Maine Educational Assessments 2022 - 2023 Assessment Security Training

Maine Department of Education
Assessment Team
September 2022

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This is the Maine Department of Education's Maine Educational Assessments (MEA) - Assessment Security Webinar. This is required for all Assessment Coordinators, Administrators and Proctors for all Maine Educational Assessments.

The Assessment Team

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Maine Educational Assessments (MEAs)

- ACCESS for ELLs
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
- Maine Science
- MSAA – Alternate Science
- NWEA
- MSAA - Alternate Math & ELA/Literacy

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The Maine Educational Assessments (MEAs) measure the progress of students in the areas of English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. The Maine DOE is responsible for the security of all Maine Educational Assessments including:

- ACCESS for English Learners alternate or general (alternate - paper-based form)
- Maine Science general assessment
- MSAA – Alternate Science
- NWEA Math & Reading
- MSAA - Alternate Math & ELA/Literacy
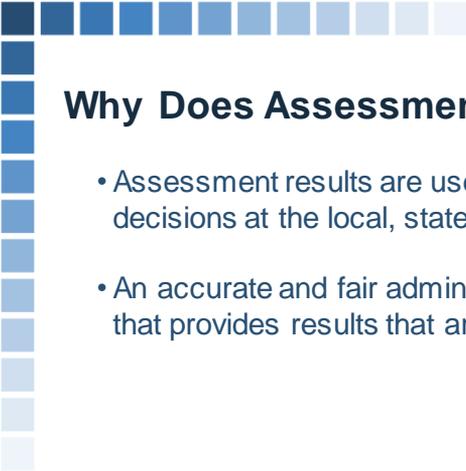
Why Does Assessment Security Matter?

- Assessment results are used to make educational decisions at the local, state and federal levels.

- An accurate and fair administration of the assessment that provides results that are valid and reliable.

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Why does Assessment Security matter?
- Assessment results are used to make educational decisions at the local, state and federal levels.
- An accurate and fair administration of the assessment that provides results that are valid and reliable.

Assessment security ensures:
- Uniformity of assessment administration
- Validity of results
- Accuracy of student achievement measures

We are <u>all</u> responsible for assessment security.

- State Education Agency
- State Assessment Coordinators
- District Assessment Coordinators
- Technology Coordinators
- Principals
- School Assessment Coordinators
- Assessment Administrators and Proctors
- Students

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Assessment security is the responsibility of everyone who comes into contact with assessment materials.

This may include:

- District Assessment Coordinators
- Technology Coordinators
- Principals
- School Assessment Coordinators
- Assessment Administrators and Proctors, and
- Students

Each of these roles should receive instruction on assessment security policies.

## Assessment Security Resources

- *Maine Assessment Security Handbook*
- Assessment-Specific Administration Manuals
  - Required training as applicable
- Training materials on the Maine DOE assessment website
  - Assessment security webisodes

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All involved staff must be fully trained in the administration policies and procedures for the specific assessment being administered. The training will include at a minimum:

- Relevant sections of this *Maine Assessment Security Handbook,*
- The Administration Manuals for the specific assessment,
- Training materials provided for the specific assessment on the Maine DOE assessment website,
- Material from Maine DOE workshops or online webinars for the specific assessment,
- Other instructions as communicated by the Maine DOE.

It is the district and school's responsibility to ensure that all Assessment Administrators and Proctors are prepared and trained.

Maine Assessment Security Handbook

1. Prevention of Assessment Irregularities
2. Detection of Irregularities
3. Investigation of Irregularities
4. Resolution of Irregularities

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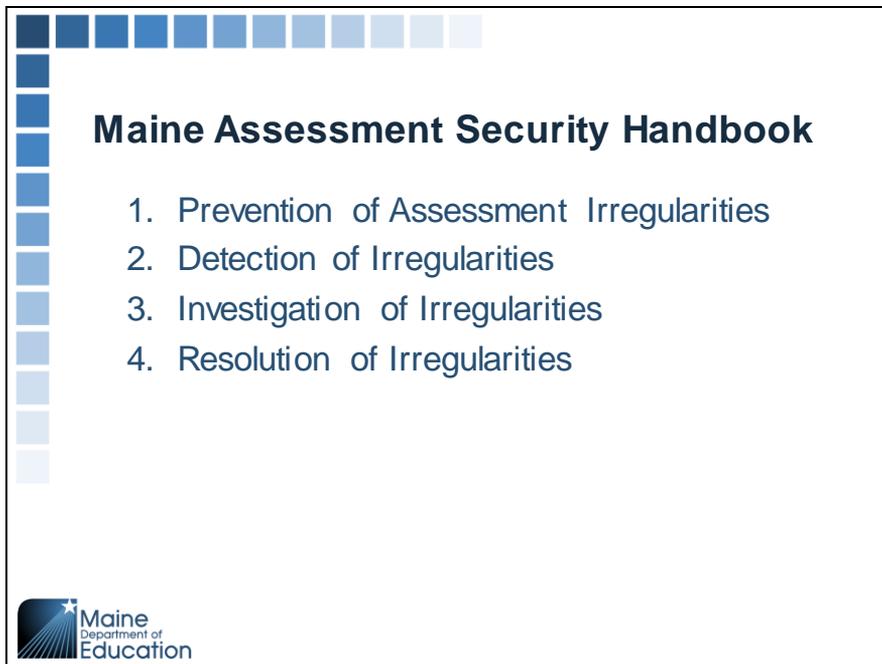
The *Maine Assessment Security Handbook* presents the general expectations of the Maine DOE for the administration of statewide assessments. Maine's policies and procedures around security are presented in four sections:

1. Prevention of Assessment Irregularities includes best practices for avoiding irregularities include training to prepare for administration, handling of materials, expectations for students, appropriate assessment environments, etc.;
2. Detection of irregularities are steps to be taken at both the state and local level to monitor assessment administration, and detect/report any irregularities that may threaten the validity of the results;
3. Investigation of Irregularities outlines the steps to be taken by the local SAU in collaboration with the Maine DOE to best understand the incident and its implications; and
4. Resolution of Irregularities working with Maine DOE to optimally resolve irregularities and to ensure valid results for all students.
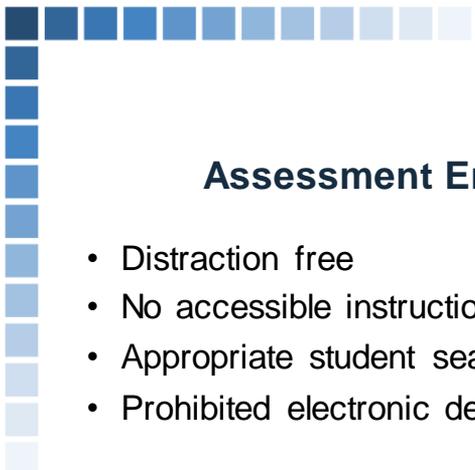
Assessment Environment

- Distraction free
- No accessible instructional materials
- Appropriate student seating/seating charts
- Prohibited electronic devices

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Best practices for preventing irregularities include providing an optimal assessment environment. The room should be quiet, orderly, comfortable, and have adequate lighting and ventilation.

The school shall designate an area for the assessment administration that provides an environment that minimizes distractions and disruptions for students (e.g., classroom, computer lab, or library). A "Do Not Disturb" sign should be placed on the door to alert others to not interrupt as an assessment is underway.

Students must not have access to unauthorized notes, textbooks, or other instructional materials. All information regarding the content being measured or assessment-taking strategies displayed in the testing room, in any manner or form, must be removed or covered. DO NOT permit the use of any supplemental reference materials (e.g., graphic organizers, outlines, word lists, multiplication charts) that are not specifically allowed.

Generally, the Maine DOE does not require that seating charts be created to show where each student was sitting for a particular session. If a certain assessment dictates a different seating chart policy, that specific policy overrides this statement.

Students are not permitted access to any unauthorized electronic devices used for communication, for capturing images of the assessment or room, or for data storage that can be used to compromise the validity, security, or confidentiality of the assessment.
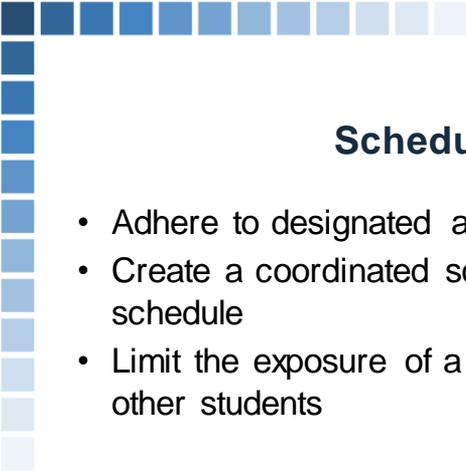
Scheduling

- Adhere to designated assessment window
- Create a coordinated school assessment schedule
- Limit the exposure of a particular session to other students

The District Assessment Coordinator should work with School Assessment Coordinators, and the Technology Coordinator where appropriate, to develop assessment administration schedules based on the school's resources (i.e., staffing, available computers, rooms, etc.) and needs, ensuring the overall integrity of the assessment process.

When possible, each session should be administered simultaneously to all students at the same grade in a particular school. For example, if an assessment has multiple sessions, all grade 5 students in a particular school are required to take Session 1 at the same time. Simultaneous or same day scheduling limits the opportunity for students who have taken the assessment to share information with friends who have not.
  For computer-based assessments, a concurrent administration may not always be possible due to the need to share computers. In those cases, a schedule should be created that completes a particular session at a particular grade in the shortest time possible in order to minimize exposure and discussion about the assessment.
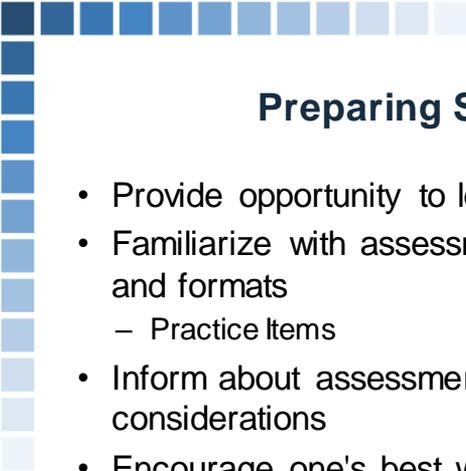
Preparing Students

- Provide opportunity to learn the content
- Familiarize with assessment-taking strategies and formats
  - Practice Items
- Inform about assessment security and ethical considerations
- Encourage one's best work

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Students should have the opportunity to learn the content being assessed.

Students should be familiar with assessment-taking strategies and with the types of formats and scoring used on the assessments, such as multiple-choice questions, multiple-select items, multi-part items, constructed-response questions, extended essays, testing platforms, online tools when applicable, and scoring rubrics.
- Utilization of practice items does not equate to "teaching to the test."

Students should be informed about assessment security and ethical considerations including
- do not participate in any form of cheating
- only provide answers that are strictly their own
- do not consult notes, textbooks, or other teaching materials
- do not use cell phones, computers, or other digital or electronic devices
- do not share questions with other students or consult other students, staff, or anyone else accessible to them during assessment administration.

Students should understand that their results will be included in their school records; a score report will be provided to parent(s) or guardian(s); and results will be used by

teachers and district staff to help improve student learning.

Encourage students to:
- Do their best
- Do their own work
- Make sure they understand and follow directions
- Respect other students during the administration
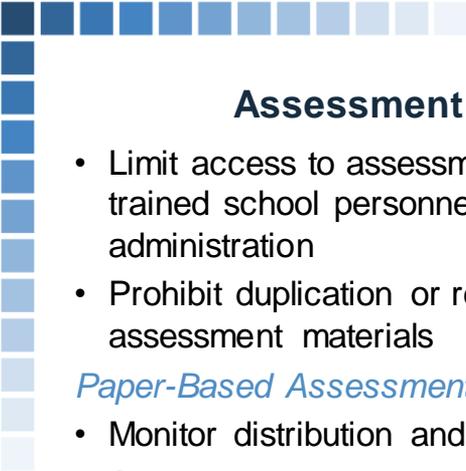
Assessment Materials

- Limit access to assessment materials to trained school personnel directly involved with administration
- Prohibit duplication or retainment of assessment materials

Paper-Based Assessments:

- Monitor distribution and use of materials
- Secure materials in locked area

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As assessment coordinators or administrators, you are ultimately responsible for the security of assessment materials while they are in your school building.

To achieve valid and comparable state assessment results, students must have no prior exposure to the items on the assessment. It is critical that all staff who have access to assessment materials protect the assessment from exposure at all times. Under no circumstance should anyone have access to assessment materials other than trained school personnel designated to be directly involved with administration.
Duplication of assessment materials is prohibited. Duplication includes but is not limited to audiotaping, videotaping, photographing, photocopying, and handwritten copying. Make sure no phones, cameras, or other electronic devices other than the online device itself are used during sessions . In addition, no paper version of an assessment, or student work, including any record of computer-generated responses, may be retained.

When using paper-based assessment materials:
- Monitor the distribution and use of these materials
- Secure assessment materials must be locked after each day or period of administration

All Administration Manuals and School Assessment Coordinator Manuals are <u>not</u> secure materials and may be discarded after administration has concluded.

During Administration

- Follow all procedures exactly as indicated in the Administration Manual
- Actively monitor at all times
- Ensure there are no distractions
- Destroy login tickets after assessment completion, if applicable
- Encourage students to do their best

At all times during the assessment administration, an Assessment Administrator must be present. The Administrator has a critical role in ensuring a successful administration that results in meaningful information about student achievement.

Some of the important tasks of the Assessment Administrator include:
- Follow all standardized assessment administration procedures exactly as indicated in the Administration Manual
- Monitor student behavior closely for adherence to proper assessment-taking practices
- We recommend proctoring by proximity – meaning roaming around the room to be observant of student activity
- Avoid working on other tasks, such as lesson plans or grading papers
- Ensure there are no distractions during the administration (e.g., talking, noises)
- Ensure that students are not viewing other students' devices or answer documents
- Ensure that all login tickets and other materials used for online administrations are destroyed immediately after students have completed the assessment
- In the case of requests for assistance, simply encourage students to do their best
    - Do not assist and/or coach students, directly or indirectly
- Do not leave the room unless another Assessment Administrator or Proctor is

available to remain

Having a proctor present during assessment sessions in addition to the administrator is recommended. This is not a requirement and may not be feasible in all situations, but it is good testing practice. It allows continuous supervision of the assessment administration in case an assessment administrator must leave the room to locate a School Assessment Coordinator or Information Technology Coordinator, accompany a student to the nurse or restroom, or assist a student through a crisis.

Our attitudes and approaches to assessment matter. Students are perceptive of adults' opinions on assessment.
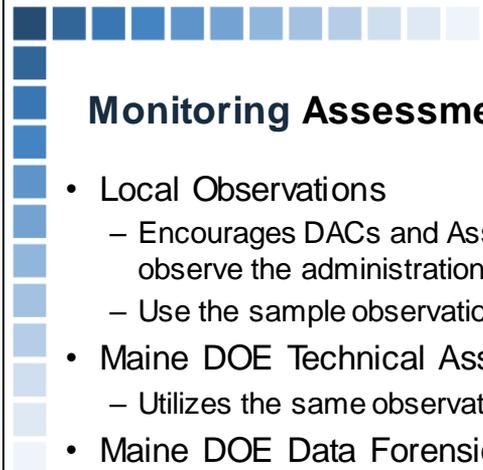
Monitoring Assessment Administration

- Local Observations
  – Encourages DACs and Assessment Coordinators to observe the administration of the assessments
  – Use the sample observation tool
- Maine DOE Technical Assistance
  – Utilizes the same observation checklist
- Maine DOE Data Forensics Analysis
- Social Media and Technology

The Maine DOE encourages DACs and School Test Coordinators to observe the administration of assessments to ensure security and consistency in administration. Sample observation tools and additional guidance can be located in the Assessment Security Handbook.

Some assessment vendors provide Maine DOE with data forensics analysis on an annual basis to examine if there are any patterns in relation to test irregularities during the administration of the assessment. The analysis provided may inform next steps with regard to test administration practices.

To the extent practicable both Maine DOE and school districts should remain diligent with regard to the posting of assessment materials on social media. This probability is greatly reduced when practices around the use of cell phones are enforced during administration.
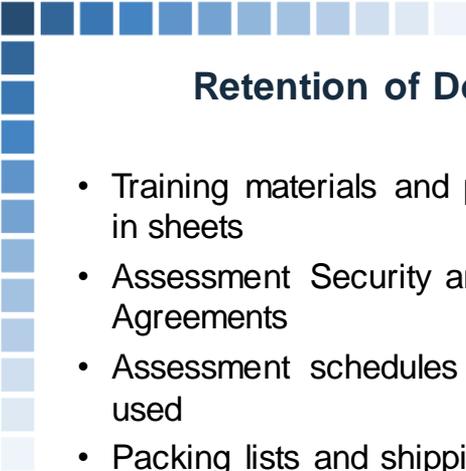
Retention of Documentation

- Training materials and personnel training sign-in sheets
- Assessment Security and Data Privacy Agreements
- Assessment schedules and seating charts if used
- Packing lists and shipping records of any paper-based materials

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Certain documentation of an assessment administration must be maintained for one year beyond the administration. Documents may be maintained at the district or at individual school levels with District Assessment Coordinators or School Assessment Coordinators. Administration documents that must be maintained include:
- Training materials and personnel training sign-in sheets
- Assessment Security & Data Privacy Agreements and/or non-disclosure forms
- Assessment schedules and seating charts if used
- Packing lists and shipping records of any paper-based materials

Detection of Irregularities

An irregularity is anything that happens during assessment that is not consistent with established protocol, whether intentional or not.

Examples of irregularities:
- Fire drill or school closure
- Power outage
- Incorrect accommodation
- Student given wrong session or grade level
- Technology failure
- Presence of posters with relevant content on walls
- Cheating

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Despite the best preparation to prevent assessment irregularities, the possibility still exists that mistakes will be made or something unexpected occurs that disrupts an assessment session.

An irregularity could be anything that happens during assessment that is not consistent with established protocol, whether intentional or not. Including but not limited to:
- A fire drill or school closure during a session
- Power outage during assessment
- The failure to provide an accommodation or giving an accommodation that was not allowed/approved
- Allowing a calculator in a session when one was not allowed
- Students given the wrong session or grade level test.
- A technology failure during online administration
- The presence of posters with relevant content on classroom walls
- Student or administrator misconduct/cheating

Communicating a Potential Irregularity

Assessment administrators and proctors report irregularities to the School Assessment Coordinator.

Irregularities may:
- Involve a breach of item security
- Lead to assessment invalidation
- Involve student misconduct
- Involve educator misconduct

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If you suspect a potential irregularity has occurred, you should contact the School Assessment Coordinator immediately. This is especially important for any irregularities that may:
- involve a breach of item security
- lead to assessment invalidation
- involve student misconduct
- involve educator misconduct

Reporting Assessment Irregularities

District Assessment Coordinators to the respective State Coordinators:

Krista Averill, NWEA and Maine Science
- 207-215-6528 OR krista.averill@maine.gov

Jodi Bossio-Smith, MSAA & ACCESS for ELLs
- 207-530-1462 OR jodi.bossio-smith@maine.gov

Each assessment may have its own process for reporting irregularities. The School Assessment Coordinator, or other administrator, should report irregularities according to the respective Service Center or Help Desk for each individual assessment. In many cases, the State Assessment Coordinator (or the individual assessment help desk and/or service center) will provide instructions that will enable immediate resolution of the irregularity (e.g., unlocking or resetting an online test session).

For more complex irregularities, the State Assessment Coordinator will contact the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) and/or Principal/School Test Coordinator, and possibly initiate an investigation of the irregularity to determine the most appropriate resolution.

Here is a link to the Assessment Irregularity Reporting

MEA Anonymous Tip Link

https://www.maine.gov/doe/Testing_Accountability/MECAS/materials/security
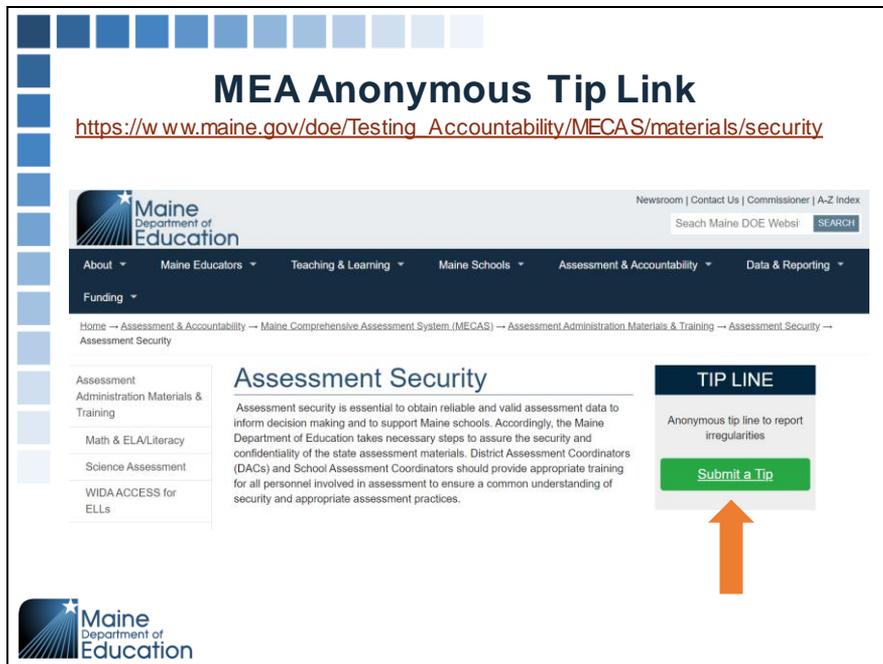
Occasionally, there will be other parties with concerns about a particular assessment practice. Students might discuss concerns with their parents. Other educators might observe questionable practices. To capture information from all available sources about potential irregularities, the Maine DOE has created an Anonymous MEA Tip Link.

This link is posted on the Maine DOE Assessment Security website and should be communicated to educators and parents along with other assessment information. This is an anonymous tip link, and follow-up conversation with the reporter will not be possible. Therefore, it is critical that complete information be provided about the concern. Without actionable information, no action will be taken. The Maine DOE encourages DACs and School Test Coordinators to monitor/observe the administration of assessments to ensure security and consistency in administration. Sample monitoring observation forms and additional guidance are in the Assessment Security Handbook.

Investigation of Irregularities

When investigating irregularities, there are three overarching questions:

- Did the irregularity lead to a breach of item security?
- Did a misadministration affect the validity of any student performance and resulting scores?
- Was the irregularity deliberate; is there evidence of academic fraud?

Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form

If it is determined that an investigation is warranted, the appropriate State Assessment Coordinator will immediately contact the DAC and/or Principal/School Assessment Coordinator about the reported incident. The State Assessment Coordinator will communicate with the appropriate district/school administrators throughout the investigative process.

If the event involves inappropriate exposure of secure assessment material, the most critical action is that the exposure be immediately contained.

The protocol for investigating irregularities can be found in the Assessment Security Handbook. The link to the Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form document is included on this slide.
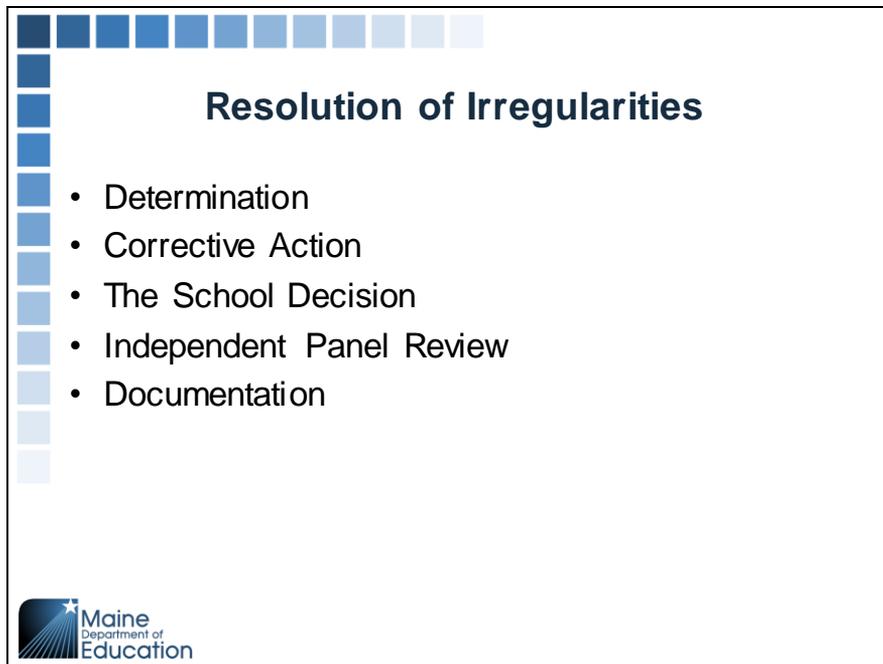
Resolution of Irregularities

- Determination
- Corrective Action
- The School Decision
- Independent Panel Review
- Documentation

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Resolving irregularities is a good faith partnership between SAUs and the Maine DOE. Corrective actions aim to minimize the immediate damage, and take action to prevent future testing irregularities.

- Determination: Based on the evidence collected, the Maine DOE Review Team will reach a determination based on the findings, such as no irregularity, irregularity resolved, breach of item security, invalid assessment administration, student misconduct, educator misconduct.

- Corrective Action: Once a determination has been made, the Maine DOE will prescribe and/or recommend corrective actions with the SAU

- School Decision: The school may accept the remediation or request an appeal. If an appeal is requested, the Maine DOE will assign an independent review panel to review the case.

- Independent Review Panel: If the school or SAU requests an appeal, an independent panel review will be conducted. The panel's report will be sent to the Maine DOE, and the Maine Commissioner of Education will notify the school and SAU of the final

determination.

- Documentation: Actions are documented during all phases of investigations and will be reviewed annually by the Maine DOE Assessment Team.
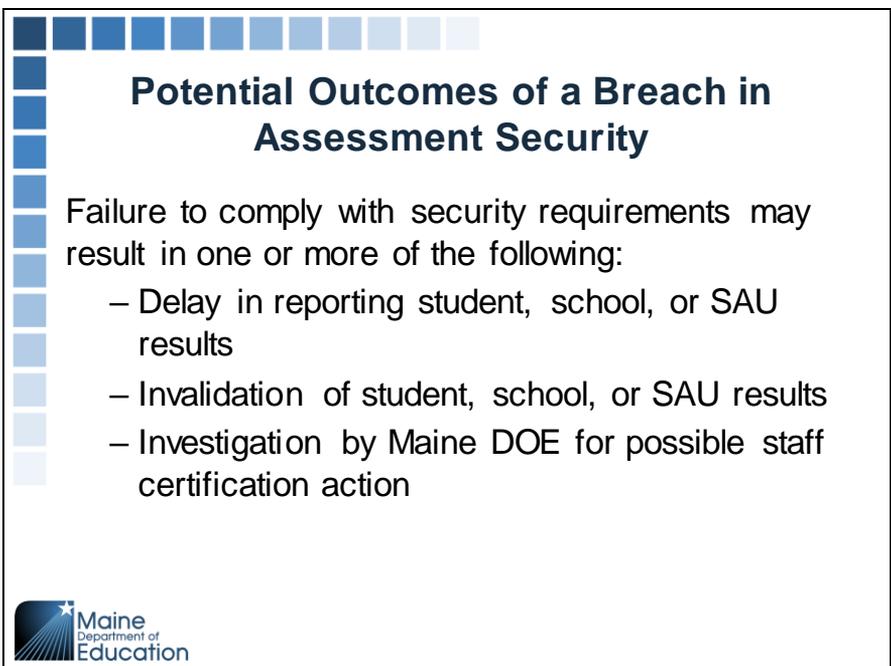
Potential Outcomes of a Breach in Assessment Security

Failure to comply with security requirements may result in one or more of the following:

– Delay in reporting student, school, or SAU results

– Invalidation of student, school, or SAU results

– Investigation by Maine DOE for possible staff certification action

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Failure to comply with security requirements may result in one or more of the following:
- delay in reporting of student, school, or SAU results
- invalidation of student, school, or SAU results
- investigation by the Department of Education for possible staff certification action

After review of all test security and privacy protocols, School Assessment Coordinators and Administrators/Proctors must sign an Assessment Security and Data Privacy Agreement and return to the District Assessment Coordinator or Principal/School Assessment Coordinator. You do not need to send the agreements to DOE.
The agreement attests that you:
- have read the appropriate manuals (School Assessment Coordinator or Administrator manuals) and viewed this Security Webinar
- agree to follow all assessment security policies as instructed
- agree to report any potential irregularities as instructed, and
- acknowledge that results data will be analyzed to detect any unusual patterns

Download and sign (by hand or electronically) the Security and Data Privacy Agreement. The agreement can be found on the DOE assessment pages URL listed, under Assessment Security.
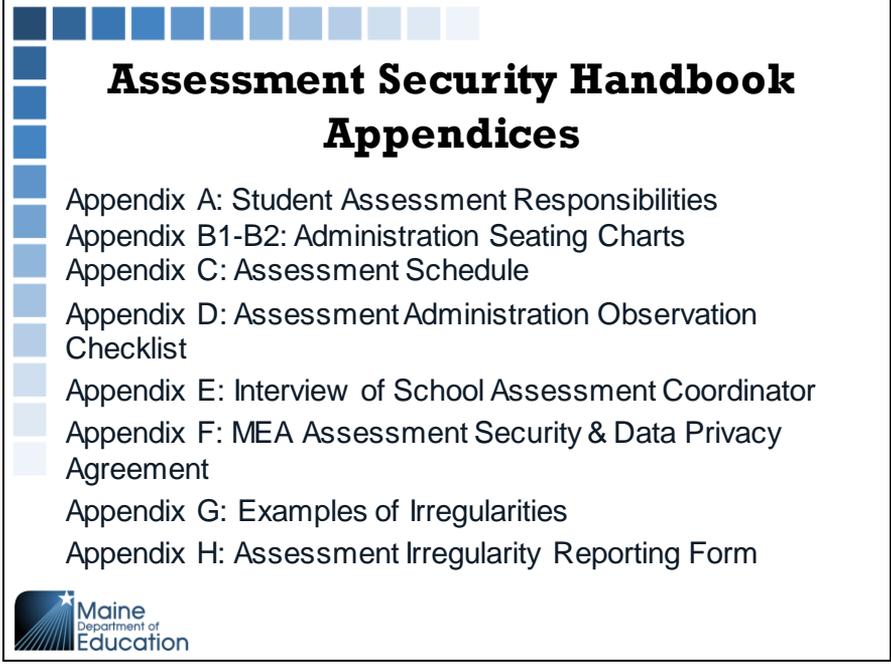
Assessment Security Handbook Appendices

Appendix A: Student Assessment Responsibilities

Appendix B1-B2: Administration Seating Charts

Appendix C: Assessment Schedule

Appendix D: Assessment Administration Observation Checklist

Appendix E: Interview of School Assessment Coordinator

Appendix F: MEA Assessment Security & Data Privacy Agreement

Appendix G: Examples of Irregularities

Appendix H: Assessment Irregularity Reporting Form

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Please refer to the Assessment Security Handbook for the above appendices and templates.

Contents

Contacts

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Please contact the corresponding assessment coordinator at the Maine Department of Education immediately if any situation occurs that could cause any assessment administration to be compromised.