



# Maine Educational Assessments

## Security Handbook

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## Introduction

Assessing student learning is an essential aspect of education, as it provides data that can lead to improved instruction and outcomes. Assessments take many forms, and each type of assessment has distinct value and purpose in a comprehensive assessment system. Educators, policymakers, and the assessment community use assessment data to improve education and to address needs for the workforce and the economy. As required by Maine Statute [20-A §6202](#), the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) must establish a statewide assessment program to measure and evaluate, on a continuing basis, the academic achievement of students in Maine’s public schools, charter schools, and private schools whose school enrollments include at least 60% publicly funded students. Results from these statewide assessments contribute to educational decisions made at the federal, state, and local levels about both schools and students. It is critical that assessment results are accurate, fair, and comparable.

To that end, the Maine DOE has established policies and defined procedures to ensure the integrity of the state assessment system. Adherence to Maine’s assessment security expectations ensures that the assessments will yield high-quality data that can be trusted to support valid and fair conclusions related to academic achievement.

The inability to follow Maine’s assessment administration and security requirements can potentially lead to one or more of the following consequences:

- Delay in reporting of student, school, district, or state results.
- Invalidation of student, school, district, or state results.
- Further review by the Maine DOE for possible action.

## Importance of Assessment Security

Maine’s state assessments are “standardized,” meaning that the same assessment is administered under the same conditions to all students at a particular grade. As an example, all fourth-grade students across the state:

- are assessed on the same mathematics standards.
- are allowed the use of the same supports and features.
- are provided identical assessment directions.
- are assessed in similar environments; and
- have required IEP and/or 504 plan determinations to receive supports and/or accommodations.

Standardization allows a fair comparison of the performance of students in different schools and student populations. It also allows the comparison of performance over time.

A condition of standardization is that students have not previously viewed assessment questions. In other words, they are secure assessment questions. Some security precautions are intended to prevent unauthorized exposure to assessment questions.

Another aim of assessment security is to ensure that performance on the assessment purely represents the work of the student. Any “help” that goes beyond the prescribed standardized supports leads to inaccurate results that are not comparable.

Unusual things do happen before, during, and after assessments are administered, and these incidents are referred to as “assessment irregularities.” Assessment irregularities can be unintentional occurrences such as power outages, innocent mistakes in the assessment administration, or they can be more deliberate. In all cases, it is the joint responsibility of state and local assessment leaders to evaluate potential implications and reach the best possible resolution.

### Irregularities Can Impact Validity and Comparability

Appropriate assessment practices are not always universally understood, and this lack of understanding can lead to assessment irregularities that may impact the validity or comparability of assessment results. For example, if an uninformed assessment administrator in one classroom provided calculators for a non-calculator portion of the mathematics assessment, results would be impacted unfairly and comparisons to other students would not be valid.

There are many types of events that could impact the validity and comparability of assessment results, some intentional and some unintentional. Focusing on assessment security aims to avoid where possible, and to address where necessary, irregularities that threaten the validity and comparability of results. Areas of concern are sometimes different for paper/pencil assessments than they are for online administration, but it is important to be aware of common events that are applicable to all modes of assessing.

### Maine Assessment Security Handbook

To help ensure appropriate administration of state assessments, the Maine DOE seeks to develop a common understanding of what practices are appropriate and to establish procedures to reinforce their consistent implementation.

This *Maine Assessment Security Handbook* presents the general expectations of the Maine DOE for the administration of statewide assessments. Maine’s policies and procedures around security are presented in four sections as described in the list below:

1. **Prevention of Irregularities** – Best practices for avoiding irregularities including training to prepare for assessments, handling of materials, expectations for students, appropriate assessment environments, etc.
2. **Detection of Irregularities** – Steps to be taken at both the state level and the local level to monitor the assessment administration and detect/report any irregularities that may threaten the validity of the results.
3. **Investigation of Irregularities** – Outline of the steps to be taken by the local education leaders in collaboration with the Maine DOE to best understand the incident and its implications should an irregularity require investigation.
4. **Resolution of Irregularities** – Guidelines for working with the Maine DOE to optimally resolve irregularities and to ensure valid results for *all* students.

## Section 1 – Prevention of Assessment Irregularities

When it comes to assessment security, we might be wise to listen to Benjamin Franklin’s advice: *An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure*. The consequences of a serious assessment security breach can be costly on many levels. The aim of this section is to highlight ways that state and local assessment personnel can work together to avoid irregularities that could threaten the validity of the assessment data.

An assessment irregularity is any actual event, act or omission, and any alleged event, act, or omission, which can compromise the integrity, validity, credibility, security, or fairness of Maine state assessments.

Maine has several different state-level assessments designed to assess different content for unique groups of students. These are collectively known as the Maine Educational Assessments (MEA). The principles and guidance in this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook* generally apply across all the assessments listed below. Requirements for particular assessments are specified in the corresponding Assessment Administration Manuals (AAM), Coordinator Manuals, and/or training provided by the Maine DOE.

Maine Educational Assessments			
Content Assessed	Assessment	Alternate Assessment*	Intended Population
Mathematics & ELA/Literacy/Reading	NWEA	Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)	All students in grades 3-8 and <b>second-year</b> High School students (NWEA) All students in grades 3-8 and <b>third-year</b> High School students (MSAA)
Science	Maine Science	Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)	All students in grades 5, 8, and third-year High School
English Language Proficiency	ACCESS for ELLs	Alternate ACCESS (N/A in Kindergarten)	English learners in grades K-12

\*Alternate assessments are intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

### Assessment Personnel

At the Maine DOE, each of the state assessments has an assigned coordinator who is responsible for ensuring that local assessment personnel have the necessary materials, training, and support to prevent serious irregularities. The **State Assessment Coordinator** is critical in the event of an assessment security concern. Contact information for the State Assessment Coordinator associated with each assessment is displayed on the front cover of this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*.

### Identification of local assessment personnel

District and school assessment professionals play key roles in the secure, fair, and equitable administration of state assessments. Roles and responsibilities are likely to vary from one Maine location to another depending on the size and organizational structure of the schools and/or district. In some locations, roles will be split; in other locations, roles will be combined. The following are roles the Maine DOE considers typical:

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The SAU **Superintendent** has ultimate responsibility for assessments within the SAU. The Superintendent must identify an individual to act as the **District Assessment Coordinator (DAC)**. In most cases, the Superintendent will assign an individual to serve as DAC in the [Staff Module of NEO](#) at the beginning of the school year. When a DAC is not assigned, that role defaults to the Superintendent. The DAC is a key contact for communication with the Maine DOE and central to any necessary investigation. For computer-based assessments, the Superintendent will collaborate with the SAU **Director of Technology** to ensure that to ensure that devices, networks, and servers are configured and operating properly to support and deliver computer-based assessments and computer workstations are set up and operating properly in preparation for and during assessment.

At the school level, the **Principal** has the responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of each assessment administration within their building. The Principal in most cases will identify a **School Assessment Coordinator (SAC)** to handle the logistics and oversight of the administration. In some schools, the Principal may serve as the School Assessment Coordinator.

The leadership for some assessments may be tailored to a specific student population. Assessment Coordinators for an alternate assessment, or for ACCESS for ELLs, may cover an entire district or a specific school.

**Assessment Administrators** are the front-line professionals interacting with students to administer assessments in each school. Generally, Assessment Administrators should be selected in the following preferred order. If a school has exhausted the availability of persons in category “1”, assignments should be made from category “2”, and so on.

1. Certified teachers or administrators employed by the school district
2. Paraprofessionals or non-licensed administrative personnel who have been appropriately trained and signed the *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement*
3. Substitute teachers who have been appropriately trained and have signed the *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement*

Specific assessments may require additional qualifications for Assessment Administrators. In those cases, those specified qualifications overrule the general qualifications above. Note example:

- For MSAA, the Assessment Administrators must be teachers or paraprofessionals who work with students daily on academic instruction.

**Additional Proctors** may be assigned to assist Assessment Administrators in assessment administration. The Proctor is an adult other than the Assessment Administrator who assists with and monitors the administration of the assessment. This adult must be approved by the building Principal or School Assessment Coordinator and can be a teacher, teaching assistant, or special service provider. While not a requirement, the Maine DOE encourages all School Administrative Units (SAUs) to work toward having two adults in each room where an assessment is being administered. SAUs may use a “proctoring by proximity” model or someone circulating to support Assessment Administrators. The Maine DOE recommends one proctor for every 20 students.

**Assessment Administrators and Proctors must not have a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. They may not serve as monitoring staff in rooms where their children or students residing in their households are being assessed.**

### Preparation of assessment personnel

All SAU and school staff involved in oversight or implementation of any state assessment must participate in required training. Individuals who are charged with handling secure assessment materials, or who have exposure to secure material, must also be trained in procedures to maintain security. For example, if a technology support person troubleshooting a machine views an item on a computer screen, they must understand that secure content may not be discussed or transmitted in any form.

All involved staff must be fully trained in the administration policies and procedures for the specific assessment being administered. The training will include at a minimum:

- Relevant sections of this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*
- The Assessment Administration Manual for the specific assessment
- Training materials provided for the specific assessment on the [Maine DOE assessment website](#).
- Material from Maine DOE workshops or online webinars for the specific assessment
- Other instructions as communicated by the Maine DOE

The training requirements will vary somewhat across assessments. For ACCESS for ELLs, as an example, there are specific online training courses available through the educator's Secure Portal account resulting in certification as an Assessment Administrator.

The DAC, and/or the DAC's designee for a particular assessment, must ensure that appropriate personnel participate in training offered by the Maine DOE. The DAC (or designee) is responsible for ensuring that clear and comprehensive annual training has been provided on assessment administration, security, and procedures for all involved parties. The Superintendent and the DAC are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all involved staff understand and comply with state assessment requirements.

The DAC (and/or designee e.g., alt. assessment coordinator) should ensure that training is documented. Records of all assessment training materials including presentations, handouts, and sign-in sheets must be maintained for one year following the assessment administration. If a school experiences an assessment irregularity, the Maine DOE may ask for these materials to ensure that the training was appropriate and adequate.

### Assessment Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement

After assessment professionals are fully trained, they are required to sign (in writing or digitally) the *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement Appendix F* associated with the specific assessment in which they will be involved.

Note: For ACCESS for ELLs, Assessment Coordinators and Assessment Administrators sign the *WIDA Non-Disclosure and User Agreement* as part of the online training course. This agreement replaces the standard *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement*.

These agreements must be maintained by the SAU for one year following the assessment administration. In the case of an irregularity, the Maine DOE will expect the DAC to be able to produce the signed agreements.

### Preparing Students for Assessments

Students must be prepared for assessments in three ways:

1. Students should have the **opportunity to learn** the content being assessed in a manner that promotes long-term retention, application and transference of learning and concepts covered. For MEA assessments, the content is identified in the Maine Learning Results.
2. Students should be familiar with **assessment-taking strategies** and with the types of formats and scoring used on the assessments (multiple-choice questions; constructed-response questions; extended essay; assessment platform; online tools; scoring rubrics).
3. Students should understand that their results will be included in their school records; a student report will be provided to families; and assessment results will be used by teachers to help improve curriculum and instructional planning. It is important that they **do their best work** and that they do it independently.

#### Student assessment integrity

Students should be encouraged to do their best to demonstrate to themselves, the school, and their families their knowledge, understanding and skills. They should know that some parts of the assessment might be easy for them and some parts might be difficult.

In order for state assessments to accurately reflect what a student knows and can-do students should focus on:

- Doing their best on the state assessment.
- Doing their own work.
- Making sure they understand and follow the assessment directions.
- Respecting other students during the assessment.

[Appendix A Student Assessment Responsibilities](#), is available for optional use. Assessment personnel may use Appendix A with students in advance of assessing, share with families, have students sign as acknowledgement, etc. This resource may be customized for the local assessment situation or the age and needs of the students.

#### Encouraged student assessment preparation practices

The following professional assessment preparation activities are permissible for educators to use:

- Utilizing Maine’s Learning Results as a resource for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
- Incorporating content area objectives into the local curriculum throughout the year.
- Communicating with students, families, and the public what state assessments entail, when and how the assessments will be administered, and how data will be used.
- Integrating and teaching assessment-taking skills along with classroom instruction.
- Creating a positive assessment-taking environment.
- Using released items, sample items, and other practice materials provided by the Maine DOE to support the instructional program.

- Ensuring students are familiar with the types of assessment questions and how they are scored.
- Sharing with students when the Assessment Administrator can help (e.g., clarification of directions; help when a computer freezes) and when they cannot (e.g., help with reading a word).
- Ensuring students are familiar with the assessment platforms for computer-based assessment including but not limited to how to navigate, how to respond, how to use embedded tools.

### Prohibited student assessment preparation practices

Assessment preparation cannot in any way expose students, teachers, or the public to secure assessment questions or forms. Focusing instruction on secure assessment content is cheating. The Maine DOE will investigate any such alleged misuse of secure assessment material. If found to be true, such activity could lead to district liability for the cost of item development, score invalidations, personnel action, and/or certification action.

The following prohibited assessment preparation practices must be avoided:

- Discussing, retaining, or reproducing any secure state assessment questions, materials, or student responses to secure questions.
- Using secure assessment questions or altered versions of secure assessment questions.
- Placing undue stress on students before, during, or after the assessment administration.

### Assessment Administration Environment

It is important to provide an optimal assessment environment. The assessment room should be quiet, orderly, comfortable, and have adequate lighting and ventilation. This section describes the minimum assessment environment requirements. Certain state assessments may dictate a more detailed environment policy. Some students may require a unique assessment environment as an approved accommodation. In such cases, the accommodation overrides the general assessment environment requirements. See individual Assessment Administration Manuals for specific guidance.

#### Distraction free environment

The school shall designate an area for the assessment administration that provides an environment that minimizes distractions and disruptions for students (e.g., classroom, computer lab, or library). A “Do Not Disturb” sign may be placed on the door to alert others to not interrupt the assessment that is underway.

#### Instructional materials

All information regarding the content being measured or assessment-taking strategies displayed in the assessment room, in any manner or form, must be removed or covered. Students should not have access to unauthorized notes, textbooks, or other instructional materials. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Assessment-taking tips
- Content displays/posters
- Word lists
- Writing formulas
- Definitions

- Mathematical formulas/theorems
- Multiplication tables
- Charts or maps
- Desk tags (e.g., multiplication charts, fraction charts, etc.)

### Appropriate student seating

Students must be seated so there is enough space between them to minimize opportunities to review each other's work.

Certain state assessments may dictate a different seating policy. In such cases, the assessment specific seating policy overrides the seating policy found in this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*.

### Seating charts

Generally, the Maine DOE does not require that seating charts be created to show where each student was sitting for a particular assessment session. In some cases, a certain assessment may dictate a different seating chart policy. In the case of a specific requirement, that specific policy overrides this statement.

In some cases, the Maine DOE may require that a particular SAU or school maintain seating charts. When required by the Maine DOE, the seating charts must be maintained by the SAU for a period of one year. Model seating charts are provided in [Appendices B1 and B2](#). These charts may be utilized by SAUs or schools that find them helpful.

### Prohibited electronic devices

Students are not permitted access to any unauthorized electronic devices used for communication, for capturing images of the assessment itself or the room, or for data storage that can be used to compromise the validity, security, or confidentiality of the assessment. Prohibited devices include but are not limited to smart phones, smart watches, cell phones, book readers, electronic tablets, pagers, cameras, non-approved calculators, music players (including listening to music), or voice recorders.

Unauthorized devices must always be powered off and stored away from the students' work area during an assessment session. These devices cannot be used as a substitute for a calculator. Specific calculator policies are outlined in the Assessment Administration Manual particular to each assessment.

If a particular state assessment dictates a different prohibited device policy, the more specific policy overrides the general policy in the *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*. As an example, it is conceivable that a particular assessment could require that prohibited devices be collected before students enter the assessment environment.

Unauthorized access to electronic devices is an assessment irregularity that must be reported.

### Security of Assessment Materials

To achieve valid and comparable state assessment results, students must have no prior exposure to the assessment items. It is critical that all staff who have access to assessment materials always protect the assessment from exposure. Security must be maintained before, during, and even following the administration since some of the assessment questions will be used in future administrations.

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The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) should work with School Assessment Coordinators (SAC) to ensure proper handling of materials and successful return of all materials. Specifically, school personnel **must** follow these assessment security practices:

- Secure assessment materials must be kept in a locked storage area that is only accessible to the SAC and designees. Materials should be locked before and after administration.
- Secure items include, but are not limited to assessment booklets, assessment tickets, answer documents, scratch paper, materials used to provide accommodations, and ancillary materials specific to assessments (e.g., Listening & Speaking CD for ACCESS for ELLs).
- Inform all personnel involved in the assessment administration of the importance of maintaining strict assessment security and of the implications of assessment security breaches.
- Determine which staff are responsible for maintaining a chain of custody over assessment materials and limit access to those directly involved with each of the assessments.
- Distribute and collect secure assessment materials to/from students individually.
- Implement careful inventory procedures to account for secure materials as they are checked in and checked out by designated staff.
- Account for all secure assessment materials, including assessment tickets, before, during, and after each session.
- Return answer documents, assessment booklets, and other secure assessment materials in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the Assessment Administration Manuals.
- Destroy all student (login) tickets and scratch paper following guidelines and instructions in the applicable Assessment Administration Manuals.
- Maintain packing lists, shipping records, and documents used to track the delivery and custody of materials for one year following the administration (if applicable). These will be helpful if a discrepancy arises, or the receipt of materials cannot be confirmed.

Any activity that exposes secure assessment material beyond what is necessary for the administration is prohibited and must be immediately contained to eliminate further exposure. If a student posted an item on social media, it must be taken down. If an assessment form was copied and distributed to the teachers in the school, all copies must be retrieved and destroyed. If teachers are discussing an item in the teachers' room, they must immediately be informed of the security impropriety.

**If the security of assessment questions or forms are compromised, the associated State Assessment Coordinator identified on the cover of this document must be immediately contacted.**

A breach of the security of state assessments could result in invalid SAU, school, or student scores. An uncontrolled breach could even invalidate an entire state assessment administration.

Assessment professionals must be careful to safeguard the security of state assessment material. The following are examples of activities that are prohibited:

- Providing students access to secure assessment questions, except during the actual administration. (Note: Use of practice assessments and released items is permitted and encouraged.)

- Reviewing actual assessment items before, during, or after the administration.
- Examining or discussing actual assessment items or responses with anyone.
- Copying or reproducing any portion of secure assessment material.
- Allowing media representatives to interview or photograph students or staff during or after the assessment window. Students and staff may be interviewed after results are released, but they should be cautioned not to discuss any specific assessment questions.
- Leaving secure assessment materials, including assessment tickets, unattended at any time unless they are locked in the secure location designated by the School Assessment Coordinator.
- Using handling, or viewing online assessments, assessment booklets, or answer documents for any purpose other than those enumerated in proper administration procedures.
- Disclosing or discussing assessment questions with students, parents, teachers, other educators, community members, or the media before, during, or after administration. The one exception is to report potential security irregularity to the designated professional. Assessment administrators, for example, should report any concerns to the School Assessment Coordinator.
- Posting secure assessment items or materials on the internet or share by another method of communication.
- Allowing student access to online assessments at prohibited times outside of the school day or at off-site locations that are not secure environments.

Secure materials must be returned to assessment contractors or destroyed in accordance with the procedures and timelines outlined in the Assessment Administration Manuals. Maintaining adequate oversight and reinforcing proper handling and packing practices will help ensure the accurate and complete disposition of secure items. Most situations that involve the loss or late return of secure materials result from failure to establish or implement basic inventory procedures (e.g., materials control documents, check-in/check-out procedures, accounting for items at the end of each assessment session).

The loss of secure state assessment materials is a breach of assessment security and must immediately be investigated and reported. Missing materials must be reported to the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator identified on the cover of this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*.

### Assessment Administration

All state assessments require a standardized process of assessment administration to yield fair and accurate results that can be compared to other students. This section outlines many steps that can support this goal as well as the types of activities to be avoided.

#### Assessment windows

Each component of the Maine Educational Assessments has its own assessment window defining the allowable time span within which the assessment must be administered. Within the designated assessment windows, district and school assessment leaders should create the most effective schedule for the students in the SAU/school.

The assessment calendar outlining applicable assessment windows for the current school year can be found on the [Maine DOE website](#). They can also be found in the Assessment Administration Manual associated with each assessment. The windows are designed to provide ample opportunity to complete administration while confining

the exposure of secure assessment items to a specific period. Assessment may only occur during the designated assessment windows.

In planning the assessment schedule, pay special attention to any students who may require an extended time accommodation or extra time between sessions. For some students, it may be critical to begin assessments on the early end of the window. For others, it may be critical to begin sessions early in the assessment day.

### Assessment schedule

The DAC should work with SACs, and the AAs where appropriate, to develop assessment administration schedules based on the school's resources (i.e., staffing, available computers, rooms, etc.) and needs, to ensure the overall integrity of the assessment process.

When possible, each assessment session should be administered simultaneously to all students at the same grade in a particular school. For example, all grade 5 students in a particular school are required to take Science Session 1 at the same time. Simultaneous or same day scheduling limits the opportunity for students who have taken the assessment to share information with students who have not.

For computer-based assessments, a concurrent administration may not always be possible due to the need to share computers or availability of proctors and assessment administrators. In those cases, a schedule should be created that completes a particular session at a particular grade in the shortest time possible to minimize exposure and discussion about the assessment.

Students who require a make-up due to absence on assessment day and students requiring certain accommodations will necessarily require a different schedule. Also, individually administered assessments (e.g., MSAA, Alternate ACCESS for ELLs) will not happen concurrently for all students. However, all assessment must happen within the assessment windows identified by the Maine DOE. It is recommended that administration begin early in the windows to ensure that all can be completed, including any necessary make-ups.

Assessment schedules for Mathematics & ELA/literacy, ACCESS for ELLs, Alternate ACCESS for ELLs, Maine Science, and MSAA, administrations must be documented. Please see [Appendix C: Sample Assessment Schedule](#). Documentation must include:

- Principal
- SAU
- District Assessment Coordinator
- School Name
- School Assessment Coordinator
- Location of Session
- Date, Start Time and End Time
- Assessment/Grade/Subject/Session
- Assessment Administrator for each session

Documentation of assessment schedules must be maintained for one year after the administration. The schedules will be a helpful support during observations of assessment administrations by the Maine DOE. They will also be critical in the case of an irregularity that requires investigation.

### Role of the Assessment Administrator

At all times during the assessment administration, an Assessment Administrator must be present. The administrator has a critical role in ensuring a successful assessment administration that results in meaningful information about student achievement. Some of the important tasks of the Assessment Administrator:

- Begin all standardized administration procedures exactly as indicated in the Assessment Administration Manual.
- Read oral instructions to the students exactly as they are required by the appropriate Assessment Administration Manual.
- Monitor student behavior closely for adherence to proper assessment-taking practices.
- Ensure there are no distractions during the assessment administration (e.g., talking, noises).
- Ensure that students are not viewing other students' devices or answer documents.
- Ensure that all assessment tickets and other materials used for online administrations are destroyed immediately after students have completed assessments.
- In the case of requests for assistance, simply encourage students to do their best.

Assessment Administrators, and Proctors where used, are encouraged to frequently and unobtrusively move through the room and monitor the students' work areas during administration. To perform this function successfully, and to maintain security, the Assessment Administrator and Proctor should always grant their full attention to administration. They should refrain from distractions such as:

- Holding extended conversations with each other
- Reading newspapers or books
- Eating
- Using a computer, cell phone, or other device unless directly required for the assessment
- Tending to other unrelated duties (e.g., grading papers)

### Prohibited assessment practices

All educators involved in the assessment process must follow professional standards that ensure the integrity of assessment scores by eliminating any opportunities for assessment takers to attain scores by fraudulent or deceptive means. Assessment personnel **must not participate** in inappropriate and restricted practices and **must report** any such behavior they observe.

**The following are examples of inappropriate and restricted practices:**

- Leaving an assessment room unsupervised at any time. Proctors may leave the room to find an assessment coordinator, if needed, or assist a student who must leave the classroom.
- Permitting the use of any supplemental reference materials (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines, word lists, multiplication charts) that are not specifically allowed.

- Making assessment answers available to students.
- Assisting a student by any direct or indirect means (e.g., gestures, pointing, prompting) in identifying or providing correct or incorrect answers.
- Reading student responses during or after administration. Only a School Assessment Coordinator may view a student response and only in an emergency.
- Attempting to hand-score student responses to an assessment, unless required (e.g., SAA and MSAA).
- Erasing or changing student responses on a paper-pencil assessment.
- Changing any student responses in an online assessment.
- Administering assessments outside of their designated assessment window.
- Coaching students during the assessment, edit their work, or respond to their questions regarding content or answers.
- Giving students hints, clues, or indication of correctness or incorrectness.
- Allowing students to access information on the internet during an assessment administration.
- Allowing the use of prohibited electronic communication or storage devices.
- Enhancing student responses in any manner, including, but not limited to darkening, rewriting, correcting, editing, erasing extraneous marks.
- Transferring student answers to the student answer document or online system, unless: (1) required by an approved accommodation (e.g., Braille or scribe) or (2) is available as a support for a particular assessment (e.g., SAA) or (3) instructed to do so by the State Assessment Coordinator.
- Allowing a student to return to a session to complete or edit responses after the designated session has ended.

### Retention of Assessment Administration Documentation

Certain documentation of an assessment administration must be maintained for one year beyond the administration. Documents may be maintained at the district or at individual school level with District Assessment Coordinators or School Assessment Coordinators. Assessment administration documents that must be maintained include:

1. Names of the District Assessment Coordinator and the School Assessment Coordinators for each administration
2. Assessment training materials, including handouts and sign-in sheets documenting participation
3. Signed *Security and Student Data Privacy Agreements* and signed *WIDA Non-Disclosure and User Agreement*.
4. Assessment schedules
5. Packing lists, shipping records, and documents used to track the delivery and custody of materials
6. Seating charts (if required)

As will be discussed in later sections of this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*, there are circumstances when these documents will be requested by the Maine DOE. If the SAU or school is selected for technical assistance, documentation will be reviewed. In the case of an irregularity that requires investigation, such documentation will be very helpful in understanding the circumstances and verifying appropriate practices of staff involved with administration.

## Section 2 – Detection of Irregularities

An assessment irregularity is any actual event, act or omission, and any alleged event, act, or omission, which can compromise the integrity, validity, credibility, security, or fairness of Maine state assessments. Despite following best practices to prevent assessment irregularities, the possibility still exists that mistakes will be made or something unexpected occurs that disrupts the administration. This section addresses the ways in which irregularities may be detected and reported so that the best possible resolution can be reached in the most efficient and least harmful way. Examples of assessment irregularities can be found in Appendix G of this handbook.

### Reporting Irregularities

Whether intentional or unintentional, any suspected violation of assessment security by students, proctors, teachers, or administrators must be reported as soon as possible. Many irregularities can be remediated without significant consequences if caught and corrected in a timely fashion.

#### Reporting by Assessment Professionals

Generally, the staff directly involved in the assessment administration (i.e., Assessment Administrators, Proctors, School Assessment Coordinators) will be in the best position to notice an irregularity in the administration. These individuals are critical eyes, ears, and voices in the detection of irregularities. District Assessment Coordinators must ensure that lines of communication are defined and shared.

The Maine DOE recommends that Assessment Administrators (or Proctors) report any potential irregularities to the School Assessment Coordinator. This is especially important for any irregularities that may: (1) involve a breach of assessment item security, (2) lead to assessment invalidation, (3) involve student misbehavior, or (4) involve educator misbehavior. The School Assessment Coordinator, or other administrator, should report irregularities according to instructions in the table below.

Instructions for Reporting Assessment Irregularities	
Math and Reading (NWEA)	The School Assessment Coordinator (or other administrator) should contact the State Assessment Coordinator to report details of the irregularity. For all other questions that may require technical assistance please reach out to NWEA Partner Support at (855) 430-1777 or email <a href="mailto:techsupport@nwea.org">techsupport@nwea.org</a> .
Alternate Math and ELA/literacy (MSAA)	The School Assessment Coordinator (or other administrator) should contact the Cognia Client Care Center at (866) 834-8879 or email <a href="mailto:MSAAServiceCenter@cognia.org">MSAAServiceCenter@cognia.org</a> to report details of the irregularity. Any necessary information will be provided to the State Assessment Coordinator by the Cognia Service Center.
Maine Science	The School Assessment Coordinator (or other administrator) should contact the New Meridian Customer Support at (855) 544-0842 or email <a href="mailto:MEScience@adamexam.com">MEScience@adamexam.com</a> to report details of the irregularity. Any necessary information will be provided to the State Assessment Coordinator by New Meridian.
Alternate Science (MSAA)	The School Assessment Coordinator (principal) should contact the Cognia Client Care Center at (866) 615-2745 or email <a href="mailto:mainesaa@cognia.org">mainesaa@cognia.org</a> to report details of the irregularity. Any necessary information will be provided to the State Assessment Coordinator by the Cognia Service Center.

ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs	The School Assessment Coordinator (or other administrator) should contact Data Recognition Corp help desk at (866) 276-7735 or email <a href="mailto:help@wida.us">help@wida.us</a> to report details of any irregularity. Any necessary information will be provided to the State Assessment Coordinator by WIDA/DRC.
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In many cases, the State Assessment Coordinator (or the Help Desk) will provide instructions that will enable immediate resolution of the irregularity (e.g., unlocking or resetting an online session).

For more complex irregularities, the State Assessment Coordinator will contact the DAC and possibly initiate an investigation of the irregularity to determine the most appropriate resolution (e.g., starting an assessment session without required accommodations; staff or student misconduct during administration). The DAC, along with any other appropriate administrator, will collaborate with the State Assessment Coordinator until the concern has been resolved. *Section 3- Investigation of Irregularities* and *Section 4- Resolution of Irregularities* provide information about the Maine DOE protocol for resolving complex irregularities.

### Reporting by Others

Occasionally, there will be other parties with concerns about a particular assessment practice. Students might discuss concerns with their parents. Other educators might observe questionable practices. To capture information from all available sources about potential irregularities, the Maine DOE has created an [Anonymous MEA Tip Link](#). This link is posted on the [Maine DOE MECAS homepage](#) and should be communicated to educators and parents along with other assessment information.

This is an anonymous tip link, and follow-up conversation with the reporter will not be possible. Therefore, it is critical that complete information be provided about the concern. Without actionable information, no action will be taken.

### Observing Assessment Administration

It is the joint responsibility of the local assessment coordinators and assigned Maine DOE personnel to observe assessment administrations. The intent is to ensure that assessments are administered in accordance with established policies, and that there is no indication or appearance of assessment fraud or inappropriate exposure of secure materials.

#### Local observations

It is the SAU and school's responsibility to observe assessment practices and enforce the policies and guidelines in the *Maine Assessment Security Handbook* to promote fair, approved, and standardized practices. The Maine DOE greatly relies on school and SAU leadership to observe assessment practices and to take self-corrective actions to resolve problems.

The provision of technical assistance to schools during an assessment administration will help support the implementation of procedures and risk of error is minimized. The Maine DOE recommends that District Assessment Coordinators, School Assessment Coordinators, and Principals make randomly visit assessment rooms to observe, without disrupting the administration environment. [Appendix D Assessment Administration Observation Checklist](#)

may be customized to meet your needs. [Appendix E Interview of School Assessment Coordinator](#) is provided which can be customized for use by the District Assessment Coordinator to verify school-level procedures.

Any irregularities that are discovered during local observations should be immediately reported as described in the *Reporting Irregularities* section. When reported quickly, the district may be able to resolve the irregularity and avoid a significant number of student assessment results being invalidated.

### Maine DOE Technical Assistance

The Maine DOE will provide technical assistance visits and support to schools during assessment windows to observe assessment administration procedures. A Maine DOE staff member or designee may present at the front office of the school at the beginning of the school day during a technical assistance visit. A schedule of assessments for the school will be requested and a room chosen to observe.

The DOE staff member or designee should collaborate with the Assessment Administrator(s)/Proctor(s) and will observe with minimal interference to the assessment administration. The DOE staff member or designee will utilize a checklist like [Appendix D Assessment Administration Observation Checklist](#) in and will also utilize an interview similar to [Appendix E Interview of School Assessment Coordinator](#). Upon conclusion of the observation, the DOE staff member or designee will highlight best practices observed and address any concerns via technical assistance with the Assessment Administrator. The Maine DOE will provide a copy of observation document to the school.

Technical assistance will be provided to schools on a ten-year (10-year) cycle. Schools may receive additional technical assistance should there be increased instances of irregularities or that showed unusual results on a previous state assessment or may be selected for annual technical assistance for consecutive years.

### Data Forensics Analysis

During and following the assessment administration, the Maine DOE conducts multiple statistical analyses on student assessment data. These “data forensics” analyses help the Maine DOE flag potential irregularities. The questions that could be addressed through data forensics analyses are similar for computer-based and paper-pencil assessments, but the methodology may be different depending on the assessment delivery method. Some questions that the Maine DOE could explore through data forensics are:

- *Does it appear that two or more students colluded before or during an assessment?*  
A data forensics analysis called “Similarity Analysis” examines data on an item-by-item basis for pairs and groups of students to determine if responses are more similar than would be expected. If this is true for two students, it may suggest that they shared answers during an assessment. If the similarity occurs for a classroom, it may suggest the undue influence of a teacher.
- *Does it appear that some students had advance knowledge of specific assessment questions?*  
A data forensics analysis called “Person-Fit Analysis” examines the consistency of student responses across an entire assessment. Unusual patterns, such as answering difficult items correctly after missing easier items, may suggest that the student(s) received inappropriate assistance on the difficult items.

- *Are there changes to scores for an individual or a class from one assessment administration to the next that are greater than one would expect?*  
A data forensics analysis called “Unusual Score Gains and Losses” compares scores from one assessment occasion to another. Changes greater than typical for student, or especially for a group of students, may suggest coaching on actual assessment content or “help” during the earlier or later administration.
- *Does the timing of responses to questions vary considerably from the responses of other students?*  
A data forensics analysis called “Unusual Time Expenditure” could detect that a student or group of students is using an unusually long or short time to answer questions. This may suggest something other than a legitimate assessment experience. For example, if a student answered questions on a reading session correctly without taking time to read the passages, one might wonder how they got the answers. This analysis can be done on an item-by-item basis on a computer-based assessment.
- *Is there an unusual pattern of incorrect answers changed to correct answers?*  
A data forensics analysis called “Corrective Change Analysis” identifies responses that were changed. On a paper-pencil assessment, erasures are analyzed. On a computer-based assessment, a comparison can be made between a first response and the replacement response. An unusual pattern of correcting many incorrect responses may suggest that answers were changed by an educator or that students had inappropriate assistance during administration.

In some cases, there are competing reasonable explanations for the surprising patterns. The Maine DOE will be careful not to over interpret the information gathered from data forensics analyses. Questionable patterns may, for example, prompt additional analyses or increased communication with schools.

### Monitoring Social Media

To the extent practical, the Maine DOE, in collaboration with school districts and assessment contractors, is responsible for monitoring the internet and social media for any disclosure of secure assessment questions or materials. This includes monitoring the internet for assessment items captured and shared either from computer screens or from paper-based booklets. It also includes monitoring of social media sites for posts discussing or exposing secure assessment material. SAU or school staff that encounter secure materials on the internet or hear about students posting such information must immediately report the incident to the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator, as identified on the cover of this document.

## Section 3 – Investigation of Irregularities

In investigating irregularities, there are three overarching questions:

- Did the irregularity lead to a breach of assessment item security?
- Did a misadministration affect the validity of any student performance and resulting scores?
- Was the irregularity deliberate; is there evidence of academic fraud?

For more complex irregularities, the State Assessment Coordinator may determine that further investigation is necessary to ensure an appropriate resolution. The State Assessment Coordinator will communicate with the DAC and any other appropriate administrators throughout the investigative process.

The Maine DOE protocol to preserve assessment security is as follows:

1. Once it is determined that further review and information gathering is warranted, the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator will immediately contact the DAC about the reported incident.
2. **If the event involves inappropriate exposure of secure assessment material**, the most critical action is that the **exposure be immediately contained**.
3. The State Assessment Coordinator and the DAC will determine the most appropriate administrator(s) to support the DAC with information gathering. In most cases, the District Assessment Coordinator and the School Principal will work with the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator through the process. If the reported incident involves a Principal, the Superintendent (or designee) will work with the DAC. For purposes of this protocol, the team will be referenced as DAC/Administrator.
4. The State Assessment Coordinator will alert the DAC to the Maine DOE protocol instructing the DAC/Administrator that a review and further information gathering must be conducted with staff and student(s), as appropriate, as soon as possible after discovering or being alerted to the irregularity.
5. **If student(s) are allegedly involved**, a family member must be notified.
6. The DAC/Administrator must communicate with the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator as soon as possible thoroughly documenting the incident, information gathered, and the outcome/determination reached. The communication ([Test Irregularity](#)) may be sent to the State Assessment Coordinator by email, and must include as applicable:
  - State IDs (not names) for any students whose results might be impacted
  - Names and roles of involved educators
  - Grade level(s) and session(s) affected
  - Documentation of assessment security training
  - Record of signed Security and Student Data Privacy Agreements

## Maine Assessment Security Handbook

- Whether in the opinion of the DAC/Administrator assessment security was violated
  - Scope of any secure assessment material exposure: what material, exposed to whom, for what period of time
  - Any disciplinary actions taken (student or educator) if applicable
  - Any other actions taken
7. Information about exposure of any secure assessment material must be immediately reported by the State Assessment Team Leader to the assessment contractor.
  8. The Maine DOE Review Team, consisting of the Chief of Learning Systems, the State Assessment Team Leader, and the applicable State Assessment Coordinator, will review the documentation within one week of receipt. At any point deemed necessary, the Maine DOE may seek legal counsel if necessary.
  9. The DOE Review Team will determine whether any student, school, or SAU assessment results must be invalidated and communicate that decision to the DAC/Administrator as well as the associated assessment contractor. Students whose assessment results are invalidated are identified as non-participants in the state accountability system.
  10. The DOE Review Team will determine whether there are questions about teacher or administrator conduct. If not, **go to #17.**
  11. The Review Team will determine the need for the Maine Commissioner of Education's involvement. If there is no need for Maine Commissioner of Education involvement, **go to #17.**
  12. The DOE Review Team will submit documentation with recommendations to the Maine Commissioner of Education as soon as possible upon completion of review and information gathering.
  13. The Maine Commissioner of Education will decide within one week whether to order one or more of the following actions: (a) further information gathering; (b) delay in reporting student, school, or district results; (c) invalidation of student, school, or SAU results; (d) additional review by the Maine DOE for possible certification action.
  14. If the Maine Commissioner of Education determines that a certification review is necessary, the information will be forwarded to Maine DOE Certification so that additional information can be properly gathered. DOE Certification will report independently to the Maine Commissioner of Education.
  15. The Maine Commissioner of Education will communicate with the Superintendent as soon as practical following the completion of the review. The response will outline the Department's process, documentation, determinations, and any prescribed corrective actions.
  16. The State Assessment Team Leader (or designee) will review the report and its recommendations to ensure that all actions called for in the report have been carried out before determining a resolution has been achieved. This does not include any activity related to certification beyond the initial sharing of the Maine Commissioner of Education's

request for inquiry with DOE Certification.

17. The State Assessment Team Leader (or designee) will communicate with the Superintendent, DAC and Administrator to share any determination(s) and prescribed corrective action(s).
18. The State Assessment Team Leader (or designee) will ensure that all appropriate actions are implemented.
19. The State Assessment Team Leader (or designee) will maintain files of all correspondence.

## Section 4 – Resolution of Irregularities

Resolving irregularities is a good faith partnership between the SAU and the Maine DOE. Corrective actions aim to:

- Minimize the immediate damage.
- Ensure that any released assessment results are valid.
- Be appropriately transparent.
- Be consistent with all relevant laws and regulations regarding issues such as privacy rights.
- Take action to prevent future assessment irregularities.
- Recover costs as appropriate.
- Support school decisions regarding disciplinary action.
- Support any Maine DOE Certification determinations.

### Determination

Based on the information collected, the Maine DOE Review Team will create a summary and make one or more of the following determinations:

1. **NO IRREGULARITY**: The Maine DOE determines that there was no irregularity.
2. **IRREGULARITY RESOLVED**: The Maine DOE determines that there was an irregularity and that all applicable steps were completed.
3. **BREACH OF ASSESSMENT ITEM SECURITY**: The Maine DOE determines that there was inappropriate exposure of secure assessment material.
4. **INVALID ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION**: The Maine DOE determines that there was a problematic irregularity in the Assessment administration that may be accidental or ill-informed, rather than deliberate.
5. **STUDENT MISCONDUCT**: The Maine DOE determines that the assessment irregularity may involve deliberate student misbehavior (e.g., possible cheating attempt).
6. **EDUCATOR MISCONDUCT**: The Maine DOE determines that the assessment irregularity may involve deliberate teacher or administrator misbehavior (e.g., possible cheating attempt).

### Corrective Action

Once a determination has been made, the Maine DOE will identify and/or recommend corrective actions. The corrective actions will be intended to remedy the current situation caused by the irregularity and/or to prevent similar irregularities in the future. The specific corrective actions will be tailored to specifics of the irregularity and its context. Some of the possible corrective actions that could be required and/or recommended for determinations are provided.

1. **NO IRREGULARITY**: No corrective action required.
2. **IRREGULARITY RESOLVED**: No corrective action required.
3. **BREACH OF ASSESSMENT ITEM SECURITY**: Possible corrective actions include:
  - a. Maine DOE reports exposed assessment material to assessment vendor.
  - b. Student scores are invalidated as needed with no opportunity of reassessing. This may impact elements within Maine's Model of School Support.

- c. Superintendent is required to inform the local school board of a misadministration and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - d. Superintendent is required to inform the local school board of the security breach and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - e. School or SAU is identified for additional annual technical assistance.
  - f. If SAU error is responsible for costs associated with additional assessment development or additional administrations, those costs may be passed on to the SAU.
  - g. The Maine DOE relies on the SAU and/or School Assessment Coordinators to supervise assessment booklets and assessment tickets until the day of administration. The Assessment Coordinators closely observe administration and collect, return and/or dispose of materials following administration.
4. INVALID ASSESSMENT ADMINISTRATION: Possible corrective actions include:
- a. Student scores are invalidated as needed with no opportunity of reassessing. This may impact Maine’s Model of School Support.
  - b. Superintendent is required to inform the local school board of a misadministration and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - c. Principal is required to inform families of students whose assessment scores will be invalidated.
  - d. School or SAU receives annual technical assistance.
  - e. Superintendent is required to provide an updated plan with the Maine DOE for the following year’s assessment administration.
  - f. School is required to prepare a seating chart for the next year’s assessment administration.
5. STUDENT MISCONDUCT: Possible corrective actions include:
- a. Student scores are invalidated as needed with no opportunity of reassessing. This may impact elements within Maine’s Model of School Support.
  - b. Principal is required to inform families of the incident and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - c. Any student disciplinary action will be left to the discretion of the families and the school administration.
  - d. Principal is required to utilize [Appendix A Student Assessment Responsibilities](#) for future assessment administrations.
  - e. School is required to prepare seating charts for the next year’s assessment administration.
6. EDUCATOR MISCONDUCT: Possible corrective actions include:
- a. Student scores are invalidated as needed with no opportunity of reassessing. This may impact elements with Maine’s Model of School Support.
  - b. Superintendent is required to inform the local school board of the security breach and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - c. Superintendent is required to inform the local school board of a misadministration and any resulting invalidation of scores.
  - d. School or SAU is identified to receive annual technical assistance.
  - e. The Maine DOE appoints an assessment monitor to supervise assessment booklets and tickets until the day of administration. The state-appointed monitor would closely observe assessments and collect, return and/or dispose of materials following administration.
  - f. Personnel involved in the irregularity may be excluded from administering future assessments.
  - g. The Superintendent will be notified so that the district may take necessary personnel action.

- h. At the discretion of the Maine Commissioner of Education, the involved personnel may be referred for review by Maine DOE Certification.

### The School Decision

The school may accept the remediation or will have two weeks to request an appeal. If an appeal is requested, the Maine DOE will assign an independent review panel to review the case.

### Independent Review Panel

If the school or district requests an appeal, an independent panel review will be conducted. An independent review panel is made up of, at minimum three panel members. Each member will be an independent consultant with experience as a school administrator and no conflict of interest with either the Maine DOE or the school/SAU. The panel will make recommendations to the Maine DOE that will include, but not be limited to, the extent to which the panel finds the Maine DOE findings valid and the appropriateness of the resolution. If the panel finds that the Maine DOE resolution was proper, the district may be required to pay for the independent review panel expenses.

The panel's report will be sent to the Maine DOE, and the Maine Commissioner of Education will notify the school and district of the final determination.

### Documentation

Actions are documented during all phases. Documentation will be reviewed annually by the Maine DOE Assessment Team to generate recommendations to improve Maine's assessment procedures.

## Appendices

[Appendix A](#): Student Assessment Responsibilities

[Appendix B1-B2](#): Assessment Administration Seating Charts

[Appendix C](#): Sample Assessment Schedule

[Appendix D](#): Sample Assessment Administration Observation Checklist

[Appendix E](#): Sample Interview of School Assessment Coordinator

[Appendix F](#): Master Assessment Security Agreement Form (SAC, AA/Proctor)

[Appendix G](#): Examples of Irregularities

[Appendix H](#): Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form

The above referenced forms are located on the [Assessment Security webpages](#).

## APPENDIX A: Student Assessment Responsibilities

Students are encouraged to do their best to demonstrate their knowledge and skills to themselves, the school, and their families. Some parts of the assessment might be easy for them and some parts might be difficult.

For state assessments to accurately reflect what a student should focus on:

### Expected Conduct:

- Doing their best on the state assessment.
- Doing their own work.
- Making sure they understand and follow the assessment directions.
- Respect other students during the assessment administration.

### Inappropriate and Prohibited Conduct:

- Communication with anyone about the assessment questions, during and after the administration. This includes written, electronic, verbal, or gestured forms of communication.
- Copying another student's answers.
- Requesting or accepting help from another person.
- Answering an assessment question or any part of a question for another student.
- Using any material or equipment that is not allowed by the instructions.
- Using prohibited devices such as phones or calculators.
- Doing anything to unfairly affect your score or the score of another student.
- Taking assessment questions from the room.



## Maine Assessment Security Handbook

### APPENDIX B1: Assessment Administration Seating Chart

School:	Room #:	Date:
Assessment Administered:	Subject/Grade Level:	
Assessment Administrator:	Start Time:	
Proctor(s):	End Time:	

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28		

Seat #	Student Name	Paper- Based Booklet # Computer- Student Login	Form #	Session Completed
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
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11				
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Seat #	Student Name	Paper- Based Booklet # Computer- Student Login	Form #	Session Completed
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## Maine Assessment Security Handbook

### APPENDIX C: Assessment Schedule

Assessment schedules must include the following information and be retained by the district or school for one year beyond the assessment administration.

- Principal
- SAU
- District Assessment Coordinator
- School Name
- School Assessment Coordinator
- Location of Assessment Session
- Date, Start Time, and End Time
- Assessment/Grade/Subject/Session/Form
- Assessment Administrator for each session

District:					Principal:			
School:					District Assessment Coordinator:			
Date:					School Assessment Coordinator:			
Assessment	Grade	Subject	Session	Form	Location	Assess. Admin.	Start Time	End Time
<i>Math</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>Math</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>Room 17</i>	<i>Mrs. Smith</i>	<i>9:00</i>	<i>9:50</i>

**APPENDIX D: Sample Online Maine Science and General ELA and Mathematics Assessment Observation Form via Qualtrics Survey**

\*\* Note that the observation forms all contain similar elements that take place before, during, and after the assessment, but the individual assessment specific surveys also contain elements that are specific to the assessments. This form is the most basic form of the survey.

[An electronic copy of the survey is available.](#)

School Name:	
Assessment Administrator:	Proctor/TA/AA(s):
Observer:	Assessment:
Date of Observation:	Grade/Subject

	Item	Code*	Comments
1	Instructional materials that may provide clues or answers are not visible in the room.		
2	The desks/tables are arranged with enough space between them to minimize opportunities to review each other's work.		
3	Desks/tables are clear of all materials except what is allowed in the assessment administrator manual.		
4	Electronic devices were collected or otherwise stored away and unavailable for student use.		
5	The Assessment Administrator read directions clearly, loudly, and exactly as printed in the Assessment Administration Manual.		
6	Students worked independently of each other.		
7	The assessment room was free of disruptions (talking, fire drills, intercom announcements).		

\*Use Codes: NA=Not Applicable 1=Exemplary 2=Acceptable 3=Minor Issue 4=Major Issue UO=Unable to Observe

	Item	Code*	Comments
8	Booklets/tickets were distributed to and collected from the students individually by the Assessment Administrator/Proctor(s) and not passed by students.		
9	The Assessment Administrator answered only questions related to the directions.		
10	Students were provided a break individually, (where applicable) during an assessment session with close supervision.		
11	Students worked on appropriate sections of the assessment and did not return to or go forward to other sections.		
12	All students remained quiet as everyone completed the assessment session.		
13	Assessment tickets/booklets, answer documents, and scrap paper were never left unattended.		
14	The assessment room was supervised at all times.		
15	The Assessment Administrator/Proctor(s) were actively monitoring the room at all times.		
16	Assessment signs were posted on room doors (e.g., Do Not Disturb, Electronic Devices Not Allowed, Quiet Please Assessments in Progress).		
17	List any observed accommodations provided to students		

\*Use Codes: NA = Not Applicable 1=Exemplary 2=Acceptable 3=Minor Issue 4=Major Issue UO=Unable to Observe

Is this the TA's first time administering the assessment?

- Yes  
 No

TA's level of confidence administering the assessment.

- High  
 Neutral  
 Low

Does the proctor/TA/AA feel they received sufficient training and support to administer the assessment?

Yes

No

If no, please explain.

Did you observe any students or did the specifically observed student complete the entire assessment?

Yes

No

If no, please provide a reason why the student or students did not complete the assessment. Please check all that apply.

Student became ill and left the room

Student became overwhelmed

Student was dismissed

Student left the room and did not return

Student has an accommodation that allows taking breaks

Student was administered the assessment administration over multiple days

Student refused to complete the assessment

Environmental disruption resulted in student not completing the assessment

Other reason, please describe.

Was the student(s) provided an opportunity to participate in a practice session?

All students were provided the opportunity

Some students were provided the opportunity

None of the students were provided the opportunity

Were any of the students or the specifically observed student observed choosing the same answer repeatedly?

Yes

No

If yes, was it related to any of the following?

Test content

Test preparation

Student characteristic

TA/Proctor/AA behavior

Environment

Unknown

Were any of the students, or the specifically observed student observed hurrying through the assessment?

Yes

No

If yes, was it related to any of the following?

Test content

Test preparation

Student characteristic

TA/Proctor/AA behavior

Environment

Unknown

Were any of the students observed using the universal tools provided in the assessment?

Yes

No

If yes, how did the student appear to be using the tool(s)?

Appropriately utilizing the tools

Trying the tool out

Playing around (tool appeared to be a distraction)

Other, please describe.

Please provide any insight including specific topics for additional assessment training offered by the Maine Department of Education.

**APPENDIX E: Interview of School Assessment Coordinator**

School Name:
School Principal:
School Assessment Coordinator:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Date of Interview:

	Item	Code*	Comments
1	The School Principal or School Assessment Coordinator provided a schedule of the assessments occurring.		
2	Please share the location of tickets/booklets when not in use for assessment administration.		Is the location locked with limited access?
3	Please share how you distribute and return assessment materials to the Assessment Administrators		Were materials for the observed administration(s) handled consistently with the plan?
4	Please provide copies of the <i>Security and Student Data Privacy Agreement</i> for everyone that is in contact with the assessment.		Did you see signed agreements for the Assessment Administrator/Proctor(s) involved in the observed administration(s)?
5	Please provide all documentation demonstrating all Assessment Administrators and Proctors have been trained in assessment administration and security.		Is documentation that such training occurred for the Assessment Administrator/Proctor(s) involved in the observed administration(s) also available?
6	Please share next steps at the conclusion of the assessment administration.		Were materials taken directly to the School Assessment Coordinator?

\*Use Codes: NA = Not Applicable 1=Exemplary 2=Acceptable 3=Minor Issue 4=Major Issue UO=Unable to Observe



APPENDIX F: MEA Assessment Security and Data Privacy Agreement

Please check all that apply:

- Checkboxes for School Assessment Coordinator (SAC), Assessment Administrator (AA), Proctor, Math & ELA/Literacy (NWEA+ MSAA), and Science (Maine Science & MSAA).

As a School Assessment Coordinator/Assessment Administrator/Proctor for the MEA Mathematics and ELA/Literacy assessment, I agree that:

- 1. I have provided training for my school's Assessment Administrators/Proctors including related administration manuals and training webinars (SAC) OR I am familiar with all related administration manuals and participated in required training webinars (AA/Proctor).
2. I will accordingly provide a secure assessment environment and securely handle printed materials.
3. I will report any potential assessment security incidents to the DOE/District Assessment Coordinator/SAC as appropriate.
4. I am aware that assessment data will be analyzed to identify any patterns indicative of a security concern.
5. I will comply with the Maine DOE Assessment Security Handbook and/or Security webinar guidance and understand technical assistance may occur to ensure that assessments are administered in accordance with established policies, and there is no indication of assessment fraud or inappropriate exposure of secure materials.
6. I understand that failure to address the above requirements may result in one or more of the following:
- delay in reporting of student, school, or SAU results,
- invalidation of student, school, or SAU results, and/or
- additional review by the Department of Education for possible certification action.

Student Data Privacy Agreement

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. No information may be disclosed during or following the assessment administration about individual students, including student demographics, student assessment settings and responses, and incidents that occur during administration, except to the District Assessment Coordinator as needed. I agree to protect the confidentiality of student information in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and to only access student information that is related to the scope of my work. Failure to comply could result in a DOE investigation and possible certification action.



I understand and voluntarily accept and agree to the conditions outlined above in the Assessment Security Agreement and the Student Data Privacy Agreement.

Name (print or type): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX G: Examples of Irregularities

This list is not comprehensive but constitutes the most common irregularities experienced by Maine SAUs.

Example of Irregularity	Reportable	Irregularity results in an Invalidation of Student Score (yes/no)	Rationale
Cell phone usage	Yes	Yes	In most cases, the student utilized the cell phone during the administration of the assessment and therefore, it is determined academic fraud (e.g., cheating) has taken place. Given technological advances, proctors and administrators should be mindful of the use of smart watches during assessment administration.
Coaching	Yes	Yes	The coaching and leading of students to an answer/response would be deemed academic fraud.
Emergency Procedures (e.g., Fire alarm, lockdown)	Yes	No	The session would be paused/suspended; student data saved; all students ceasing participation in the assessment at the same time. Secure assessment content remains secure.
Loss of WIFI	Yes	No	The session would be paused/suspended; student data saved; all students ceasing participation in the assessment at the same time. Secure assessment content remains secure.
Power Outages	Yes	No	The session would be paused/suspended; student data saved; all students ceasing participation in the assessment at the same time. Secure assessment content remains secure.
Materials/Resources	Yes	Maybe	The determination would be based upon whether the availability of materials & resources was a deliberate act of academic fraud. This would be determined based upon responses provided in the irregularity report.
Misadministration of Accommodations	Yes	Maybe	This depends upon the additional information provided to the state assessment coordinator and accommodations as outlined in a student intervention/IEP/504 plan.

**Upon notifying the applicable state assessment coordinator of the irregularity, the state assessment coordinator will provide a copy of the Assessment Irregularity Reporting form (Appendix H).**



## Maine Assessment Security Handbook

### APPENDIX H: Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form



#### Assessment Irregularity Reporting School Year Administration

The Department was notified on **date** of an assessment irregularity for the **insert** assessment which requires additional information to determine next steps. The Department has confirmed an instance of an irregularity on the Reading. Please respond to and complete the following document and return to the appropriate assessment coordinator via confidential/secure email.

Please select the following as they apply:

- The irregularity led to a breach of test item security
- A misadministration affects the validity of any student performance and resulting scores
- Plagiarism affects the validity of student performance and resulting scores.
- The irregularity is deliberate; there is evidence of academic fraud

The following information is necessary to determine next steps:

SAU Org ID# & Name:	School Org ID# & Name:	Student State ID(s): Class name (if applicable):
Names & Roles of involved educators:	Date of Test Security training:	Date of signed Test Security and Student Data privacy agreements:
<b>Insert name</b>	<b>Insert date</b>	<b>Insert date</b>
Assessment/test sessions affected:		
Provide a rationale as to why the DAC/Assessment Administrator believes assessment security was or was not violated?		
Provide a description of the assessment irregularity.		
Date family is informed of irregularity.		
Please share any concerns related to assessment secure material exposure. (if applicable - what materials, to whom, and for what period of time)		

Disciplinary action or other action taken? (Student or educator as applicable)	
How were assessment sessions monitored by Assessment Administrators to ensure non- approved devices were not utilized?	

**\*\* Please do not include student names in this document or subsequent emails. \*\***

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Role: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Maine DOE Assessment Review Team will review provided documentation within one week of receipt.

DOE Receipt:

Follow up actions, if necessary:

SAMPLE