# Assessment Team

# Office Hours/Lunch & Learn

January 12, 2022

**Questions & Answers**

**Q: Are the feds waiving participation this year?**

A: There has been no communication from US ED mentioning that they may be considering granting any waivers at this time. US ED has communicated the importance of valid student assessment data during this unprecedented time.

**Q: NWEA: Is there a way to know if our district was one of these (in reference to multiple session administrations)?** **Termination vs. Suspension of sessions could be user errors with 1st time users.**

A: The Assessment Team is reexamining the NWEA re-administration policy closely. Results/session duplicates included in the Comprehensive Data File indicate that some students are being administered the assessment more than once. If the SAU needs to re-administer the assessment to a student, the DAC should also go into the MARC platform to exclude the first administration**.** If you would like to review re-administration requests or duplicate NWEA sessions from the fall administration or would like statistics on this data, please reach out to nancy.godfrey@maine.gov

**Q: Will this (the NAEP details on slide 5) messaging go out in an email to the NAEP schools**?

A: Reminders have been sent to all the schools and additional communications are in the MyNAEP for Schools Platform. For step-by-step guides and additional technical assistance, please reach out to Assessment Coordinator Dr. Regina Lewis at Regina.Lewis@maine.gov.

**Q: If the student did ONE of the 3 sessions and got a RIT score, are they participants for all both Math and ELA?**

A: In the spring there were only 2 sessions required – math session was math participation, and reading was ELA participation. Beginning in the fall however, math session still = math participation, but ELA is now reading and language. This topic is still being discussed and reviewed with feedback being solicited. Considerations include the multiple administrations of the same assessment within one school year. DOE will be reporting participation to the US Department of Education in the Spring, but it is yet to be determined how the multiple administrations will contribute to overall participation. The Department will be examining participation in both the fall 2021 and spring 2022 administrations and consulting with educators and SAU leadership to gain further insight and feedback.

**Q: Will TTS be enabled in the spring since there is the ability to have the test not read the passages? [e.g. within the NWEA platform you can check which of the 4 components of an item is read aloud or not]**

A: The Assessment Team is reexamining the technical specifications of Text To Speech (TTS) in the NWEA/MARC platform specifically in reference to the reading session during which reading passages are not to be read aloud. It’s come to the team's attention that settings are available within MARC platform that control TTS functionality when TTS is universally disabled. The assessment team continues to review this policy and protocol with special services team members, SAU leadership and educators, and NWEA to develop a more suitable and equitable strategy for our Spring 2022 administration regarding TTS/Reading Session (options other than disabling TTS completely) and Read Aloud/Human Reader protocol. Additional information will be provided as received with targeted training around TTS available closer to the opening of the NWEA assessment window.





**Q: Many of our Principals are not familiar with the process or protocol for ‘exemptions’ and equate this with opting-out. Is there training for Special Considerations for Principals?**

1. Special consideration/exemptions from participation in required assessments remains reserved for students experiencing significant medical emergencies throughout the specific assessment window only. Special Considerations process and instructions can be found at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS>



[**Special Considerations Exemption Instructions PDF**](https://www.maine.gov/doe/sites/maine.gov.doe/files/inline-files/Special%20Consideration%20instructions%20VF_2.pdf)- This process for assessment exemption is intended to be used in the rare instances when a student cannot participate in either instruction or assessment. In these cases, a request for State approval of non-participation must be made through the **NEO Portal.**

This process remains the responsibility of Superintendent and/or Principal who have confidential NEO login credentials. The Assessment Team will make note to communicate and remind administrators of this process as the spring assessment season windows approach.

**Q: Opt-language - We have a school committee member that would like us to send out blanket “opt out” forms to every family at the beginning of the year….**

A: The Maine DOE does not prevent nor promote the non-participation of students in federally required state assessments. If families elect to not have their child participate in state-required assessments, the SAU may have a local form to keep for your records, however, the DOE does not have a template document available. The Department does not need to be notified of non-participation. Students eligible to participate in the assessments and elect to not participate are included in the sending/responsible SAUs assessment data as a non-participant. Exemptions from required assessments remain for those students experiencing significant medical emergencies as federally defined

Federal requirements do not include a provision for a student or family to elect to not participate in the assessments however, a family may elect for a student not to participate. Should a family make the decision to not participate in the assessment(s) the Department encourages districts to share the SAU assessment policy if one is available. For many schools, this policy requires the family to document in writing their decision to not participate and to meet with the school principal to discuss the decision. This provides the principal an opportunity to share the benefits of assessment in general, how assessment data is utilized, and potential unintended consequences. Should the family continue to elect to not participate, the student will be identified as a non-participant in the applicable assessment. If however, an SAU has a non-participation or “opt-out” policy, the SAU is required to share it with all families. If no such policy exists, there is no need to develop or share such a policy.

**Q: I wonder if maybe the issue is the public in general doesn’t understand the accountability piece with State Assessment, that it impacts Federal funding, as well as inform instruction.**

A: As a result of the ongoing challenges related to COVID-19, The Maine Department of Education is not publicly reporting the following items within the ESSA Dashboard for either the 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 school years.

Accountability related elements

Maine received a [waiver from reporting accountability-related](https://mainedoenews.net/2021/04/27/priority-notice-seeking-public-comment-to-waive-requirements-related-to-assessment-accountability-and-public-reporting/) elements and as a result of assessment waivers in 20219/2020, the accountability model was not administered in the fall of 2021.

* Accountability system description
* Other academic indicator results – in Maine this is academic growth. As there was a non-administration of assessments in spring 2020, there is no comparison data available.
* School quality or student success indicator results – in Maine this is chronic absenteeism.
* Progress toward meeting long-term goals and measurements of interim progress

Other elements:

* Assessment results
	+ Maine Science – assessment was a field test and therefore only raw score data is available.
	+ MSAA Science – assessment was a field test and therefore only a raw score is available.
	+ Math & ELA summative assessment was not administered, rather an interim assessment (NWEA) was administered. This assessment provided timely and actionable data to Maine educators and was used to inform classroom instruction. Student data is available to SAUs within the Maine’s Assessment & Accountability Reporting System (MAARS). This data is available within the confidential portal for SAU access and distribution to families. Spring 2021 individual student reports (ISRs) are available for download.

For the 2019-2020 school year, the following additional items were not publicly reported:

* English language proficiency assessment results
* Number and percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities participating in an alternate assessment