

Purpose

This plan was created to provide school and School Administrative Unit (SAU) personnel with the technical knowledge necessary to assure consistent administration of all state required student assessments throughout Maine. To ensure this process is purposeful and meaningful while also meeting federal requirements set forth by the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA), the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) has outlined a plan for what assessment technical assistance may include across the state.

The purpose of providing technical assistance is to support SAUs and schools with areas of challenge while also highlighting and sharing areas of excellence. Through collaborative partnerships, the Department and SAUs will work together to improve the opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and can do. As a part of the technical assistance process, SAUs will continue to observe assessment administration conducted in schools through the utilization of an online observation tool provided by Maine DOE. SAUs will continue to follow the guidelines and requirements for assessment security and administration of the state assessments administered within the SAU.

Maine DOE will examine assessment data and associated documentation with the goal of providing SAUs with feedback and support. Consistency of administration, appropriate application of accommodations, and observation of assessment administration assists with providing the most accurate picture of what a student knows and can do. The goal of these collaborative efforts is to reduce the challenges and barriers experienced by SAUs, schools and students that prevent or reduce student performance during assessment experience.

The structures and practices outlined in this plan are designed to support and improve the validity and reliability of student results. This procedural method of looking at SAU practices is an opportunity for Maine DOE and SAUs to work together to ensure standardized assessment administration, fairness, equity of access to the assessment, and assessment security of the very highest caliber.

ESSA includes the expectation all assessment administration practices be reviewed and supported within the State system: the general academic assessments, the general English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments, the alternate academic assessments, and the alternate ELP assessments. Additionally, ESSA contains provisions that will help to ensure success for students through equitable access to high quality instruction. Equity in assessment is a part of equity in education and requires the development of systems to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success.

The Assessment Technical Assistance Plan is a critical element in supporting SAUs in the implementation of state-required assessments. Data collected through all aspects of a balanced assessment system helps to increase understanding of the unique challenges and barriers faced by individual students or by populations of students. As a result of this collaborative process among Maine's educator, schools, SAUs and the Maine Department of Education, all Maine students will have an equitable opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do in relation to grade level content via state assessments.

Technical assistance is purposeful and targeted support for Maine SAUs across all elements related to state assessments.