# Office Hours Q & A

March 12, 2021

# NWEA

**Paper/Pencil Tests: Are they available? How so we order them?**

Maine Science – Yes, paper assessments are available as an accommodation as outlined in a student’s IEP or 504 plan. The science assessment coordinator, Nancy Godfrey, is developing a protocol to request paper tests which will be shared with districts by early next week. Both regular and large print booklets will be available. Within the online platform however, the zoom accessibility feature is available as a universal tool, zooms to 500% and could be used in lieu of a large print paper version.

NWEA Math & ELA/Literacy – There is no paper-based version.

MSAA and MSAA Science – [Paper-based versions are available](https://mainedoe.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1S9QihaVUSOiZjE), as identified on the student’s IEP or 504 plan, and can be downloaded within the MSAA System after the training modules are completed.

ACCESS for ELLs - Paper-based versions are available, as identified on the student’s IEP or 504 plan, and can be ordered via WIDA AMS.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs – This is only available for a paper-based administration.

**When will we know the time limits to apply for each testing session?**

[Average session durations for the NWEA assessment](https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2018/08/Average-MAP-Growth-Test-Durations.pdf) are available on the NWEA website. As NWEA is an adaptive assessment and there are certainly outliers at either end of this continuum however the average students completed the NWEA MAP growth assessment within 45-75 minutes. One big difference is that students can pause and resume the assessment the next day. This is indicative of nuances between an adaptive interim assessment and a summative assessment.

**Portland has a School Day SAT scheduled for 3/24. They are asking if these third-year students would be exempted from the NWEAs?**

The state assessment this year for third year of high school students is the NWEA MAP Growth and as such, there would not be an exemption from participating. Districts also have the option of administering MAP growth to the second year of high school students should they choose. Any high school administration of SAT during the spring 2021 is done so independently.

**Can you speak to how we can ensure ‘security’ on NWEA remote?**

Districts have the option of administering the NWEA MAP growth either via the lock-down browser or a web-based browser. Both administrations have both upsides and downsides. At the district level, the decision must be made as to which modality makes the most sense.

The Department and NWEA recommend MAP growth assessments administered in person in the school environment be administered via the lock-down browser.

**Is there any possibility that we could give the NWEA to 10th graders INSTEAD of 11th graders?**

Third year high school students are required to take NWEA MAP growth. In response to requests from superintendents and district leaders, administration of the NWEA for 2nd year/10th grade students are optional.

**When will there by guidance on NWEA accommodations?**

The NWEA webpage includes an accommodations and accessibility features document. The math and ELA/Literacy assessment coordinator, Nancy Godfrey is in the process of reviewing NWEA accommodations in partnership with NWEA to determine which are permissible under Maine’s policies. When finalized, all materials will be posted to the [DOE NWEA webpage](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/NWEA) within the accordion-style links.



**Is the NWEA fall administration required next year?**

Yes, the fall administration of the NWEA MAP growth will be required for fall of 2021 and Spring 2022 for students in grades 3-8 and 3rd year of high school. Students in the 2nd year of high school are able to participate should a SAU so choose.

**If a student participates in NWEA in the spring window, before the state rolls out more instructions, would that score be their final MEA score, maybe requiring an appeal? I thought the first score in a window became the final score.**

Maine DOE is still developing its retest policy and more information will be shared in an upcoming office hour session.

**The Commissioner stated in a meeting this week that districts could choose to do all remote testing for ELA and Mathematics. Can we do that?**

The NWEA MAP growth can be administered remotely at the discretion of the district.

**In the DOE Public Communications, it stated that new users would be given priority, from the schedule, it does not seem as though we are being given priority as current users are testing first. What was meant by priority? And will it be possible for new users to be supported with PD in order to be able to test earlier, say before the April break?**

The MAP Growth training and remote administration training for SAU users will be announced March 29-April 2nd. For new users, there are onboarding elements and professional learning that must transpire prior to administering the assessment therefore, the administration window for new users is later than that of current users. For current users, basic training will not be required however, the remote administration training is recommended. SAUs who have completed these processes can begin assessment prior to April 14 if they choose.

# NEW MERIDIAN

**Do we need to repeat the 15 min material distribution and instruction for each administration children sit for, yes? So 3 times?**

There are 10-15 minutes to distribute materials and read directions. The Test Administrator Manual will be forthcoming outlining these specifics including the narrative text of the directions that TA reads aloud prior to each session.

**What materials would be distributed for Science?**

Distributed materials may include assessment booklets for students with accommodations to receive a paper copy of the assessment. The new [Science Assessment](https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/Generalscience) webpage is now open. The Maine Science materials will soon be posted within the accordion-style links.



# SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Do we have to require the NWEA for students who are full distance learners since it can be given at home? Or is it the district's choice to opt them out of that one? I understand the science assessment we exempt all of these learners as we don't have space to bring them in.**

NWEA MAP growth is the required Math & ELA/Literacy assessment for all students grades 3-8 & 3rd year high school. It is required for both students who are in-person and fully remote. Students in grades 3-8 & 3rd year high school with the most significant cognitive disabilities will participate in the MSAA math and ELA/Literacy. This assessment cannot be administered remotely.

For the Maine science and the MSAA- Science assessments, a best faith effort to administer the assessment to students in grades 5, 8 and 3rd year of high school is requested. Blanket exemptions for Maine science or MSAA Science are not available. The Maine Science assessment window has been extended a further two weeks through June 11, to provide additional time to support scheduling and locating additional areas to assess. Please also note, the assessment can be administered to smaller groups of students and does not require all students participate at the same time.

**What is the time frame for the bulk special consideration? Is it suggested we reach out to those remote families now informing regarding the delivery of the test on site to determine who may or may not attend? Should we give them the option prior or make the decision based on our remote numbers at this time?**

The bulk process for the COVID-19 reasons expanded upon the previously permissible exemption for significant medical emergencies. The COVID-19 special consideration and subsequent bulk request process was developed for students who are unable to come into a school environment to participate in an assessment and has immediate applicability to all assessments with the exception NWEA MAP growth as this can be administered remotely and in-person. The bulk process applies to assessments, such as New Meridian, MSAA, and ACCESS which cannot be administered remotely., and there may be large groups of students who cannot come into the school environment to participate in the assessment for the duration of the applicable assessment window. The Department recognizes that COVID-19 is ever present and the intention of this special consideration is for those students who are receiving remote instruction for the entire duration of the window due to COVID-19 related health concerns

If you know that the student will be 100% remote for the remainder of the school year and/or unable to come in to a school environment with a safe assessment plan that has been coordinated by the school and offered to each student, a special consideration may be submitted when the assessment window opens.

**Would a lack of safe testing spaces qualify as a reason to request an exemption?**

If space is an issue and you are unable to schedule those assessments within the extended windows provided, it possibly could be. The intentional extension of applicable assessment windows provides additional time to address challenges related to scheduling. In addition, the limited grades assessed for example in science may help to alleviate challenges related to scheduling.

**If a student who is unable to come on site for the alternate assessment is eligible for a special consideration waiver?**

As alternate assessments must be administered in-person, for those students who are fully remote during the assessment window, due to reasons of either medical emergency or the COVID-19 pandemic, the school can apply for a special consideration request.

**What is the process for identifying test administrators in Special Purpose Private Schools both within and outside of Maine?**

Responsible SAUs should reach out to Special Purpose Private Schools to identify assessment administrators for Maine students. The special education director or assessment coordinator should also share all ongoing communication regarding the assessment, training, etc. with the applicable assessment administrator.

# ACCESS

**If we are not able to get a student in for the ACCESS, what do we need to do for documentation?**

For those students who are fully remote during the assessment window, due to reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school can apply for a special consideration request.

# REPORTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

**What will be the reporting requirements for NWEA and what will happen with those results?**

NWEA will provide Maine DOE with one comprehensive data file, which will then be uploaded in the MAARS confidential reporting. There will be an ad-hoc reporting module in MAARS by which districts can filter data by student populations, assessments and year.

Additionally, Maine DOE will be submitting a federal waiver from reporting NWEA results. This is the first year many districts are administering this assessment. Districts are expected report NWEA data locally however, to staff and families.

Maine DOE additionally applied for a federal waiver from reporting for the New Meridian Science assessment, as this is a field test year, and we have already received waiver approval from publicly reporting MSAA Science data, which is also a field test.

**FROM 3/5/2021 For districts new the NWEA, if they can be ready to test prior to Apr.19, could they? (esp. for districts who already have a local assessment scheduled)**

If the SAU is onboarded and has completed assigned tasks and professional learning, the SAU may start assessment administration prior to 4/19.

**I am interested in knowing what will happen with students taking the [NWEA] assessment multiple times in the same window (spring)**

This information is currently being discussed between NWEA and the DOE regarding retest policy. Once further information is known, we ensure to communicate it.

**Can DACs also be included in the NWEA user agreement mailing? The DACs will be able to follow up with District superintendents to ensure it was completed and returned.**

NWEA user agreements being sent directly to districts from NWEA commencing 3/12/21 will be sent to superintendents with a communication also sent to DACs.

**As new districts come on board for NWEA, what is the time required to complete all necessary onboarding and training professional learning modules?**

New districts will need to take 2 trainings listed below:

* + Onboarding: March 22 – March 31, 75-minute training
  + Professional Learning: March 29 – April 2, 2-hour session

**A district currently using NWEA in grades 3-8 only would be deemed a current user correct? The SAU will still sign the user agreement and will ensure the new users in grades 10 and 11 complete the onboarding and MAP basics training. They will not be classified as a New district partner is that accurate?**

Yes. Even though the SAU is adding the 2nd and 3rd year of HS, the SAU is considered an existing user however, NWEA recommends SAU staff engage in the Professional Learning training before they start administering the assessment to students in the 2nd and 3rd year of HS.