

**Guidance to Support Maine School Administrative Units During**

**2020 - 2021 Assessment Administration**

March 2021

Contents

[Maine Educational Assessments [MEAs] 3](#_Toc66188776)

[Acronyms and Terms 3](#_Toc66188777)

[Overview & Rationale for Assessment 4](#_Toc66188778)

[Guidance for Administering Assessments 4](#_Toc66188779)

[PPE and Sanitization 5](#_Toc66188780)

[Proctoring 5](#_Toc66188781)

[Scheduling 5](#_Toc66188782)

[Technology Considerations 6](#_Toc66188783)

[Additional Guidance on Encouraging and Supporting High Participation 6](#_Toc66188784)

[Material Handling Logistics 6](#_Toc66188785)

[Additional Items Recommended for Safer Administration 6](#_Toc66188786)

[General Interim Assessment in ELA/Literacy and Math – NWEA 8](#_Toc66188787)

[Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) - English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Math 9](#_Toc66188788)

[MSAA Science 9](#_Toc66188789)

[Scheduling and Administration 9](#_Toc66188790)

[Encouraging and Supporting High Participation 10](#_Toc66188791)

[General Assessment of Science – Maine Science 11](#_Toc66188792)

[ACCESS for ELLs 13](#_Toc66188793)

[Proctoring 13](#_Toc66188794)

[Material 13](#_Toc66188795)

[Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance 14](#_Toc66188796)

[Encouraging and Supporting Participation 15](#_Toc66188797)

[ALTERNATE ACCESS 16](#_Toc66188798)

[Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance 16](#_Toc66188799)

[Material Handling Logistics 17](#_Toc66188800)

[Encouraging and Supporting High Participation 18](#_Toc66188801)

[National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2021 19](#_Toc66188802)

[NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey 19](#_Toc66188803)

[NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaire Special Study 20](#_Toc66188804)

[Special Considerations 21](#_Toc66188805)

[Criteria for Exemption: Significant Medical Emergency 21](#_Toc66188806)

[What If My Student Does Not Have a Medical Emergency? 22](#_Toc66188807)

[Criteria or Exemption: COVID/Quarantine 22](#_Toc66188808)

[Bulk Upload Process 22](#_Toc66188809)

[Parental/Family Consent 23](#_Toc66188810)

[Maine DOE Decision Tree of Assessment Participation for All Instructional Models 24](#_Toc66188811)

# Maine Educational Assessments [MEAs]

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| --- | --- |
| **Assessments** | **Population** |
| ACCESS for ELLs  *English language proficiency* | English learners in grades K-12. |
| Alternate ACCESS for ELLs  *Alternate assessment for English language proficiency* | English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 1-12. |
| NWEA  *ELA/literacy and mathematics* | Students in grades 3-8 and third year of high school. |
| Multi State Alternate Assessment – MSAA  *Alternate assessment for ELA/Literacy and mathematics* | Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3-8 and third year of high school. |
| New Meridian Science  *Science* | Students in grades 5, 8, and third year of high school. |
| Science Alternate Assessment – MSAA Science  *Alternate assessment for science* | Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in grades 5, 8, and third year of high school. |

# Acronyms and Terms

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Terms** | **Acronyms** |
| Assessment Administrator | AA |
| District Assessment Coordinator | DAC |
| English Language Arts/Literacy | ELA |
| Multi-State Alternate Assessment | MSAA |
| School Assessment Coordinator | SAC |

# Overview & Rationale for Assessment

The Maine Department of Education has created this resource to support the 2020-2021 school year administration of assessments in Maine schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. On September 3, 2020, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos and the US Education Department [released a letter](http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/Secretary%20DeVos%20Letter%20to%20CSSOs%2009%2003%202020.pdf) to all chief state school officers indicating federal waivers for assessment administration will not be provided this year. More recently, on [February 22, 2021,](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/materials) the US Education Department released a *Dear Colleague Letter* outlining opportunities for flexibility in relation to assessment administration, reporting, and waiver opportunities related to accountability. The state assessment affords schools the following opportunities:

* A snapshot of where students are in their learning at this moment in time;
* An understanding of the impact to learning during the COVID-19 crisis;
* Identification of academic learning gaps between student populations;
* Qualitative data to inform curricular and programmatic decisions in the coming months.

At this time, Maine schools continue to operate utilizing in-person, hybrid and remote instructional models as determined locally, using [Maine DOE’s Guidance Framework for Return to School](https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework) and public health guidelines developed by [Maine CDC](https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus/index.shtml).

As SAUs continue to design and implement innovative solutions to the unprecedented challenges caused by COVID-19, Maine DOE is also seeking innovative solutions. This document will continue to be updated as information and additional resources become available.

Maine DOE recognizes that a more efficient assessment with more immediate and actionable data to support students and teachers during this novel school year is critical, and we have committed to providing an assessment and flexibilities that support the efforts in Maine classrooms.

In this document, you will find general guidance pertaining to assessment administration as well as guidance for each individual assessment in the MEA suite of assessments.

# Guidance for Administering Assessments

SAUs and schools are asked to make a good faith effort to administer and complete all statewide assessments as circumstances allow in the spring of 2021. Action steps by SAUs/schools to demonstrate this effort include but are not limited to the following:

* In partnership with Maine DOE, ensuring all required assessment materials are in place;
* Completion of required trainings for assessment coordinators and administrators;
* Planning and scheduling for assessments, including session locations;
* Encouragement of participation, including for remote learners/families.

Remote administration of some of the statewide summative assessments is not a viable option. Therefore, schools must follow health and safety requirements as established by the Maine Center for Disease Control [Maine CDC] and the Maine Department of Education [Maine DOE] when administering spring 2021 assessments. This guidance includes [MDOE’s Framework for Reopening Schools and Returning to In-Person Instruction](https://www.maine.gov/doe/framework/part-I/#6r), including the following steps regardless of the county’s red, yellow or green designation:

* Symptom screening at home for all staff and students
* Physical distancing and facilities
* Masks/face coverings
* Hand hygiene
* Personal protective equipment
* Return to school following illness

## PPE and Sanitization

Allow sufficient time between sessions for handwashing, sanitization, moving children in and out, taking temperatures (if applicable), completing health surveys/self-certification, and other safety procedures including Maine CDC guidelines for sanitization.

## Proctoring

The district may consider training or supporting additional staff members to administer assessments to maximize the number of students who may participate in the assessment in-person at one time. The district may also consider scheduling substitute teachers to cover classrooms while trained educators are administering the assessment.

## Scheduling

Assessment should be incorporated into student and teacher schedules in the most convenient way possible. Please take into consideration when scheduling, sessions may be longer than normal due to social distancing and sanitizing needs. Be sure to coordinate with district and school administrators to ensure schedules for multiple assessments will not cause unintended health and safety risks, as multiple assessments may have the same or overlapping administration windows. Collaborate with applicable staff members to ensure appropriate modifications for students with supports, accommodations or unique needs as outlined in their Individual Education Programs (IEPs) or 504 plans. Teachers should strategically utilize instruction and assessment practice opportunities in order to familiarize students with the safety precautions that will be implemented for assessments.

## Technology Considerations

Check with your technology departments to ensure that the students’ devices are running the most recent version of the assessment platform, as updates to software may not be reliably deployed remotely. If these updates cannot be completed remotely, allow time for the updates to happen when students bring in their devices, or have a small number of devices that you sanitize between students. Try to minimize the sharing of devices between students where possible. If devices must be shared, sanitize between usages by students.

## Additional Guidance on Encouraging and Supporting High Participation

Clear and consistent communication with and among administrators, coordinators, educators, and parents/families is crucial to ensure the highest participation possible. Parent notification letters should detail precautions being taken by the school to maintain safety and wellness to help alleviate anxiety related to assessment situations. The Department encourages SAUs to keep track of family communication regarding the scheduling of sessions. Outline assessment plans in an easily accessible format, such as an FAQ document, explaining the plan and offering guidance to address health and safety concerns prior to administration. Please also consider the transportation needs of students and families to encourage participation. Pre-plan adherence to CDC safety protocols if transportation is to be provided.

## Material Handling Logistics

Maine has transitioned to all assessments being offered online, however, where accommodations may exist and a student receives a paper-based copy of the assessment, we recommend that staff wear gloves when distributing, handling, or collecting materials. Consider setting up the room before students enter with their assessment booklet and have them return the booklet to a specific container at the end to minimize handling materials between assessment administrator and student.

## Additional Items Recommended for Safer Administration

* + Plastic wrap or keyboard covers
  + Clear masks/face coverings
  + 70% alcohol solution
  + Spray bottles
  + Rags/wipes/paper towels
  + Hand sanitizer
  + Pencils for students to keep
  + Sheet protectors
  + Gloves

The following sections contain guidance specific to each state assessment.

# General Interim Assessment in ELA/Literacy and Math – NWEA

MAP Growth assessments provide data to educators in order to support and inform instructional decision making in the classroom in both ELA and mathematics.

MAP Growth tests, which are vertically scaled across grades K–12, measure student achievement using items aligned to the Common Core State Standards. Each item is assigned a score on a RIT scale. Because the scales are equal-interval across grades, educators can compare academic growth across students and time — within an academic year and over multiple years. The assessments adapt above and below grade level to accurately identify every student’s achievement level. MAP Growth assessments draw from an item bank containing nearly 50,000 items, including technology-enhanced items, across all grades, content areas, and languages. The item pools cover all instructional areas and difficulty levels.

**Remote Assessment Support:** The remote testing experience is similar to onsite administration, with changes mainly in proctor communication with students. After completing more than 400,000 remote assessment events in spring 2020, NWEA gathered feedback from partners to develop resources to guide schools as they prepare for the reality of a remote administration. Resources include a high-level overview and guidance for remote administration, user manuals, troubleshooting guides, frequently asked questions, accommodation considerations for remote administration, school-to -home communication support materials, assessment prep checklists, device readiness tools, and a series of short videos to help proctors and assessment coordinators. The remote assessment webinar for educators provides answers from our experts to educators’ pressing questions about remote assessment, from the student and proctor experience and best practices from virtual schools to ways to ensure data validity. This webinar can be viewed at <https://www.nwea.org/resource-center/resource/remote-testing-on-demand-webinar/>

The hyperlinks contained in the above section provide information and resources related to remote administration; however, there may be elements outlined within the resources and supports that may not be applicable to Maine SAUs.

# Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) - English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy and Math

# MSAA Science

The Multi-State Alternate Assessments in Math and ELA/Literacy (MSAA – Math & ELA/Literacy, MSAA - Science) are designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general assessments are not appropriate nor accessible, even with accommodations. Students who are assessed with the MSAA [must meet the participation criteria](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/materials/msaa) and be identified as alternate assessment participants in their Individualized Education Plans [IEPs] as well as local and state enrollment systems. Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards [AA-AAS] provide these students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the content areas of English/language arts, mathematics and science. These assessments are designed to be administered in a 1:1 setting and facilitated by an educator who has extensive familiarity with the student and their IEP.

## Scheduling and Administration

SAUs/schools are encouraged to schedule assessments throughout the entire window and maximize the flexibility of the students being assessed. In hybrid instructional models, schedule the students for days they are already receiving instruction in person. Flexibility, coordination and patience with parents and families will be critical if a student needs to complete assessments at another time. Scheduling of staff to facilitate the assessments is another important consideration, particularly in the hybrid schedule. Additional staff to support may be required. Again, it is strongly recommended that students are partnered with assessment administrators whom they are familiar with and vice versa. Assessment coordinators/administrators may also want to plan to allow students to complete as many sessions/assessments as possible during a single session, if this is feasible for the student and allowable based on IEP accommodations. Coordinators are encouraged to plan for student breaks if it is anticipated a student will take multiple sessions/assessments in a single day. Be sure to coordinate with SAU and school administrators to ensure schedules for multiple assessments or sessions will not cause unintended health and safety risks. Though the MSAA/MSAA Science are administered in a 1:1 setting, it is recommended that the Assessment Coordinator (AC)/Assessment Administrator (AA)plan to use a space that allows for social distancing as much as possible between student/s and AAs. Ensure that health and safety protocols, including face coverings and proper sanitization procedures, are in place. All potential AAs must complete the appropriate training modules within the MSAA System before they will have access to administer the assessments.

## Encouraging and Supporting High Participation

If you are coming from a hybrid or remote environment, please keep the following considerations in mind:

* + Parent notification letters should detail precautions being taken by the school for safety and wellness to help parents feel comfortable about assessment situations.
  + Try to ensure that students don’t consistently miss the same remote classes during assessment administration. Creating a special schoolwide assessment schedule is one practical approach. Make sure that teachers understand that students need to take assessments and will be missing remote classes.
  + Districts should consider the transportation needs of students and families to encourage participation. Preplan adherence to CDC safety protocols if transportation is to be provided by the schools.
  + It is recommended that districts document every effort made to contact parents and schedule assessment sessions should parents refuse to bring their students to school for the assessment.

# General Assessment of Science – Maine Science

This spring (2021) Maine Department of Education will usher in the new Maine science assessment based, for the first time, on the Maine science and engineering standards, i.e. NGSS, adopted in April 2019. In a year of firsts, the general science assessment will also go online under the direction of a new vendor, [New Meridian](https://newmeridiancorp.org/science-exchange/). This new format will allow for greater flexibility over the coming years. In the short term, changes of note include a greater focus on science and engineering practices along with the application of knowledge rather than rote recall. Questions will mostly occur in clusters around a common problem or process. The assessment will continue to focus on the performance expectation level, yet under Maine’s new science standards these are three-dimensional performance expectations that incorporate science practices and crosscutting concepts with disciplinary core ideas/content.

The Maine science assessment, in collaboration with New Meridian, will provide Maine students in grades 5, 8, and the third year of high the opportunity to demonstrate the science principles and practices that they know and can do as they prepare to navigate an increasingly technical world. With the adoption of new science standards, educators are charged with the goal of increasing the depth of instruction and student learning through a focus on critical inquiry and application. The Maine Science assessment is closely aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). This assessment was selected to provide an opportunity for Maine educators and SAUs to administer a high-quality science assessment aligned to three-dimensional science standards.

Due to time constraints, the Year-1 administration of the New Meridian, MEA science assessments will consist of summative assessment items and clusters licensed from the New Meridian Science Exchange. Launched in 2019, the New Meridian Science Exchange, a participatory science assessment item bank that facilitates sharing of science content. The science exchange includes over 600 science items for grades 5, 8, and high school that are aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) aligned content from multiple states, as well as items developed by New Meridian. All of this content is reviewed by New Meridian content experts to ensure that every item measures multiple dimensions of the NGSS. This includes a focus on the Disciplinary Core Ideas, the Science and Engineering Practices, and the Cross-Cutting Concepts outlined in the Performance Expectations of the NGSS. The assessment also contains a number of different item types, including multiple choice, multiple select, technology enhanced, and constructed response. These item types allow for a deeper investigation of the three dimensions of the NGSS and allow students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do at each grade level.

This new assessment will be administered online, with paper-versions as an accommodation. New Meridian subcontracts with [MZD](https://mzdevinc.com/), who provides the platform for assessment administration. The online platform is provided by MZD’s [ADAM](https://mzdevinc.com/adam/) Assessment Delivery and Management Platform, built by [MZD](https://mzdevinc.com/) flexible, scalable, and secure tools engineered for the real-world needs of educators, and designed to uniquely enable more authentic measurements of students’ knowledge and skills. There is no remote model of the new Science Assessment.

The Maine Science assessment window has recently been extended by an additional two weeks. This extension provides a total of four (4) weeks for assessment administration. The Maine Science assessment window opens May 17 through June 11, 2021. SAUs are encouraged to schedule assessments throughout the entire window, while considering the health and safety precautions required under the circumstances of the pandemic. For example, in hybrid instructional models, students could be scheduled to participate in the assessment on days that they are already receiving instruction in person. Additional staff to support may be required to meet the challenges of assessing all students within the administration window.

# ACCESS for ELLs

ACCESS is the collective name for WIDA's suite of summative English language proficiency assessments and is taken annually by English Learners in kindergarten through grade 12. There is no remote model of the ACCESS assessment; it must be administered in person. Provisional ELs (i.e., new ELs identified by the provisional screener but not a standard EL screener) should participate in ACCESS assessments until they qualify for services with a standard screening. If the standard screening occurs before March 16 and the student is identified as an English learner, the student is required to participate in the ACCESS assessment. Students screened after March 16 may participate in the ACCESS assessment if the district exercises that option. The ACCESS assessment window runs from January 11 through April 16, 2021.

Please note the wearing of masks/face covering can impede a student’s ability to understand when listening to teachers, or a teacher’s understanding of a student’s speaking, which may impact administration and student scores. Make sure that a student who is wearing a mask/face covering can be understood by conducting a microphone check before conducting the online speaking assessment.

See below for considerations to support a safe in-person administration.

## Proctoring

Kindergarten: Assessments are administered one-to-one. It is recommended that assessment coordinators plan to use space that allows for social distancing as much as possible between the pair(s) of student and proctors and other individuals in the space.

Grades 1-3: Consider providing each student a personal pencil to keep for the writing portion, so that the pencils are not shared with other students.

Grade 4-12: Sanitize computer stations and keyboards in between uses or put plastic wrap on the keyboard that is changed after every use during the writing portion. This is effective in saving sanitation time and reducing wear and tear on the computers.

Grades 1-12: If speaking tests need to be one-on-one, allow a minimum of 20-30 minutes per student to complete. If more than one student is participating in the assessment at a time, make sure they’re physically distanced.

## Material

The ACCESS for ELLs materials order window within WIDA AMS opened in October and closed in mid-November. Orders for materials were based on counts for all eligible English Learners. This includes online and paper administered assessments. The ordering window for additional materials opened November 25 and will remain open through the assessment window.

When returning materials to WIDA, assessment administrators and other staff will be handling paper materials used by students. Consider wearing gloves and/or allowing materials to sit undisturbed for a period of time before handling.

Data Recognition Corp (DRC) provides large plastic bags (mailers) to be used to return assessments for scoring. Upon completion of the last session, consider having students place their booklets directly into the mailers. Follow DRC guidance on the proper handling of the paper materials for shipping.

Some suggested safety precautions for kindergarten materials handling include putting the cards and story book into page protectors or placing cards and items on the table under a transparent overlay, such as a sheet of plexiglass. Kindergartners can use their pencils as pointers to indicate their answers in the books or on the cards, instead of using their hands. We suggest providing a pencil to each child to use during the assessment and to keep afterwards.

A possible strategy for paper-based assessments is to administer the listening domain in small groups using the audio CD instead of using headsets. This approach entails playing the audio track for all the students in the room at the same time. The room would need to be a larger room with good acoustics. A gymnasium would not be an appropriate setting as it could impede the listening comprehension.

Encourage students to use their own headsets or earbuds with built-in microphones for online administration; make sure that the microphone attached to personal headsets or earbuds passes the mic check prior to the start of the session. Shared headsets should be sanitized between usages by students in the manner recommended by the CDC. Make sure that a child who is wearing a mask/ face covering can be understood by conducting a mic check. Allow extra time between sessions to accommodate sanitizing. If you choose to not use headsets and instead use the built-in microphone on the Chromebook or laptop, plan to have students test individually or separate them in a large room so that background noise isn’t captured on the student’s speaking domain.

## Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance

Keep in mind how your students’ classes are scheduled. To reduce the risk of transmission, strategically plan your assessment schedules minimally mixing different cohorts of students and limiting additional social interactions between groups that would not normally interact. There is a medium risk in mixing groups of students and teachers throughout/across school days, according to the CDC, however, this may affect the number of sessions for each tier.

In-person assessments may require additional staffing to complete all assessments during the applicable assessment window; additional individuals may need to be trained to support administering the ACCESS through the WIDA website. Check the WIDA website for the most up-to-date procedures pertaining to assessment administration. All potential assessment administrators must go through WIDA certification training in order to administer the assessment.

## Encouraging and Supporting Participation

If you are coming from a hybrid or remote environment, please keep the following considerations in mind:

* + Parent notification letters should detail precautions being taken by the school for safety and wellness to help parents feel comfortable about testing situations.
  + Try to ensure that students don’t consistently miss the same remote classes during assessment. Creating a schoolwide assessment schedule is one practical approach. Communicate with teachers to ensure understanding student participating in assessment will be absent from remote classes. Students should not be held accountable for any content missed due to ACCESS testing.
  + Districts should consider the transportation needs of students and families to encourage participation. Preplan adherence to CDC safety protocols if transportation is to be provided by the schools.
  + It is recommended that districts document every effort made to contact parents and schedule assessment administration, should parents refuse to bring their students to school for the assessment.

# ALTERNATE ACCESS

Students who take Alternate ACCESS each have unique needs, abilities, proficiencies, and goals as outlined in their IEPs. As part of the IEP process, eligibility for the Alternate ACCESS will have been determined ahead of time in consultation with the bilingual specialist present on Alternate ACCESS participation guidance for 2020-21. Alternate ACCESS administration strategies may be different from region to region, SAU to SAU, school to school, and perhaps even student to student. The Alternate ACCESS assessment window opens January 11 and closes April 16, 2021.

Maine is a member state in the WIDA Consortium. WIDA, the vendor, has developed the ACCESS suite of assessments. These ACCESS assessment tools measure the English language proficiency of multilingual students. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participate in the Alternate ACCESS.

There are options for Maine educators to safely assess students using the Alternate ACCESS. These discussions must begin with the student’s IEP.

## Student and Proctoring Scheduling Guidance

It is recommended for SAUs reach out to families as early as possible prior to the ACCESS assessment window to share that state assessments will continue as scheduled, albeit perhaps in a different format than usual. It is strongly recommended that the assessment be given by an assessment administrator with whom the student is familiar and administered in a location comfortable to the student. This may mean that the SAU enlists the student’s special education case manager or other familiar teacher to become certified to administer Alternate ACCESS. They may work with the district’s coordinator of multilingual services to create an account in the WIDA Secure Portal to provide guidance on how to complete training and achieve credentials to administer Alternate ACCESS.

WIDA has an estimated that 20 minutes is needed per language domain for a total of 80 minutes the student will actually spend on assessment tasks. This estimate does not include convening the student for the assessment, providing breaks in between domains, redirecting the student as needed, sanitizing spaces between students, etc. All of these transitions must be carefully considered based on the individual needs of the child and their IEP. The four Alternate ACCESS for ELLs domains can be administered in any order and are not timed. Due to the adaptive nature of the assessment and unique abilities and behaviors of the students, actual assessment times can vary widely. The different domain sessions can be administered on different days, with no minimum or maximum break between the administrations” (from pages 41-42 of the 2020-21 WIDA District and School Test Coordinator Manual).

## Material Handling Logistics

Alternate ACCESS materials are shipped along with all other ACCESS materials in early January. Most of ACCESS is administered online, however, the Alternate ACCESS materials are paper based. Secure assessment materials are included for the administration of the Alternate ACCESS; however, the Booklet may be cut apart and presented in a way that better suits the needs of the individual student participating in the assessment. The Assessment Administrator Script and the Student Response Booklet must remain intact and all materials must be returned to WIDA-DRC at upon the completion of the assessment. Further information related to this can be located on page 71 of the 2020-21 WIDA Test Administrator Manual.

ACCESS administrators should be provided with appropriate PPE, including, but not limited to, clear face coverings/masks, hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, antibacterial wipes, page protectors, and/or plastic coverings that make for easier sanitization thereby limiting the cleaning process in between administrations. To prevent the sharing of materials unique to the assessment administrators, district-level users of the WIDA-Assessment Management System (WIDA-AMS) can order additional materials so assessment administrators do not have to share materials, and manuals can be printed or viewed online. There are no manipulatives involved in the Alternate ACCESS; it is almost strictly the student pointing at pictures in the test book or responding with their voice when prompted. The writing tasks direct the student to use a pencil. The sharing of writing implements is strongly discouraged, we recommend assessment administrators keep a pencil for their own use. It is highly encouraged that school districts equip their Alternate ACCESS assessment administrators with a supply of No. 2 pencils that they may gift to the students upon completion. Assessment administrators are encouraged to have students point with their pencil or some type of pointer that can be sanitized (rather than their finger). Additionally, if a picture from the assessment item is amplified or magnified by making a paper copy for better visibility, please seek further guidance specific to the assessment procedures and materials in the WIDA manuals mentioned throughout this section.

Once Alternate ACCESS materials have been collected by the SAU, it may be wise to quarantine them before return shipping to WIDA-DRC. Secure materials are typically bagged, zip-tied, packed into boxes, sealed, and shipped via parcel service with prepaid labels. It is anticipated that WIDA-DRC will be providing more COVID-19-related guidance about the actual shipping and handling procedures of their materials as the ACCESS administration window gets closer.

## 

## Encouraging and Supporting High Participation

Bilingual staff, family liaisons, and community outreach personnel are going to be valuable resources in connecting with families to ensure a smooth and safe assessment administration process for all parties involved. SAUs should be flexible in considering and adapting to the cultural and linguistic factors in communication and scheduling (religious customs, gender-related norms, addressing people by proper names, regional gestures, etc.) in the cases that in-home assessment is used. It will be crucial to have relevant personnel review students’ IEPs and to consider all possible cultural norms, as well as to certify staff (familiar to the student) to administer the assessment. These considerations will better equip districts to provide a comfortable and appropriate assessment environment.

# National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2021

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), with the support of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), has decided to postpone the 2021 national assessment in math and reading, scheduled to begin January 2021, and concentrate on the 2022 assessments. NCES determined that at this time, the NAEP cannot be administered in a manner that would meet the mandated requirements for administration of the assessment, given NAEP’s unique design and methodology. COVID-19 related conditions prevent NCES from administering NAEP safely to a sufficient and representative sample of students that would allow for the reporting of the results in a valid and reliable manner consistent with NCES’ statistical standards and the NAEP Authorization Act  (20 U.S.C. 9622(b)(2)(B)).

For more information please visit the [NCES page](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks2020/11_25_2020.asp) pertaining to the [delay of the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) assessment](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/commissioner/remarks2020/11_25_2020.asp).

Read a [statement from Chair Gov. Haley Barbour and Vice Chair Alice Peisch](https://www.nagb.gov/news-and-events/news-releases/2020/governing-board-statement-on-postponment-of-naep-2021.html) reflecting the consensus of the Board in support of rescheduling the NAEP Assessment.

## NAEP 2021 Monthly School Survey

The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) at the U.S. Department of Education recently [announced a national survey](https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/ed-announces-national-survey-gather-critical-data-school-reopening) intended to collect data pertaining to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students and educators. This project, known as the "NAEP 2021 School Survey", was created to address the requirements of [Executive Order 14000](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-01-26/pdf/2021-01864.pdf).

Maine schools originally selected for participation in NAEP for the spring of 2021 are participating in the monthly NAEP 2021 School Survey. The Maine Department of Education recognizes the importance of accurate and reliable data to guide decision-making and appreciates the commitment of Maine schools selected to participate. Schools and districts, selected for participation, were notified by the department during the latter part of February. Additional resources to assist schools and districts with gathering the data for survey completion are available from the NAEP Coordinator and will be posted to the NAEP and International Assessment section on the [Supports & Resources page of the assessment webpages](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will administer the survey monthly to gather information regarding grade 4 and 8 student instructional modes and attendance rates through the end of the 2020-21 school year. The goal of the survey is to provide data to inform policy and identify needed resources to continue to support in-person learning. This data will be collected at the national and local level(s). Please note that this study does not require student participation and involves only the schools originally selected for the postponed NAEP 2021 assessment. A designee for each school will complete the survey each month during the administration window. The scheduled monthly windows for data collection are as follows:

* February 22- March 12
* March 22-26
* April 19-23
* May 24-28
* June 21-25

The Maine Department of Education will receive a data file from each of the monthly data collection windows as well as a final cumulative data file. The Department plans to use this data to support schools as they develop ongoing instructional models and plans. A pdf copy of the NAEP 2021 School Survey is [located here for your convenience](https://docs.mynaep.com/myschool/documents/NAEP_2021_School_Survey.pdf).

## NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaire Special Study

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) remains undecided on the timing of the NAEP 2021 School and Teacher Questionnaire Special Study. These questionnaires are customarily completed by the teachers of the mathematics and reading of the students in the selected grades and schools. In addition, there will be a small number of questions related to the impact of the pandemic. This study is scheduled to be conducted during Spring 2021.  The window for administration of the survey questionnaires has not been determined. Additional information pertaining to the questionnaires will be provided as it becomes available. There will not be an administration of student questionnaires in 2021.

# Special Considerations

A Special Consideration is a request for a student to be exempt from participation in a required Maine Educational Assessments (MEA) for medical reasons. ​ Special Consideration requests must be submitted within the open assessment window of each specific applicable Maine Educational Assessment within [NEO](https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/Accounts/Account/Login​).  Log-in credentials are required. Assessment administration windows for each assessment can be located on the [assessment calendar.](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/calendar)

Students receiving academic instruction in grades 3-8 and third year of high school must participate in state assessments.​ In rare instances, a student is unable to participate in either instruction and/or assessment. In these cases, a request for Maine DOE approval of non-participation, a Special Consideration, must be requested. ​ Absence due to behavior issues, suspensions, and truancy does not meet the definition of a medical emergency, and therefore is not eligible criteria for a Special Consideration exemption request.

Special Consideration requests must be based on a decision made by an educational team that may include the following, as appropriate: ​

* The student’s teachers,​
* English as a Second Language endorsed educator,​
* School counselor,​
* Principal,​
* Parent or legal guardian, and,​
* if possible, the student. ​

This educational team collects and reviews information and documents the decision to make a request.

## Criteria for Exemption: Significant Medical Emergency

* This includes long-term hospitalization **without** access to academics, severe trauma, mental health crisis (student is in danger to self or others), or placement in hospice care.​
* A Medical Emergency may also include medically fragile students that are not able to participate in any academic activity and/or statewide assessment due to a debilitating disease.​A narrative/justification statement is required in Section 6.0. ​
* **Additional backup justification/attachments for this category are REQUIRED.**

## What If My Student Does Not Have a Medical Emergency?

* Consider all 504 or Special Education Accommodations that may be used such as:​
  + Paper version request​
  + Extended time​
  + Multiple assessment sessions​
  + Scribe​
  + Complete assessment in an alternate setting​
  + Be familiar with the supports that are available within the applicable assessment system.

## Criteria or Exemption: COVID/Quarantine

* COVID/Quarantine includes a student who has positive COVID test results, is unable to participate in statewide assessment due to the condition of quarantine according to Maine DOE COVID19 -Standard Operating Procedure or has elected for full remote instruction during each individual assessment window. ​
* A narrative/justification statement is required in Section 6.0. ​
* **Additional backup justification attachments for this category are NOT REQUIRED**

## Bulk Upload Process

As a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the variety of instructional models implemented within Maine schools, and recognizing schools/districts may have a large number of students unable to participate in required assessments due to health concerns, the assessment team has developed a bulk upload process that may be utilized by schools when submitting large numbers of special considerations.

Please reach out to the applicable assessment coordinator for additional information and instructions around completing this process.

[Jodi Bossio-Smith](mailto:Jodi.Bossio-Smtih@maine.gov), [Nancy Godfrey](mailto:Nancy.Godfrey@maine.gov)

**Alternate & ACCESS assessment Coordinator** **Assessment Coordinator**

MSAA – Math Math

MSAA - ELA/Literacy ELA/Literacy

MSAA – Science Science

ACCESS

Alt. ACCESS

## Parental/Family Consent

Parental Consent is a criteria of Special Considerations.  This is an important part of the request, especially if medical documentation is required for the request.​ Principals may access a copy of the Parental Request within the module.  This consent form is to be placed in the student’s cumulative file. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the parent consent letter has been translated into ten (10) of Maine’s most frequently used languages and can be located in the communication toolbox on the [Supports & Resources page of the assessment webpages.](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/supports)

# Maine DOE Decision Tree of Assessment Participation for All Instructional Models

Is the student physically in school for any portion of the week?

Yes No

Is the student’s family willing to bring the student to the school for the purposes of assessment?

*See Additional Guidance for Supporting High Participation, pg. 5*

Administer the assessments onsite utilizing the Guidance to Support Districts with 2020-2021 Assessment Administration.

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Yes No

Parent and school choose a mutually agreed upon location and day/time (could include, but not limited to private area of the school, after hours, administration building or off site (library), or in-service days) to administer the assessment.

What is the reason the student is unable to participate in the assessment?

* Medical emergency. The school will have to complete a [Special Considerations Request](https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/Accounts/Account/Login).
* Remote only learning due to medical needs/concerns [e.g. medically fragile] related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The school will have to complete a [Special Considerations Request](https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/Accounts/Account/Login).
* Health/safety concerns related to the Covid-19 pandemic [e.g. quarantine, exposure, positive COVID result], document using [Special Considerations Request](https://neo.maine.gov/DOE/NEO/Accounts/Account/Login).
* Did not disclose.

Administer the assessments under the agreed-upon conditions.

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The assessments are not currently offered as remote administrations. The student is unable to participate in assessment for 20-21. First three examples need to be documented as outlined.