**Questions & Answers**

**Assessment Office Hours**

**Accessibility/Universal Tools/Supports/Accommodations**

**NWEA and New Meridian Science**

**April 9, 2021**

# NWEA Accessibility Features and Accommodations

**DOE Text to Speech (TTS) for NWEA Statement:**

As the Department continues to reflect and evolve in the area of assessment, this feedback from the field is valuable. With the introduction of two new assessments this year, the Assessment Team has the opportunity to review state-approved accommodations, universal tools and designated supports in partnership with other teams within the Department. This determination around text to speech on the statewide summative reading assessment was made in partnership with the Special Services Team, including State Special Services Director Erin Frazier. The reason is because accommodation would alter the construct of what is being measured, which is reading comprehension. As the purpose of an accommodation is to provide access to a student with a documented disability without altering the construct of what is being measured, text to speech is not an allowable accommodation on the statewide summative reading assessment. For those students with specific learning disabilities pertaining to reading, we continue to recommend that SAUs continue to collect data about these learners beyond the standardized state administration of the NWEA.

**Is Text to Speech (TTS) an assignable accommodation or a universal support?**

TTS should be consistent with the student’s normal routine during instruction and assessments. Headphones/earbuds are necessary unless assessed individually in a separate setting. TTS is can be enabled for MATH ONLY and is not permitted for the reading session.

**Can students use scrap paper as they have had with MEA in the past?**

Yes, students are permitted to use scratch paper as they have in the past. This is a universal tool and not an accommodation.

**What is the difference between an embedded support and a universal tool?**

Embedded means device delivered features that are a constructed part of the assessment platform. Non-embedded means provisions outside of the online platform. This may include provision of an outside person, item, or change in timing and/or setting. These settings must be assigned in the NWEA platform for each student and for each session.

**If a student has “clarify directions” which is a designated support but is contained on a student IEP, how do I indicate that within the NWEA platform?**

Clarify Directions is a Maine policy support, but it is not visible or has a check box within the NWEA platform to record. This is allowed as a Designated Support and should be recorded in student profiles at the local level.

**You indicated that there are adjusted test windows next year [for NWEA]. What are those? Will these windows align to a default number of weeks of instruction?**

The broad assessment window for the fall has been provided and is currently August 15 – November 30, 2021 The Department will be working to identify assessment windows for both the fall 2021 and spring 2022 administrations. We will solicit feedback and input from Maine SAUs.

**Is there a way that we can have practice tests to teach students how to use these tools?**

NWEA student practice samples are available:

#### [NWEA MAP Growth Practice Assessments](https://practice.mapnwea.org/#/practice-landing)

The login Credentials same for every content/grade:

**Username: grow**

**Password: grow**

**In the math portion [of NWEA], do all test takers get TTS or only students with have it as part of their normal classroom routine for instruction?**

TTS for NWEA Math is a universal tool however, it must be assigned individually for a student in the NWEA platform and should only be used if this is incorporated into the student’s regular classroom program.

**Are there universal tools available for 6+ as well?**

The Universal Tools, Supports and Accommodations are the same for all students in grades 3-8 and high school; e.g. either the 2-5 sessions or the 6+ sessions.

**Since there is no time limit, if a student starts a specific test session on a given day but does not finish, can they pause and continue that same session the next day or do they need to complete each session within one given day?**

Since NWEA is not a timed assessment and is adaptive, students can pause sessions and return to them on subsequent days. Both Math and Reading sessions must be completed by 6/15/21.

**Are we going to be asked to put individual accommodations in NWEA for all students? Will the text-to-speech need to be added manually for each student when assigning the test, or will it be embedded and automatically accessible?**

At this time there is no ‘bulk upload’ process for NWEA accommodations. TTS for NWEA Math is a universal tool however it must be assigned individually in the NWEA platform for students and should only be used if this is incorporated into the student’s regular classroom program.

**Is there a way to demonstrate this accommodation set up to teachers in a training session that will be held prior to the actual testing session?**

The office hours implemented on Friday, April 9 provided insights into the NWEA platform regarding the selection and identification of accommodations for students. An additional and brief demonstration will be provided on Friday 4/16 DAC office hours session. The recordings for both sessions will be located on the [Assessment Webpages](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/materials).

**If TTS is universal, shouldn’t it be defaulted for math that all students have TTS? Do we have to go into the settings on devices to turn TTS on, or because it is assigned in the NWEA platform, it will automatically be available?**

Although a universal feature, TTS Math is not a default setting for everyone as it should only be used if this is incorporated into the student’s regular classroom program. TTS for NWEA Math must be assigned individually in the NWEA platform.

**Do all students need to have the non-embedded universal features checked for each session, or can proctors provide these features without checking the box?**

Similar to the Clarify Directions support answer above, there will be non-embedded supports not visible or has a check box within the NWEA platform to record. These supports should be recorded in student profiles at the local level.

**I am anticipating that there will be 8 test sessions for each grade as we have 8 classrooms. Who can set those up and enter the accommodations?**

The DAC, SAC or Technology Coordinator would be responsible for establishing the assessment sessions.

**If TTS is in an IEP for Reading is it a violation to have it switched on?**

Although TTS may be an included provision in a student’s IEP, the accommodation cannot alter the construct of the assessment. Permitting the use of TTS for a reading assessment does alter the assessment construct and therefore, TTS is not available in the NWEA Reading session.

**Are human readers allowed for the reading portion if it is in the IEP?**

Although human readers may be an included provision in a student’s IEP, the accommodation cannot alter the construct of the assessment. Permitting the use of a human reader for a reading assessment may alter the assessment construct (intonation and inflection during reading) and therefore, human readers are not permissible in the NWEA Reading session.

**Is the practice test scheduled with accommodations in the MAP system, or do students just use the practice test link shown during the office hours session on the student resources page?**

The practice assessments do not have accommodations assigned and are generic in nature. The practice sessions are available through links on the Maine DOE [NWEA assessment webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/NWEA).

#### [NWEA MAP Growth Practice Assessments](https://practice.mapnwea.org/#/practice-landing)

The login Credentials same for every content/grade:

**Username: grow**

**Password: grow**

**For the NWEA assessments are students being tested on reading and language or just reading?**

Spring 2021 Maine will be administering:

* + Reading (required)
    - “Reading 2-5” for grades 3, 4, 5 OR
    - “Reading 6+” for grades 6-8 & HS
  + Language Use (optional this spring and will be required fall 2021 and spring 2022)

# New Meridian Accessibility Features and Accommodations

**Are there any updates on when we'll have access to science assessment manuals, PD, logins?**

Science updates including manuals, guides, training sessions, etc. are expected to be posted to the [Science Assessment Webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience) during the week of April 19-23.

**So if a student does NOT have extended time, will they be able to finish their session another day?**

The Science assessment does have time parameters with the average amount of time per each of the 3 sessions (4 including the student questionnaire) for all grade levels 5/8/HS is 60 minutes per session. If a student has “Extended Time” documented as a school, team-based decision, each of the individual 3 sessions must be completed within the same day started – with the time extension beyond the 60 minutes until the end of that specific school day when the session was opened and started.

**My understanding had been that science could not be completed remotely. Is this true?**

The New Meridian online Science Assessment must be administered in-person and not remotely. The secure lock-down ADAM kiosk must be installed on each student device.

**Will materials distribution and instructions need to happen each session?**

Forthcoming are the Science Assessment Administration Manuals (formerly TAMs) will be posted on [Science Assessment Webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience) during the week of April 19-23 (one for each grade level 5, 8, & HS). Each session will require 10-15 minutes for distribution (of testing tickets and/or paper-based) and instructions. The manuals will have the script that each assessment administrator/proctor must read aloud prior to each session. Although the instructions for each individual session may be identical, they must be read/repeated before each session.

**If a student doesn't get back to the test to finish the same day for some reason will the test program count what the student did complete?**

Yes, the assessment will “score” what the student completed in the allotted amount of time. Science test sessions cannot be reopened on subsequent days.

**Are accommodations for the science test assigned similarly to the Science on the platform or are they uploaded in a batch?**

Supports & accommodations must be individually assigned to each student in the ADAM platform prior to administering the sessions. There is no bulk upload process at this time.

**When will the tech downloads be ready for the IT dept?**

Science updates including manuals, guides, training sessions, etc. are expected to be posted to the [Science Assessment Webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience) during the week of April 19-23.