**Questions & Answer Session**

**Office Hours**

**February 5, 2021**

**Question: Has the Math and ELA/Literacy assessment for grades 3-8 and 3rd year high school been announced? What is timing for that decision?**

**Answer:** The Department remains in contract negotiations with a vendor. Once the contract is executed, the Department will notify districts and begin the onboarding process.

**Question: The Science assessment is new for grades that take it, online, and aligned to NGSS. Is there a way to see sample questions yet or will that be at the training mentioned that is upcoming?**

**Answer**: DOE is currently under contract negotiations for the New Meridian Science assessment. Details regarding professional learning and onboarding will be forthcoming.

**Question: For students who are fully remote who we can't get in, is there a form we fill out? We have 225 student who are fully remote and won't have busing for them. The number who won't be able to take it is likely to be large. Is it ok to exempt a large number of students? Will that impact funding?**

**Answer:** A large number of districts are implementing a hybrid approach to instruction which includes identified days engaged in remote and in-person learning. The Department anticipates the extension of assessment windows for assessment administration provides increased opportunity for students to participate in the assessment on days when they are attending in person. Should a school have all students within any one assessment grade, typically 3-8 and 3rd year of high school, engaged in remote learning for 100% of the time during the entire assessment window, please reach out to the assessment team. For individual students who may be engaged in 100% remote learning and are unable to attend school in person due to COVID-19, a special consideration request may be submitted on behalf of the student.

**Question: Is the science test paper and pencil or online?**

**Answer:** The New Science assessment will be administered online. The alternate assessment in science is also online and administered , via the MSAA System. Should a student require a paper-based version of the assessment as an accommodation as outlined in a students IEP, a paper-based version of the assessment would be available.

**Question: Is there any possibility that another possibility of a waiver will happen with the new administration?**

**Answer:** The answer is, we just don't know. With the recent confirmation of the new secretary for education, we are hoping additional federal guidance is forthcoming.

**Question: Will DACs will be cc’d on the correspondence regarding the NAEP 2021 survey studies that will be sent to superintendents, school principals and coordinators?**

**Answer:** Yes. DACs will be cc’d on the district level communications from the NAEP coordinator pertaining to the NAEP 2021 questionnaires and the NAEP 2021 survey study. The team makes every effort to ensure all individuals engaged in assessment administration receive the same information. This is achieved through emails to DACs and through established list servs.

**Question: We have many students who “choose” remote, but not necessarily due to medical needs. If a student is fully remote, does the special consideration apply or do they need to show a medical need?**

**Answer:** The Special Considerations module has a COVID/Quarantine option. This would also include health/safety concerns, related to the pandemic, and resulting in a student receiving remote instruction. No medical documentation is required for COVID/Quarantine.

**Question: How many years do you anticipate the new Math and ELA/Literacy assessment contract to be in place?**

**Answer**: We are currently negotiating an initial 2-year contract.

**Question: So to be clear, if a student is remote, and the assessment can’t be done virtually, we submit the request? we currently have over 100 students in remote status. I assume we are planning on the ELA/math/science assessment will be Virtual and this is mostly for alternate assessments?**

**Answer**: If a student is receiving remote instruction due to being quarantined or has health and safety concerns related to COVID-19, the assessment cannot be administered remotely and the student is unable to enter the building to participate in person, a special consideration request may be submitted.

If for example, there is an entire grade level that is impacted by COVID-19 and are unable to participate in the assessment in person for the entire duration of the assessment window due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we ask that the district reach out to the assessment coordinator of the assessment that is directly impacted. The Department is working on a process that would streamline this process and be less burdensome to school districts

All sciences assessments will be administered in person, there is no not a remote administration option. For math and ELA/literacy, the new assessment currently under contract negotiation has the option to be administered remotely if a student is unable to complete in person. The MSAA math and ELA/literacy assessment must be administered in person.

**Question: I would also like to know how to do a group submission of names for exemption for our fully distant learners.**

**Answer**: If there is a large group of students who are receiving instruction remotely and are unable to participate in the assessment in person as a direct result of COVID-19, we ask that the district reach out to the assessment coordinator of the assessment that is directly impacted. The Department is working on a process that would streamline this process and be less burdensome to school districts

**Question: Regarding the Assessment Re-Design, is it possible for DACs to receive a list of participants from their district once the work begins?**

**Answer:** Absolutely. The deadline to express interest is February 26. Once the interest form is closed, we will work to get districts that information.

**Question: I am sure others have expressed concern, about the validity of remote assessments, and the impact those scores might have in selection on our schools?**

**Answer:** The Department is aware of concerns and continues to pose questions related to remote administration. It should be noted the majority of the assessments (science, MSAA- math & ELA/Literacy, MSAA – Science, and ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS) are designed to administered in person and do not have a remote option.

**Question: Is there a reason why we need to give documentation for medical special considerations? If we do not need to do so for COVID, I am not understanding the reason for the difference.**

**Answer:** Federal statute outlines specific language regarding to special considerations due to significant medical emergency. Maine has adopted this federal language when receiving special consideration requests from Maine school districts. The special consideration related to COVID-19 is not a federal allowance and is a consideration that the Maine DOE, in response to district concerns, has instituted.

**Question: What assessments would be able to be given to a fully distant learner or is that not known yet?**

**Answer:** The possibility of remote administration exists only for the Math and ELA assessments but does not include the MSAA math and ELA/Literacy assessment. All other assessments will continue to be administered in person where it is safe to do so. More information will be provided after the new math and ELA/Literacy contract is fully executed.

**Question: Are you encouraging remote students to take the unnamed assessment at home if possible?**

**Answer:** The math and ELA assessment is able to be administered in person and remotely. Where possible and where it is safe to do so, students may be administered the assessment in person. Those students who are receiving instruction 100% remotely are able to participate in the assessment remotely if they are unable to participate in person. Should a student receiving instruction remotely not participate in the assessment either remotely, in person and is not eligible for special consideration, the student would be a non-participant. The possibility of remote administration exists only for the new math and ELA/Literacy assessments. More information will be provided after the contract has been approved and signed.

**Question: How long does each session (reading and math) of the mystery assessment vendor’s assessment take for a student? This would help us understanding scheduling during our hybrid model.**

**Answer** :The average student will finish a session in 45-70 minutes. However as the assessment is adaptive it is possible for students to spend multiple hours on an assessment session depending on their answers and their engagement. Schools may want to consider assessment completion spaces where a student who require a longer period of time can finish the sessions. For those concerned about students who typically rush through an assessment and hit submit. The proctor does have the ability to monitor and pause a student who seems to be moving at an accelerated pace.

**Question: How does one sign up for the MEA Listerv?**

**Answer:** The assessment team has a number of listservs available which are assessment specific. Details can be found on the Maine DOE website within our monthly update and are included below for your convenience:

**General Assessment (MEA) Listserv:** <https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/mea>

**Alt. Assessment Listserv:**<https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/alternateassessments>

**ACCESS Listserv:** <https://mailman.informe.org/mailman/listinfo/esl.communication>