

# MEA Alternate Mathematics and

**ELA/Literacy**

**Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)**

# 2019 Guide for

**Score Report Interpretation**

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### Purpose

**Introduction to the MSAA**

The Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) is a comprehensive assessment system designed to promote increasing higher academic outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities in preparation for a broader array of post-secondary outcomes. The MSAA is designed to measure academic content that is aligned to Maine’s content standards. This test contains many built-in supports that allow students to use materials they are most familiar with and communicate what they know and can do as independently as possible. The MSAA is administered in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA)/literacy and mathematics in grades 3-8, and 11 (3rd year high school, Maine).

This assessment was developed through the research and development completed by the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) and has been carried forward by the MSAA State Partners. MSAA is currently being administered by ten participating states: Arizona, American Samoa, Guam, Maine, Maryland, Montana, the Pacific Assessment Consortium (PAC-6) [1], South Dakota, Tennessee, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Washington, D.C.

This guide provides information regarding the administration and results of the spring 2019 MSAAfor district and school personnel.

### Student Participation

The criteria for student participation in the MSAA reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability. All content areas should be considered when determining who should participate in this assessment. The table below shows the participation criteria and the descriptors used to determine eligibility for participation for each student.

Students must meet the following eligibility criteria:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Participation Criteria** | **Participation Criteria Descriptors** |
| 1. The student has a significant cognitive disability. | Review of student records indicates a disability or multiple disabilities that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.\*  \*Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life. |
| 2. The student is learning content linked to (derived from) the State’s Content Standards. | Goals and instruction listed in the IEP for this student are linked to the enrolled grade-level State’s Content Standards and address knowledge and skills that are appropriate and challenging for this student. |
| 3. The student requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains in the grade and age-appropriate curriculum. | The student (a) requires extensive, repeated, individualized instruction and support that is not of a temporary or transient nature, and (b) uses substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to acquire, maintain, generalize, demonstrate, and transfer skills across multiple settings. |

Assessments for students with significant cognitive disabilities rely on a foundation of communicative competence. Students who do not have receptive and expressive communication are unlikely to be able to demonstrate what they know and can do on an assessment. Students who do not have a mode of communication are identified during the assessment process.

Teachers are encouraged to use the Communication Toolkit developed by NCSC to help these students develop a mode of communication. The toolkit can be found here: <https://wiki.ncscpartners.org/index.php/Communication_Tool_Kit>

### Overview of the MSAA Format

The MSAA assesses ELA/literacy (reading and writing) and mathematics at grades 3-8, and 3rd year high school, and is aligned to the Maine’s content standards and the MSAA Core Content Connectors. The MSAA is a computer–based, on demand, stage adaptive like assessment consisting mostly of selected response and some constructed response items written at four levels of complexity. These complexity levels represent different levels of skill acquisition by students.

Students with significant cognitive disabilities often need materials and instructional strategies that are substantially adapted, scaffolded, and have built-in supports to meet their individual needs.

The MSAA levels of complexity are designed to follow instructional practices. When students begin to learn a new skill, or acquire new knowledge, they need more support. As students learn and develop mastery of that skill or knowledge, they need less support. The test items on the MSAA are developed with many scaffolds and supports embedded within the items. Supports not embedded in the test items may be provided as accommodations, as well as other allowable ways to present the item to a student, based on their individual requirements.

The assessment is a computer-based test (CBT) designed to be administered one-on-one. Based on the needs of the student, the assessment may also be delivered in a paper– pencil format. The needs of the student may also be addressed through other supports and accommodations such as: reading the test aloud, having a scribe, using manipulatives, object replacement, translating the test into ASL, among others.

Each content area consists of 30-40 items that are mostly selected response. The writing portion of the ELA test contains a scaffolded writing prompt at each grade level. Each content test is divided into test sessions. Test administrators have substantial leeway in developing a testing schedule with the ability to start and stop a test depending on the engagement of the student.

### Scoring

Scoring of most items is accomplished within the online test platform. The selected response items are scored as correct or incorrect by the test platform based on the

answer keys programmed into the system. Other constructed response items are scored by the Test Administrator and then marked correct or incorrect in the test platform. Items without responses receive a score of zero.

The writing prompts at each grade level were field tested this year. Student responses are hand-scored. Results from the writing prompts will not be included on score reports and are not part of the overall ELA/literacy score for the 2016-17 year.

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### MSAA Score Reports

### Overview

This guide describes the types of score reports provided for the 2016-17 MSAA administration.

#### Information included on the score reports:

* *Scale scores* describe student’s performance. Scale scores may be used to make comparisons between groups of students, schools, and districts. Based on scale scores, students are assigned to performance levels. Table 1 shows the scale score ranges for each performance level, content area, and grade level.
* *Performance Levels* describe how the student performed in relation to the knowledge and skills of that content area and grade level. The performance level descriptors are broad and general statements regarding skills and abilities of students who have attained each level. Performance levels for the MSAA were established by committees of educators after the first NCSC administration of the assessment in 2015. Performance level descriptors for each content area and grade level can be found in Appendix A of this document.

### Testing Participation Requirements by Content Area

All students in grades 3 – 8, and 3rd year high school are required to be assessed in ELA/literacy and mathematics. Participation status is assigned independently for ELA/literacy and mathematics. All submitted tests receive a participation status, regardless of the number of item responses.

### Interpreting and Using the MSAA Scores

The MSAA tests student performance in ELA/literacy and mathematics, based on Maine’s content standards. The student’s performance level is based on alternate achievement standards. Results for the MSAA are reported by a scale score and performance level for each content area.

Schools are responsible for distributing reports to parents and having reports available for teachers to view. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that access to individual student results be restricted to the student, the student’s parents/guardians, and authorized school personnel. Therefore, the *MSAA Individual Student Report* is confidential and should be kept secure within the school and district.

The *Individual Student Report* shows the score earned and a brief description of the student’s current Performance Level. Complete Performance Level Descriptions for both math and ELA at each grade level can be found on the Test Results page – MSAA at: <https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/results> .

#### Table 1: 2019 Performance-Level Scale Score Ranges by Content Area and Grade

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Performance Level | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Grade 11 |
| **English Language Arts** | | | | | | | |
| Level 4 | 1254-1290 | 12591290 | 1256-1290 | 1251-1290 | 1255-1290 | 1250-1290 | 1255-1290 |
| Level 3 | 1240-1253 | 1240-1258- | 1240-1255 | 1237-1250 | 1240-1254 | 1238-1249 | 1240-1254 |
| Level 2 | 1234-1239 | 1234-1239 | 1232-1239 | 1231-1236 | 1236-1239 | 1230-1237 | 1236-1239 |
| Level 1 | 1200-1233 | 1200-1233 | 1200-1231 | 1200-1230 | 1200-1235 | 1200-1229 | 1200-1235 |
| **Mathematics** | | | | | | | |
| Level 4 | 1254-1290 | 1251-1290 | 1253-1290 | 1251-1290 | 1254-1290 | 1251-1290 | 1250-1290 |
| Level 3 | 1242-1253 | 1239-1250 | 1240-1252 | 1239-1250 | 1240-1253 | 1240-1250 | 1240-1249 |
| Level 2 | 1235-1241 | 1233-1238 | 1232-1239 | 1233-1239 | 1234-1239 | 1234-1239 | 1235-1239 |
| Level 1 | 1200-1234 | 1200-1232 | 1200-1231 | 1200-1232 | 1200-1233 | 1200-1233 | 1200-1234 |

MSAA scores should be used in conjunction with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) progress reports, student work, diagnostic assessments, district-required assessments, and report cards in order to place the student’s performance on academic content and skills in context and to provide a complete picture of the student’s progress across a wide range of categories.

It is helpful to read the Performance Level Descriptors to understand the expectations for the performance level and grade level for each student. This information can provide a concrete link from the test to instructional planning.

#### Talking to Parents and Guardians

When talking to parents and guardians about their child’s score, it may be helpful to keep

the following in mind:

* + The MSAA meets the federal guidelines as an Alternate Assessment based on Alternate Achievement Standards (AA-AAS), to measure yearly growth for ELA/literacy (reading and writing) and mathematics.
  + MSAA measures progress toward post-secondary options using Common Core Connectors; which are aligned to Maine’s content standards.
  + MSAA assessment results should be used along with local assessment results and other information to determine what changes in curriculum and instruction may be needed to support students’ learning.
  + MSAA scores alone should not be used to make placement or eligibility decisions. Accessing Reports

District Assessment Coordinators (DACs), can provide permission so that Principals, teachers and Superintendents can access all MSAA reports, including state, district and school level results, individual student reports and data files on the ESEA Data Dashboard.

**ESEA Data Dashboard – Public Site** <https://www.maine.gov/doe/dashboard>

This site provides public access to data from Maine’s assessment and accountability systems, beginning with data from the 2015-16 administration of Maine Educational Assessments (MEA).

Information is provided about how Maine’s students performed on state assessments beginning in 2015-16 in mathematics, English language arts/literacy, and science. Data for annual assessments towards English language proficiency is also reported for students who are English learners. Two types of reports are available:

* Quick Reports provide tables of basic participation and performance data for each school, each district, and for the state as a whole. These reports contain links to ESEA Report Cards.
* Interactive Reports are more detailed customized reports for users who wish to drill

deeper. Users are able to view data about particular grade levels or particular groups of students. Data for a particular school or district can be compared to data from other selected schools or districts.

**MAARS – Confidential Site** [**https://lms.backpack.education**](https://lms.backpack.education/). This site provides confidential access to detailed information about how students performed on state assessments in mathematics, English language arts/literacy, and science. For English learners, data are also reported for annual assessments of English language proficiency. Access to this confidential student data is controlled by District Assessment Coordinators in accordance with the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). For more information about FERPA please visit the following website: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>.

These reports contain information valuable to schools and districts in their efforts to better serve the academic needs of individual students with significant cognitive disabilities and to evaluate and improve curriculum and instruction.