different states. The new enhanced item selection algorithm for MAP Growth prioritizes on-grade questions in very much the same way as the summative portion of our state assessment. The transition to the enhanced item selection algorithm is a global change to NWEA’s MAP Growth product that will impact all states in 2025-26. NWEA’s decision to develop and implement this algorithm for their MAP Growth product is independent of the work that they complete with their through year assessment state partners. The new algorithm is being piloted now for all schools utilizing MAP Growth in Maine who did not complete the opt-out form provided by NWEA this summer. Next year, schools will no longer have the opportunity to opt out of the new MAP Growth algorithm.

Although Maine had the opportunity to adopt the new enhanced item selection algorithm this school year, the Maine DOE chose to continue with the older diagnostic model that does not prioritize on-grade items while Maine schools still had the opportunity to opt-out.

***Could the ~33% be offered prior to the ~67% so as to capture growth most accurately. This was requested previously but feels even more important after living the experience with kids. The [spring administration] is not an authentic Growth experience. I would love to see us do better.***

During the assessment development process, Maine DOE and NWEA discussed considerations regarding the order of summative and diagnostic items, including the grouping of all diagnostic items and all summative items, either at the beginning or end, or the shuffling of items.

The current assessment design is a shuffling of diagnostic and summative items throughout the assessment. There are a few reasons for not grouping all diagnostic items at the beginning of the assessment.

Per NWEA's psychometricians: "This allows us to establish how students are doing with the mostly on-grade content and then we use the diagnostic items to focus on refining where the student is at by allowing wider grade range items for low/high achievers... This is the industry standard for state summative assessments."

Other reasons are the following:

- The attemptedness criterion for the summative portion of the assessment, which determines whether the student is considered a participant for accountability purposes, is the completion of 25% of the operational summative items. Placing those items at the end of the assessment would negatively impact participation rates for students who have not completed the entire assessment.
- Separating the diagnostic portion from the summative portion creates an inconsistent assessment experience for students on the reading assessment. The summative reading item bank consists solely of passage-based items, whereas the diagnostic reading item bank consists of both passage-based and standalone items. Placing all passage-based items at the beginning or at the end of the assessment increases the likelihood of student fatigue.
- All questions, both diagnostic and summative, contribute to the RIT score determination.

If concerns regarding the shuffling of summative and diagnostic items are related to testing endurance, please note that the Through Year Assessment can be split into multiple sessions, and more than one session is recommended in the spring for most grade levels. (Please see the [Assessment Coordinator Guide](#) for more information regarding scheduling.)

***Compared to other states using this this type of state-wide assessment, how accurate are Spring results compared to NWEA MAP growth goals set from the Fall? Should we be tracking Fall to Fall to best accommodate growth goals for our students?***

NWEA's Psychometrics and Content Teams are working to craft a response to this question, and the answer will be included in an Understanding Scores session once it is available. There are two available Understanding Scores sessions this fall:

- Tuesday, September 24, 3:30-5:00 PM [[Registration link](#)]
- Thursday, October 10, 3:30-5:00 PM [[Registration link](#)]

***Will the other NWEA team be attending a future Assessment Hours?***

Maine DOE has discussed this possibility with NWEA. At this time, Maine DOE will continue to direct psychometrics and assessment design questions to NWEA's Psychometrics and Content Teams, who will continue to provide responses to be shared back with the field.



## Maine Science

Resource

- [Maine Science Support](#)

Question/Comment

**Comment: I appreciate the high school science assessment not competing with AP exams!**

## NAEP & International

Resource

- [NAEP Assessment Schedule](#)

Questions

*No questions at this time.*

## ACCESS & Alternate ACCESS (English language proficiency)

Resource

- Information related to the annual English Language Proficiency Assessment, can be found on the Maine DOE/ACCESS webpage: [English Language Proficiency Assessments | Department of Education \(maine.gov\)](#)

Questions

**Where can I find the current and upcoming WIDA workshops?**

The link to the self-paced workshops is: <https://wida.wisc.edu/grow/self-paced>. Those workshops are available through August 31, 2025.

More information regarding ML PL opportunities can be found on the [Multilingual Programs Professional Learning page](#).

## MSAA (Math/ELA and Science)

Resource

- Information related to the Multi-State Alternate Assessment can be found on the Maine DOE/MSAA webpage: [MSAA | Department of Education \(maine.gov\)](#) Current year information will be updated as it becomes available.
- As a District Assessment Coordinator, will you need access to the MSAA Platform to view students, create TA accounts, monitor test status and download reports? If so, complete the survey: [MSAA Test Coordinator Survey](#)

Questions

*No questions at this time.*