Maine Department of Education

Assessment

Consolidated Q & A Office hours

The following document is a consolidation of questions posed during Assessment/DAC Office Hours for February 5, February 12, February 26 and March 5 March 12 and March 26.

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# General Assessment Related Questions

**Is there any possibility that another waiver will happen with the new administration?**

In the most recent letter dated February 22, from the US Department of Education, the Department describes opportunities for states to apply for waivers related accountability and the utilization of datapoints within a state’s accountability model. There remains no blanket waiver from assessment administration at this time.

**We have many students who “choose” remote, but not necessarily due to medical needs. If a**

**student is fully remote, does the special consideration apply or do they need to show a medical**

**need?**

The Special Considerations module has a COVID/Quarantine option. This would also include

health/safety concerns, related to the pandemic, and resulting in a student receiving remote

instruction. No medical documentation is required for COVID/Quarantine.

**Regarding the Assessment Redesign, is it possible for DACs to receive a list of participants from**

**their district once the work begins.**

Absolutely. The deadline to express interest is February 26. Once the interest form is closed, we

will work to get districts that information.

**I am sure others have expressed concern, about the validity of remote assessments, and the**

**impact those scores might have in selection on our schools?**

The Department is aware of concerns and continues to pose questions related to remote

administration. It should be noted most of the assessments (science, MSAA- math &

ELA/Literacy, MSAA – Science, and ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS) are designed to administered

in person and do not have a remote option.

**What assessments would be able to be given to a fully distant learner or is that not known yet?**

The possibility of remote administration exists only for the NWEA Math and ELA/literacy assessment but does not include the MSAA math and ELA/Literacy assessment. All other assessments will continue to be administered in person where it is safe to do so.

**How does one sign up for the MEA Listerv?**

The assessment team has a number of listservs available which are assessment specific. Details

can be found on the Maine DOE website within our monthly update and are included below for

your convenience:

**General Assessment (MEA) Listserv:** <https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/mea>

**Alt. Assessment Listserv:**<https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/alternateassessments>

**ACCESS Listserv:** <https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/esl.communication>

**If waivers are possible, will Maine DOE apply? How will it be determined which waivers are submitted?**

The prior administration under Secretary DeVos had previously made it clear to states that no assessment waivers would be granted this year. Waivers related to accountability have been offered to states as outlined in the [February 22, Dear Colleague letter](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/US%20DOE%20Letter%20DCL%20on%20assessments%20and%20acct%20final%20%28002%29.pdf) from the US Department of Education. The Maine DOE remains committed to ensuring any waivers benefit Maine students. As part of the waiver process the Department is required to seek public comment. Maine did apply for a waiver from reporting for both the general and alternate science assessments, as both are field tests. Currently, the waiver from reporting the MSAA-Science assessment results has been granted. The Department is waiting to hear from the USDOE with regard to the waiver from reporting for the Maine Science assessment.

**Do we know assessment windows?**

* NWEA - March 1st – June 15th, 2021.
* ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs - January 11th – April 16th, 2021.
* MSAA Math, ELA/Literacy and science - March 15th – May 14th, 2021.

All information is housed on the [assessment calendar](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/calendar) within the assessment webpages.

**Which assessments can be administered remotely?**

Almost all MEA assessments required an in-person administration. This includes the science,

MSAA and MSAA Science, and the ACCESS for ELLs assessments. The only assessment with the

opportunity for remote administration is the NWEA MAP Growth in math & ELA/Literacy assessment.

**In terms of accountability, how will growth be measured this year with a new assessment?**

For states with no interruption to their contracts, many are already talking about how to account

for the gap in the year of data. Maine does not have that flexibility as we transition to an interim math and ELA/Literacy assessment for the 2021 & 2022 spring assessment and the two forms of assessment have not been linked through a linking study. One assessment is criterion- referenced and the other is norm referenced, therefore growth cannot be measured between the two.

**Will students be allowed to re-take an assessment? Will students be allowed to re-take the new Math & ELA/Literacy assessment?**

The assessment window for general ELA/math is open from March 1st – June 15th, 2021. The assessment will be administered within a single administration in order to align with other assessment administered statewide. A student should therefore participate and complete a single administration of the math & ELA/Literacy assessments. The Department however is working on developing a “retest” policy should there be mitigating circumstances whereby a student would need to begin a second assessment session.

**Will the MDOE provide guidance to schools and parents regarding encouraging students to enter**

**schools who have chosen to be remote to take State Assessments?**

Maine DOE is aware of several districts that have had success in reaching out to the families of remote learners for the purposes of assessment. Such communications included information pertaining to the importance of the assessments and the health/safety precautions and assessment environment for remote learners participating. If it would be helpful, Maine DOE can support districts with drafting a template to this effect or gathering communications districts have provided as resources.

**I know it was stated that public comment periods are required in order to submit a waiver, but does the MDOE have any intentions on applying for accountability waiver?**

Maine DOE plans to move forward with all statewide assessments where safely feasible to do so. At the same time, DOE colleagues are exploring the possibility of a waiver providing flexibility from accountability and reporting requirements.

**So, September is not an option for administration of the ACCESS assessment? The letter from the federal government mentioned that as a possibility.**

The ACCESS assessment window closes on April 16th, 2021. Please refer to the [assessment calendar](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/calendar) for specific assessment administration windows, for the spring of 2021. The current plan is that all assessment windows will close by June 15th, 2021.

**Paper/Pencil Tests: Are they available? How so we order them?**

Maine Science – Yes, paper assessments are available as an accommodation as outlined in a student’s IEP or 504 plan. The science assessment coordinator, Nancy Godfrey, is developing a protocol to request paper tests which will be shared with districts by early next week. Both regular and large print booklets will be available. Within the online platform however, the zoom accessibility feature is available as a universal tool, zooms to 500% and could be used in lieu of a large print paper version.

NWEA Math & ELA/Literacy – There is no paper-based version.

MSAA and MSAA Science – Paper-based versions are available, as identified on the student’s IEP or 504 plan, and can be downloaded within the MSAA System after the training modules are completed.

ACCESS for ELLs - Paper-based versions are available, as identified on the student’s IEP or 504 plan, and can be ordered via WIDA AMS.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs – This is only available for a paper-based administration.

**What will be the reporting requirements for NWEA and what will happen with those results?**

NWEA will provide Maine DOE with one comprehensive data file, which will then be uploaded in the MAARS confidential reporting. There will be an ad-hoc reporting module in MAARS by which districts can filter data by student populations, assessments and year.

Additionally, Maine DOE will be submitting a federal waiver from reporting NWEA results. This is the first year many districts are administering this assessment. Districts are expected report NWEA data locally however, to staff and families.

Maine DOE additionally applied for a federal waiver from reporting for the New Meridian Science assessment, as this is a field test year, and we have already received waiver approval from publicly reporting MSAA Science data, which is also a field test.

# NWEA

**Will our tech coordinators be able to use Clever to roster students in the NWEA platform?**

**Schools will be able to roster students within the NWEA portal, however the use of Clever for rostering will not be supported at this time. The use of Clever is being examined for utilization beginning in Fall 2021.**

**Will the upload that DAC’s are working on for NWEA also be used for the Science upload as well?**

**NWEA is a district level platform, so there is more district involvement in the rostering of students. The Department is working to get districts a file that they can utilize in NEO, which includes students required to test by eligible grades, that districts can then take and add students in non-required grade levels that they wish to assess.**

**The New Meridian platform is administered at the state level, and DOE will be providing to New Meridian a roster of eligible students. Districts will have minimal interaction with that process until it is time to create classes and group students.**

**Even though there aren’t dates determined yet, are you able to share how long training for test administrators and coordinators will take?**

**The information regarding NWEA trainings / timing is available on the** [**NWEA**](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/NWEA) **page of the Maine DOE website. New Meridian [tentative] training dates have now been shared with the field (ppt slide deck for 3/26/21) but we do not have the information as to the length of the sessions yet.**

**How do the accommodations work for both Science and NWEA?**

**Maine DOE is currently in the process of completing a reconciliation between NWEA and New Meridian offered accommodations and state policy. As soon as that information becomes available it will be shared with the field.**

**In NWEA, after a proctor session has been created, the accommodation is added to the student’s profile and must be completed before the assessment starts. The DAC, teacher, or assessment proctor can add accommodations for students. This is a manual process.**

**Are there PD opportunities for existing users that are not full?**

**The onboarding trainings, which began this week, are optional for experienced users. These sessions are required for new users and are not full. The remote session next week is full but will be recorded for the field. This is the only session that is restricted in attendance, and it is geared towards those who are planning for the broad remote implementation. DOE is also in talks with NWEA to possibly offer this session a second time. DOE recognizes the need for development in remote administration for both new and experienced NWEA users.**

**Is there a district whose DocuSign has been submitted and the follow-up email from NWEA received? We have not received ours yet…**

Please check with your superintendent to see if the email was received ensuring you’ve checked all spam and junk folders. Welcome emails were initiated on Friday March 19 and should be forthcoming. If you continue to have difficulties, please reach out to assessment coordinator Nancy Godfrey who will provide additional support.

**Is there DOE guidance on an opt-out policy now that the NWEA is being used as the statewide assessment?**

The opt out policy has not changed at all. The Department neither prevents nor promotes opting out or non-participation. If there is a district-established opt out policy, parents need to be notified of this policy. We are aware of districts which require such a request to be made in writing, and that principals then meet with these parents to make sure they have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of the assessment. If the parent still chooses to opt out, the student is not administered the assessment and is counted as a nonparticipant.

**Will Grade 10 students be included in the NWEA state contract for next year?**

The contract runs through the Spring 2022 including grades 3-8 and 2nd/3rd years of high school.

**If we are a previous NWEA user, will our historical data be migrated into a new account or will we maintain our current accounts?**

If you are a current user, your data will be available using what we already have in place. All data available for students will remain available via the student SSID#. We can clarify this further in the Q&A document.

**Fall 2021 administration requirement - is that only for language use or for all of the NWEA assessments in 3-8 and 3rd year of high school?**

The required sessions for Spring 2021 are reading and math. Beginning Fall 2021 and into Spring 2022, the required sessions will be reading, math and language use.

**If we are a current NWEA customer, but need to expand the offerings into HS (10/11 and we will pay 9) what will be the protocol?**

NWEA will be reaching out to these districts to find out how many licenses are needed for 2nd/3rd year high schoolers, and the Department will then be billed for these licenses.

**If homeschoolers wish to take the MEA Science or spring NWEA, how will they be added? (assuming only the students already rostered will “count”).**

There is a method by which a student can be manually added by the district/school. This topic will be covered in the upcoming onboarding beginning March 22nd. The student will not be included in the school’s accountability report and will receive a student report.

**Do SPPS's receive a user agreement or does the SAU for the student(s)?**

SPPSs received their own agreements.

**Will the parameters for accommodations for NWEA be posted on the website and be in the training modules?**

Yes. There is an upcoming Accommodations and Accessibility meeting with NWEA and Maine DOE and the information will be posted on the website afterwards.

**Are experienced proctors of NWEA required to participate in the trainings?**

Onboarding, which starts Monday March 22, is for all new users/proctors. Experience proctors are invited to all trainings, particularly the training related administering NWEA remotely. DOE will clearly articulate and identify which training sessions deal with the remote administration, so that educators aren’t overwhelmed by the number of sessions available.

**NWEA remote administration concerns include validity and efficacy issues: insecure testing due to students having access to parents/cell phones/secondary devices/etc.; home environment is not an ideal testing setting with noises & distractions; lack of proctoring and active monitoring; accommodations; reading test directions; troubleshooting technical and/or connectivity issues; difficulty launching a test to remote students whose remote (instructional) participation is unreliable; etc.**

We recognize that SAU and school staff have concerns regarding administration of an assessment remotely. For most of us, this is the first time such an assessment will be administered in a remote manner.

Concerns have been expressed regarding the security and validity of the assessment when administered remotely due to possible family member assistance, lack of adequate quiet space etc. While the Department recognizes none of these conditions are by any means, ideal for administration, this is one of the few assessments that can be administered remotely. For current NWEA users, the school staff will be able to detect any unexpected variances in student performance. For New users this will be more of a challenge. We would encourage students to use the same or similar location in the home as they have to access their remote instruction. Due to the remote nature of the student, it cannot be guaranteed a student wouldn’t grab a cell phone, iPad or other device and utilize while participating in the assessment. The utilization of the web-based browser would allow the proctor to view the students participating in the assessment however, the browser itself is “unlocked.” The decision of which browser will be determined by the proctor/school as you know your students best. The Department is working on having the traditional [Spring 2021 MEA letter for parents/families](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) translated – this should be available on our website early next week.

We recognize the availability of accommodations is a large concern. We are working to get resources as quickly as possible on our website and have a meeting early next week to tease this out further. We will provide information as soon as we have it.

With regard to tech issues, the challenge will be if a student who is remote begins to experience challenges accessing the assessment or if there are connectivity issues. The helpdesk is available for you to call with issues however, support would be somewhat limited due to the remote nature of the student. For students who maintaining a stable connection to the internet may be a challenge, please make a best faith effort to administer the assessment. Should there be ongoing challenges, please reach out to the assessment coordinator directly.

**You mentioned if a district is currently using the NWEA MAP Growth math/ELA assessment, we would not be expected to give the assessment twice, one for state data and once for our local data. Do we assume the state assessment will be the same test and we will have our year progress data for our year starting with our fall data, winter data, and the spring data with be a continuum?**

The assessment window for general ELA/math is open from March 1st – June 15th, 2021. The assessment will be administered within a single administration during that window in order to align with other assessments administered statewide. A student should therefore participate and complete a single administration of the math & ELA/Literacy assessments. Students will be participating in the NWEA MAP Growth grade 2-5 or 6+ assessment(s) within grades 3-8 and 3rd year of high school respectively.

**Will schools who are current NWEA users be able to set their own local windows and access their data and reports as has been the case in the past?**

Yes. Current NWEA users should continue to implement and administer the assessment on the previously determined schedule to ensure consistency between instructional weeks within assessment windows.

**Has the distinction been made between web-based vs app-based remote administration for NWEA MAP Growth?**

Maine SAUs will have the option to administer the NWEA MAP growth assessment remotely using either the web-based browser (permits a teacher/educator to interact with the student) or via the app-based or lock-down browser (does not permit a teacher/educator to interact with the student).

**Are there concerns about data reliability of remote students who take this assessment?**

Due to remote administration, there are varying factors that are beyond our control that may impact reliability and validity of the data.

**Are their crosswalks alignments between the new assessment results and results from Star?**

The Department is currently researching this question.

**We have been using the NWEA MAP growth and what do we do if parents are assisting?**

We are encouraging districts to implement, as much as possible, an assessment experience that mirrors an environment the student would experience at school. This would include using the app-based/lock down remote administration option.

**Will districts be reimbursed for grades 3-8 and 3rd year high school students who are currently using the vendor that will be revealed next week?**

Yes, current users of NWEA will be reimbursed for licenses for students in grades 3-8, 2nd and 3rd year of high school.

**If our district is administering the NWEA MAP growth math/ELA assessment to students in March, will that data be accepted by the state? Or will we be asked to administer again? Is there a known window we might plan for?**

Yes, this data will be accepted as the single administration of the assessment. Districts will not be

asked to administer it again. One administration of the assessment will be required for Spring 2021 between 3/1/21 - 6/15/21.

**Math and ELA will be able to be administered remotely, correct?**

Yes, NWEA MAP growth is able to be administered remotely.

**Will it be possible to assess different students at different times within the grade level?**

Test security considerations can be a lot lighter with adaptive assessments, and this flexibility will be of benefit to SAUs this year given current challenges related to space, staffing, and cohort learning.

**Is the intention to continue to allow district to define testing windows for the NWEA MAP growth ELA/math assessment?**

Current partners (users) of NWEA will continue to administer the math and ELA/Literacy assessment on the previously determined schedule. New users will administer the assessment once they have received onboarding and applicable professional learning. The assessment window for the NWEA MAP growth assessment runs from March 1 – June 15. The district may schedule the assessment at any point during the window.

**For Math assessments the vendor currently has several assessments, such as Math 6+, Algebra, Geometry, will schools for 3rd year students still use the assessment that they took in the fall and winter?**

The students in the 2nd and 3rd year of high school will participate in the Math 6+ assessment form.

**Will NWEA MAP growth be available via the Internet on a home-device as opposed to a school device?**

The Department is recommending a school device and not a personal device is utilized for purposes of assessment. With further questions, please reach out to assessment coordinator Nancy Godfrey: Nancy.godfrey@maine.gov.

**How much time do you intend to give between the announcement of NWEA technology requirements and the administration window opening? Will we have time for set up/practice?**

The intent is to be a staggered implementation. Once the SAUs are in a place where students can be assessed, the SAU is able to proceed. The intent is to ensure all staff administering the assessment are comfortable and confident and have received the necessary professional development support required.

**Will the assessment window open on March 1st, or is this dependent on the contract? Will PD be offered prior to the assessment window opening, or will this possibly take place tangentially?**

This will be a multi- faceted approach. Some SAUs are already using the NWEA MAP growth therefore, there will be no interruption to the SAU administration windows. For any new districts onboarding, the NWEA stands ready to support SAUs as quickly as possible. Additionally, Andy Wallace, Technology Director at South Portland School Department will be on call and supporting implementation. There have also been conversations about possible peer mentoring from SAUs that have used this tool in the past and may be able to help districts new to NWEA answer questions quickly and efficiently. The Maine DOE’s intent is to ensure SAUs are comfortable and confident in administering the assessment.

**How long does each session (reading and math) of NWEA MAP growth assessment take for a student? This would help us understanding scheduling during our hybrid model.**

The average student will finish a session in 45-70 minutes. However, as the assessment is adaptive it is possible for students to spend multiple hours on an assessment session depending on their answers and their engagement. Schools may want to consider assessment completion spaces where a student who requires a longer period of time can finish the session. For those concerned about students who typically rush through an assessment and hit submit, a proctor does have the ability to monitor and pause a student who seems to be moving at an accelerated pace.

**Are you encouraging remote students to take the NWEA at home if possible?**

NWEA MAP growth is able to be administered in person and remotely. Where possible and where it is safe to do so, students may be administered the assessment in person. Those students who are receiving instruction 100% remotely are able to participate in the assessment remotely if they are unable to participate in person. Should a student receiving instruction remotely not participate in the assessment either remotely or in person and are not eligible for special consideration, the student would be a non-participant. The possibility of remote administration exists only for NWEA MAP growth.

**How many years do you anticipate the new Math and ELA/Literacy assessment contract to be in**

**place?**

The current contract with NWEA is for a period of 2 years through June 2022.

**Has NWEA created a new assessment for Maine, or will we be using the assessments we have been using? Also, if we have students who are only remote this year, are we able to submit Special Consideration requests for them?**

The NWEA assessment will be the same assessment, the MAP growth assessment. With the remote administration availability, the Department anticipates fully remote students will participate in the assessment remotely.

**What criteria are there for “remote administration” of the NWEA assessment?**

NWEA has a series of best practice guides. SAUs have different concerns and strategies around security and proctoring. Many schools have already implemented remote administration and Maine DOE has connected with those schools in the hope of sharing best practices/experiences with SAUs which are new to the administration of NWEA. Best practices will be a focus of future office hour sessions.

**What accommodations [for NWEA] will be allowed and how do we document those for our students?**

The accessibility/accommodations document is currently available on the NWEA website. However, there will also be Maine specific policies related to using accommodations. These will be shared in upcoming office hours and via Assessment Team Communications.

**What will the criteria be for “meeting” [achievement expectations] on the NWEA Math / ELA?**

Maine DOE is not conducting benchmarking and standard setting during the summer of 2021.

**How can we assure that a remote administration is “secure?"**

When using the secure (lock down) browser, the camera is disabled and remote classroom teacher (remote proctor) lose the ability to see who is participating in the assessment. Schools will have to weigh which is important while deciding whether to use an application- based versus a secure browser approach.

**Might there be a situation (medical) where a student is unable to take the NWEA remotely or onsite?**

The intent of providing an assessment that may be administered remotely would result in more students able to participate. We advise you to reach out to your assessment coordinator, Nancy Godfrey, and she can work with you regarding next steps to see if a special consideration may apply.

**Do teachers and other proctors need to participate in any kind of training program (video, webinar, etc.) to administer the [NWEA} assessment?**

The training materials are posted to the [NWEA](https://www.nwea.org/) website. For new users, we advise you to wait until the onboarding materials are shared.

**Can the email [for the NWEA SAU User Agreement template] to Superintendents be cc’d to the DACs?**

This request has been shared with NWEA. An email will be provided to DACs informing them the notice has been provided.

**Will the NWEA assessment used for all grade levels be the MAP?**

The required grade levels to participate in the NWEA MAP growth assessment are 3-8 and 3rd year of high school. Honoring the request from district leaders, 2nd of high school students will have the option to participate if the district so chooses.

**Will we be administering the Language Usage assessment and the Reading assessment (as well as math) or just reading?**

The language usage assessment is not required for the spring 2021 administration for new or current users. Current NWEA users may continue to administer the language usage assessment during the spring of 2021. New NWEA users are not required to administer the language usage assessment during the spring 2021 administration but may elect do so if they choose. The language usage assessment will be administered and required for all NWEA users during the fall 2021 and spring 2022 assessment administration windows.

**Is the state covering the cost of 2nd year high school?**

If the SAU is anew user, the State will cover the cost for students in the 2nd year to participate should they elect to do so. For current users, the SAU will be reimbursed for 2nd and 3rd year of high school licenses currently purchased.

**Would we need to commit to the 10th grade optional when we sign [the NWEA User Agreement]?**

This is a data-sharing agreement, which does not include opting into different grade levels. After the SAU signs the document, NWEA will provide licenses for participating students, and Maine DOE will receive the invoice.

**Will the NWEA be the adaptive MAP format?**

Yes.

**What is the time burden for the various assessment tutorials? This is important for scheduling.**

The Department is still awaiting information related to the science assessment however, for NWEA MAP growth:

* Remote Test Planning for Leaders - March 29, 1x 2-hour sessions - first one will be live and recorded and made available for others to watch recorded session
* MAP Growth Basics/Remote Testing for teachers – March 29 - April 2, 1x 2-hour session – all these sessions will be live

**With regard to next year: will districts be required to take the NWEA three times?**

SAUs will be required to participate, at minimum, in the fall and spring administrations. If the SAU chooses to administer in the winter, this is optional.

**What about charter schools that the Charter Commission provides accounts for and covers our fees?**

Yes, Maine DOE will be working with the charter school commission to reimburse those costs directly to the Charter School Commission.

**Which NWEA assessment for third year high school on Math… 6+? Which for Reading?**

The 6+ will be administered.

**What are the NWEA technology requirements and are they the same for the lock-down vs. web-based browsers?**

Yes, the requirements and supported devices are nearly the same, there are some web browsers not supported on some devices. Page 1 and 2 of the System Requirements guide provide the requirements for Secure Browser and standard Web Browser testing.

Technology requirements for the platform are included on the NWEA website: <https://teach.mapnwea.org/impl/QRM2_System_Requirements_QuickRef.pdf>

**If students are at home remote for NWEA, would they would use a web-based browser?**

Yes, students can access the assessment through a standard web browser, and this would allow them to still access communication software with the teacher/proctor on the same device. They can use the secure browser if they have a second device to communicate with the teacher/proctor.

**If students are attending in-person is the lock-down browser required/recommended for administration of the NWEA assessment?**

Yes, the secure browser is recommended whenever possible.

**Is there a link to NWEA that we can review?**

NWEA has a plethora of information on their website as an introductory starting place. Some aspects displayed on this site may or may not be applicable to Maine’s administration of NWEA.

**Can students can take the assessment outside of a secure browser?**

Yes, SAUs will have the option to utilize a lock-down or a web-based browser.

**When will we know the time limits to apply for each testing session?**

[Average session durations for the NWEA assessment](https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2018/08/Average-MAP-Growth-Test-Durations.pdf) are available on the NWEA website. As NWEA is an adaptive assessment and there are certainly outliers at either end of this continuum however the average students completed the NWEA MAP growth assessment within 45-75 minutes. One big difference is that students can pause and resume the assessment the next day. This is indicative of nuances between an adaptive interim assessment and a summative assessment.

**Portland has a School Day SAT scheduled for 3/24. They are asking if these third-year students would be exempted from the NWEAs?**

The state assessment this year for third year of high school students is the NWEA MAP Growth and as such, there would not be an exemption from participating. Districts also have the option of administering MAP growth to the second year of high school students should they choose. Any high school administration of SAT during the spring 2021 is done so independently.

**Can you speak to how we can ensure ‘security’ on NWEA remote?**

Districts have the option of administering the NWEA MAP growth either via the lock-down browser or a web-based browser. Both administrations have both upsides and downsides. At the district level, the decision must be made as to which modality makes the most sense.

The Department and NWEA recommend MAP growth assessments administered in person in the school environment be administered via the lock-down browser.

**Is there any possibility that we could give the NWEA to 10th graders INSTEAD of 11th graders?**

Third year high school students are required to take NWEA MAP growth. In response to requests from superintendents and district leaders, administration of the NWEA for 2nd year/10th grade students is optional.

**When will there by guidance on NWEA accommodations?**

The NWEA webpage includes an accommodations and accessibility features document. The math and ELA/Literacy assessment coordinator, Nancy Godfrey is in the process of reviewing NWEA accommodations in partnership with NWEA to determine which are permissible under Maine’s policies. When finalized, all materials will be posted to the [DOE NWEA webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/NWEA) within the accordion-style links.



**Is the NWEA fall administration required next year?**

Yes, the fall administration of the NWEA MAP growth will be required for fall of 2021 and Spring 2022 for students in grades 3-8 and 3rd year of high school. Students in the 2nd year of high school are able to participate should a SAU so choose.

**If a student participates in NWEA in the spring window, before the state rolls out more instructions, would that score be their final MEA score, maybe requiring an appeal? I thought the first score in a window became the final score.**

Maine DOE is still developing its retest policy and more information will be shared in an upcoming office hour session.

**The Commissioner stated in a meeting this week that districts could choose to do all remote testing for ELA and Mathematics. Can we do that?**

The NWEA MAP growth can be administered remotely at the discretion of the district.

**In the DOE Public Communications, it stated that new users would be given priority, from the schedule, it does not seem as though we are being given priority as current users are testing first. What was meant by priority? And will it be possible for new users to be supported with PD in order to be able to test earlier, say before the April break?**

The MAP Growth training and remote administration training for SAU users will be announced March 29-April 2nd. For new users, there are onboarding elements and professional learning that must transpire prior to administering the assessment therefore, the administration window for new users is later than that of current users. For current users, basic training will not be required however, the remote administration training is recommended. SAUs who have completed these processes can begin assessment prior to April 14 if they choose.

**Can DACs also be included in the NWEA user agreement mailing? The DACs will be able to follow up with District superintendents to ensure it was completed and returned.**

NWEA user agreements being sent directly to districts from NWEA commencing 3/12/21 will be sent to superintendents with a communication also sent to DACs.

**As new districts come on board for NWEA, what is the time required to complete all necessary onboarding and training professional learning modules?**

New districts will need to take 2 trainings listed below:

* + Onboarding: March 22 – March 31, 75-minute training
	+ Professional Learning: March 29 – April 2, 2-hour session

**A district currently using NWEA in grades 3-8 only would be deemed a current user correct? The SAU will still sign the user agreement and will ensure the new users in grades 10 and 11 complete the onboarding and MAP basics training. They will not be classified as a New district partner is that accurate?**

 Yes. Even though the SAU is adding the 2nd and 3rd year of HS, the SAU is considered an existing user however, NWEA recommends SAU staff engage in the Professional Learning training before they start administering the assessment to students in the 2nd and 3rd year of HS.

# NAEP

**Are we legally allowed to ask the question about vaccination status [on the NAEP survey?]**

**Regarding the Vaccination Rate question, there is no HIPPA violation since there is no association with an individual teacher and/or grade. Please provide your best estimate of the percentage of teachers vaccinated prior to the date provided in the survey. The Biden Administration is using the response to this question to monitor the vaccination of educators.**

**Will DACs will be cc’d on the correspondence regarding the NAEP 2021 survey studies that will be sent to superintendents, school principals and coordinators?**

Yes. DACs will be cc’d on the district level communications from the NAEP coordinator pertaining

to the NAEP 2021 questionnaires and the NAEP 2021 survey study. The team makes every effort

to ensure all individuals engaged in assessment administration receive the same information.

This is achieved through emails to DACs and through established list servs.

**Where do you get the MyNAEP Registration ID?**

The MyNAEP Registration ID must be provided by the NAEP State Coordinator or the NAEP Help Desk. The Help Desk is available by phone: 800-283-6237 or email: naephelp@westat.com. This information is not customarily available to the other members of the Assessment Team.

**Is NAEP for only selected schools? Or do all schools have to do this?**

This is only for the sample schools and the schools have already been notified. Questions about participation should be directed to Dr. Regina Lewis, Coordinator of NAEP & International Assessments.

# Participation

**If families opt out (we will try to limit this) of the ELA/Math assessment will they count against us?**

If the student’s family refuses assessment for reasons other than medical emergency or COVID-19 considerations, this is counted as nonparticipation. Students are exempted only if a Special Consideration is approved. Non-participation is calculated within the 95% participation rate however, the USDOE has indicated a state can apply for waivers related to accountability.

**If our testing window starts in mid-April and a student moves away between now and then, and they do not take the assessment, will that count against us?**

In order for an assessment to “count” the student must meet certain requirements including full academic year. The responsible district at the time of assessing would receive the student data.

**What about SAUs which are currently using the NWEA assessments but not in all grade levels?**

SAUs currently using the NWEA MAP growth assessment will be deemed current users. If the NWEA MAP growth is currently not administered in the 2nd and 3rd year of high school, NWEA will reach out to the SAU to confirm that applicable assessment administrators implementing the assessment have access to resources and training to adequately administer the assessment.

**If our district’s county is green but we have students, whose parents chose “supported learning at home” for the school year - may the MEA Science be offered at school in a separate session with few staff/students present but that’s considered OPTIONAL to attend?**

If the student is not receiving remote instruction due to a medical emergency or COVID-19 consideration and is able to be present for in-person instruction, the expectation is that the student would be able to participate in assessments. The assessment may be offered at the school in a separate session with smaller groups of staff/students present however, participation in the science assessment is a requirement within ESEA as amended by ESSA. A student who is ineligible for a special consideration and elects to not complete the assessment is a non-participant.

# Science

**Will our tech coordinators be able to use Clever to upload student data for New Meridian?**

**The Maine DOE will provide student enrollment data files to New Meridian. Schools will be able to create “classes” or proctor sessions within the New Meridian portal, however the use of Clever for rostering will not be supported at this time. This is being examined for future administrations.**

**For both the NWEA and New Meridian assessments, will test administrators and proctors be required to watch test administration videos and sign the [security agreement] forms that indicate they have been trained like we did with eMPowerME and SATs?**

**The Department will return to this question in an upcoming session. As a reminder, the onboarding training for NWEA will begin on March 22nd and is required for all new users.**

**What format will the different sessions be for Maine Science?**

The assessment forms include multiple choice, multiple select, technology enhanced and constructed response items.

**Will there be practice items or released items for Maine Science prior to testing this year?**

New Meridian is in the process of constructing a practice item tutorial for Maine. Maine DOE has requested that the items included in the tutorial represent the variety of items included in the assessment form.

**Will there be guidance on how to complete accommodations on the New Meridian Science Assessment?**

Yes. This information with be forthcoming and posted to the [science assessment webpages](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience).

**Is the Science testing window also extended to June 15th as well?**

The Maine science assessment has been extended through June 11.

**New Meridian Science cannot be assessed remotely, math and ELA/Literacy will be allowed to be administered remotely. Am I correct? With recent communication from the Fed’s, it allows us to administer a ‘shortened version’ of the assessments. Is that the intention of the MDOE?**

The NWEA MAP Growth assessment for ELA/Literacy and math is the only state assessment with a remote administration capacity. There is no current plan to administer shortened assessments.

**Will there be a sample letter/language for requesting children come in for Science assessment?**

The Department has not drafted language regarding participating in assessment. This is something the Department can explore if it would be beneficial to schools/districts.

**Will the Science assessment be allowed to be taken remotely?**

Both the general science assessment, Maine Science (provided by New Meridian), and the alternate science assessment, MSAA Science, must be administered in-person.

**The Science assessment is new for grades that take it, online, and aligned to NGSS. Is there a way to see sample questions yet or will that be at the training mentioned that is upcoming?**

As the implementation and professional development become available, the Department will continue to share in an expedient manner, any available materials.

**Is the science test paper and pencil or online?**

The Maine science assessment will be administered online. The alternate assessment in science is also online and administered, via the MSAA System. Should a student require a paper-based version of the assessment as an accommodation as outlined in a student’s IEP, a paper-based version of the assessment would be available.

**Do we need to repeat the 15 min material distribution and instruction for each administration children sit for, yes? So 3 times?**

There are 10-15 minutes to distribute materials and read directions. The Test Administrator Manual will be forthcoming outlining these specifics including the narrative text of the directions that TA reads aloud prior to each session.

**What materials would be distributed for Science?**

Distributed materials may include assessment booklets for students with accommodations to receive a paper copy of the assessment. The new [Science Assessment](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience) webpage is now open. The Maine Science materials will soon be posted within the accordion-style links.



# Alternate Assessments

**Are students who were scheduled to take the MSAAs last year and missed them, be required to take those tests this year as well as the grade level for this year?**

In Spring 2020, a blanket waiver from all statewide assessments was issued by the US Department of Education [USED]. No students are required to make up assessments from the previous year.

**Will the MSAA training meeting on March 2 be recorded?**

Yes, the MSAA training on 3/2 will be recorded. The recording will then be shared via the alternate assessment listserv, Special Director’s communication, and the Assessment Team website.

# Special Considerations

**Is the Parent Consent Letter (English) available now?**

Yes, it is on the Maine DOE [Assessment Support and Resources webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) within the Communication Toolbox.

**Can the Special Considerations parent consent have a digital signature via in person?**

Yes, if you can have a parent sign the form in person, the “wet” signature would be acceptable.

Alternatively, the form may be provided to the parent via email to be signed electronically.

**Will there be a draft parent consent letter for special consideration for Bulk remote?**

The parent consent letter posted on the [assessment support and resources page](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) would be the same consent form used for bulk special consideration requests.

**Could it be a notice rather than a consent?**

Unfortunately, no. The parent (family) consent is required to ensure family members are aware of the special consideration request while also being aware this means there will be no student level assessment data available from the spring assessment administration.

**Just to be clear, everyone who opts out of coming in person will require a signature, yes? Not just a notification, yes?**

All students who are unable to participate in assessment due to reasons of medical emergency or COVID-19 factors may qualify for a special consideration request. All special consideration requests require a signed parent consent letter, locatedon the Maine DOE [Assessment Support and Resources webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) within the Communication Toolbox. If a parent is refusing assessment on behalf of the student, this does not qualify for a special consideration.

**We have over 400 remote learners in our district. Should we be setting up times for these students to be tested, or should I be planning to submit 400 special considerations?**

If learners are fully remote, for reasons related to health/safety/medical concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic, the school can apply for a special consideration. For students simply opting not to come to school and engaging in remote learning, the Department asks that the district/school proceed with a good faith effort to assess in-person when safely possible to do so.

If the SAU has a high preponderance of students who are fully remote and are unable to accommodate students in the building to assess for the entirety of the assessment window, please reach out to the applicable assessment coordinator directly.

**What do I do if my principal does not have access to NEO, for the special consideration module?**

Please reach out to a member of the assessment team for support with this request. Alternatively, please have the SAU superintendent complete a [request for access](https://www.maine.gov/doe/data-reporting/collection/helpdesk).

**Is there a reason why we need to give documentation for medical special considerations? If we do not need to do so for COVID, I am not understanding the reason for the difference.**

Federal statute outlines specific language regarding to special considerations due to significant medical emergency. Maine has adopted this federal language when receiving special consideration requests from Maine school districts. The special consideration related to COVID-19 is not a federal allowance and is a consideration that the Maine DOE, in response to district concerns, has instituted.

**So, to be clear, if a student is remote, and the assessment can’t be done virtually, we submit the request? we currently have over 100 students in remote status. I assume we are planning on the ELA/math/science assessment will be Virtual and this is mostly for alternate assessments?**

If a student is receiving remote instruction due to being quarantined or has health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, the assessment cannot be administered remotely and the student is unable to enter the building to participate in person, a special consideration request may be submitted.

If for example, there is an entire grade level that is impacted by COVID-19 and are unable to participate in the assessment in person for the entire duration of the assessment window due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that the district reach out to the assessment coordinator of the assessment that is directly impacted.

All sciences assessments will be administered in person, there is no not a remote administration option. For math and ELA/literacy, NWEA MAP growth has the option to be administered remotely if a student is unable to complete in person. The MSAA math and ELA/literacy assessment must be administered in person.

**I would also like to know how to do a group submission of names for exemption for our fully distant learners.**

If there is a large group of students who are receiving instruction remotely and are unable to participate in the assessment in person as a direct result of COVID-19, we ask that the district reach out to the assessment coordinator of the assessment that is directly impacted to receive the bulk process template.

**If doing the Math and ELA remotely, is that considered a special consideration?**

No, a special consideration pertains to an instance where a student is unable to participate during the entire applicable assessment window due to a medical emergency or COVID-19/Quarantine reason.

**Will bulk registration of our remote students for special considerations count against our 95% requirement if approved?**

No. If students are unable to participate due to being fully remote learners for the entire assessment window, because of reasons related to COVID/Quarantine, a special consideration may be requested. Special considerations are exemptions from assessment and are not counted as non-participation.

**The special considerations is only for on-site assessments, correct? Would that be for science and alternatives? I assume the ELA/math will be remote, so that doesn’t count for COVID related?**

Correct. Due to the availability of remote administration of the NWEA MAP growth, the Department is not anticipating receiving special consideration requests for these assessments. However, the Department also recognizes there may be mitigating circumstances that a special consideration may be required for a student for math or ELA/Literacy. The SAU is encouraged to reach out the applicable assessment coordinator should this be a concern.

**Can you remind us where to find the Parent Consent Letter for Special Considerations?**

The parent consent form is generated automatically within the special considerations module as the request is submitted and includes student and assessment specific information. For templates / translations of the parent consent letter, please see the Maine DOE Assessment [Webpages](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) in Communication Toolbox.

**If we are unable to administer remote, as in we do not have the staff to do so, can we just say that no students remote will take the assessment?**

Please reach out to the applicable assessment coordinator.

**So, if you are doing a bulk exemption you still need to have all parents sign the forms?**

Yes, a parent consent is required for each student to ensure the family is aware a special consideration will be submitted. Electronic signatures are acceptable.

**Just to be clear, everyone who opts out of coming in person will require a signature, yes?**

All students who are unable to participate in assessment due to reasons of medical emergency or COVID-19 factors may qualify for a special consideration request. All special consideration requests require a signed parent consent letter, locatedon the Maine DOE [Assessment Support and Resources webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports) within the Communication Toolbox. If a parent is refusing assessment on behalf of the student, this does not qualify for a special consideration and the student would be a non-participant.

**For students in Special Purpose Private Schools, do responsible school districts make the special consideration requests for remote students or does that fall to the individual SPPS?**

The process for requesting Special Considerations for students attending Special Purpose Private Schools (SPPS) is slightly different from students who are enrolled in one school entity. All students attending SPPS’s have a primary/sending district who is fiscally responsible for the student’s education, in addition to the secondary/concurrent SPPS enrollment. As in the past both the primary/sending district OR the SPPS are able to submit a special consideration request. The bulk Special Consideration request process does not include any mechanism for a primary/sending district to inform the secondary/concurrent SPPS of a submitted special considerations request, nor does it include any mechanism for an SPPS initiated special considerations request to obtain authorization from the primary/sending district to make such request as required in the NEO/MEA Module. Therefore, we request that ***all Special Consideration exemption requests for students attending secondary/concurrent Special Purpose Private Schools be submitted individually through the*** [***NEO/MEA Module***](https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/Accounts/Account/Login) ***by either school entity.***

**What if we’ve already requested the bulk spreadsheet is there anything else required?**

If you’ve already connected with the applicable assessment coordinator and **are in receipt** of the template, there is no further action required on your behalf at this time. If you still require a copy of the template, please reach out to the applicable assessment coordinator. The template and request(s) cannot be submitted until the applicable assessment window opens. The SAU has until the end of the applicable assessment window to submit the special consideration request(s). Please refer to the [Special Considerations Large Group Guidance](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Guidance%20for%20Special%20Considerations%202021%20Bulk%20Groups_0_0.docx) for additional information.

**Is there a due date for requests for Special Considerations? I am wondering, just in case, if remote students are somehow back in school before the end of the window?**

Assessment windows have been extended this year to provide flexibility and opportunity for students to participate in assessments when safely feasible to do so. Special considerations requests should not be submitted until closer to the end of the assessment window, if the student has been and will continue to be fully remote and therefore unable to participate in onsite assessments.

**For students who are fully remote who we can't get in, is there a form we fill out? We have 225**

**student who are fully remote and won't have busing for them. The number who won't be able**

**to take it is likely to be large. Is it ok to exempt a large number of students? Will that impact**

**funding?**

A large number of districts are implementing a hybrid approach to instruction which includes

identified days engaged in remote and in-person learning. The Department anticipates the

extension of assessment windows for assessment administration provides increased opportunity

for students to participate in the assessment on days when they are attending in person. Should

a school have all students within any one assessment grade, typically 3-8 and 3rd year of high

school, engaged in remote learning for 100% of the time during the entire assessment window,

please reach out to the assessment team. For individual students who may be engaged in 100%

remote learning and are unable to attend school in person due to COVID-19, a special

consideration request may be submitted on behalf of the student.

**Do we have to require the NWEA for students who are full distance learners since it can be given at home? Or is it the district's choice to opt them out of that one? I understand the science assessment we exempt all of these learners as we don't have space to bring them in.**

NWEA MAP growth is the required Math & ELA/Literacy assessment for all students grades 3-8 & 3rd year high school. It is required for both students who are in-person and fully remote. Students in grades 3-8 & 3rd year high school with the most significant cognitive disabilities will participate in the MSAA math and ELA/Literacy. This assessment cannot be administered remotely.

For the Maine science and the MSAA- Science assessments, a best faith effort to administer the assessment to students in grades 5, 8 and 3rd year of high school is requested. Blanket exemptions for Maine science or MSAA Science are not available. The Maine Science assessment window has been extended a further two weeks through June 11, to provide additional time to support scheduling and locating additional areas to assess. Please also note, the assessment can be administered to smaller groups of students and does not require all students participate at the same time.

**What is the time frame for the bulk special consideration? Is it suggested we reach out to those remote families now informing regarding the delivery of the test on site to determine who may or may not attend? Should we give them the option prior or make the decision based on our remote numbers at this time?**

The bulk process for the COVID-19 reasons expanded upon the previously permissible exemption for significant medical emergencies. The COVID-19 special consideration and subsequent bulk request process was developed for students who are unable to come into a school environment to participate in an assessment and has immediate applicability to all assessments with the exception NWEA MAP growth as this can be administered remotely and in-person. The bulk process applies to assessments, such as New Meridian, MSAA, and ACCESS which cannot be administered remotely., and there may be large groups of students who cannot come into the school environment to participate in the assessment for the duration of the applicable assessment window. The Department recognizes that COVID-19 is ever present and the intention of this special consideration is for those students who are receiving remote instruction for the entire duration of the window due to COVID-19 related health concerns

If you know that the student will be 100% remote for the remainder of the school year and/or unable to come in to a school environment with a safe assessment plan that has been coordinated by the school and offered to each student, a special consideration may be submitted when the assessment window opens.

**Would a lack of safe testing spaces qualify as a reason to request an exemption?**

If space is an issue and you are unable to schedule those assessments within the extended windows provided, it possibly could be. The intentional extension of applicable assessment windows provides additional time to address challenges related to scheduling. In addition, the limited grades assessed for example in science may help to alleviate challenges related to scheduling.

**If a student who is unable to come on site for the alternate assessment is eligible for a special consideration waiver?**

As alternate assessments must be administered in-person, for those students who are fully remote during the assessment window, due to reasons of either medical emergency or the COVID-19 pandemic, the school can apply for a special consideration request.

**What is the process for identifying test administrators in Special Purpose Private Schools both within and outside of Maine?**

Responsible SAUs should reach out to Special Purpose Private Schools to identify assessment administrators for Maine students. The special education director or assessment coordinator should also share all ongoing communication regarding the assessment, training, etc. with the applicable assessment administrator.

**If we are not able to get a student in for the ACCESS, what do we need to do for documentation?**

For those students who are fully remote during the assessment window, due to reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school can apply for a special consideration request.