LAS GUIDE
with embedded Components for Accommodations and Alternate Assessment

**Principles and Criteria
for the Adoption of Local Assessment Systems:**

~ November 2004 ~

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Local Assessment System:
Assessing All Students Through One Of Three Avenues

Note: All text in this document pertaining solely to Local Alternate Assessment (LAA) is presented in font different from that of the standard LAS Guide. (Ex: Standard Font, Alternate Assessment Font)

In June 2003 the Maine Department of Education published the **Local Assessment System Guide: Principles and Criteria for the Adoption of Local Assessment Systems**. This *LAS Guide* provides school systems with the criteria and rules necessary to comply with Chapter 127 while also providing flexibility for local decisions. The intent of this new document with embedded components is to provide guidance for school systems as they make decisions about their individual assessment systems while ensuring that all students are assessed through one, or a combination of three avenues: standard administration, administration with accommodations or through alternate assessment. The decision about the avenue of student participation is made by a team and is decided for each content area. The *LAS Guide* clearly states that assessments administered with valid accommodations or through an alternate assessment are to be considered comparable (see Criterion 2). What has not been articulated is the process school systems need to use to make decisions about which avenue is most appropriate for individual student participation.

Chapter 127 states "Alternate Assessment shall be a component of the Local Assessment system, with clear guidance for participation in alternate assessment". **The students who can participate in an alternate assessment are those for whom the required accommodations would be so significant that they would compromise the validity of the assessment**. These students may include, but are not limited to, students with disabilities, those identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP) or those requiring support under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Appendix C of this companion to the *LAS Guide* provides local school systems with: recommended procedures for making decisions about which avenue is most appropriate for an individual student's participation in assessment; an expanded list of possible accommodations with an accompanying worksheet for teams to use that will guide them to valid decisions about a student's participation; a possible local appeals process for the choice of local accommodations; as well as additional information. This entire process has been built on input from a variety of stakeholder groups and has been affirmed from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), with the understanding that the process will be field-tested during the 2003-2004 year.

In addition to the guidance provided by the materials in Appendix C, embedded within the appropriate sections of the *LAS Guide* are additional or different Rules and Considerations for the alternate assessment component of Local Assessment Systems. These are presented in a side-by-side format within each section.

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Local Assessment System Guide: Principles and Criteria

Introduction

For well over a decade, many and varied standards-based models for school reform have been applied in virtually every state in the nation. Central to most of these models are efforts to strengthen the methods used to assess students' *progress* toward meeting standards and evaluating the extent to which students have in fact *attained* them. This focus has been abundantly true in Maine, as discussions about assessment have taken place in classrooms, in the Legislature and at every level of the educational establishment in between. That we are still discussing assessment so vigorously attests to both the complexity of the work and the power of the essential concept: to bring about long-term improvement of our schools, we *must* be able to determine with increasing certainty what all students know and can do.

Maine's approach to assessing our state standards, the *Learning Results*, has been to use a combination of state and local measures in building a "comprehensive assessment system." The state test, the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA), was revised in 1999 to align more closely with content standards and performance indicators established in the *Learning Results*. At the same time, schools across Maine have been aligning their local curricula, instruction, and assessments (classroom, school, and district levels) with the standards. To provide initial assistance to local districts and to clarify design parameters, the Maine Department of Education (DOE) produced a number of supportive documents: the report from the Assessment System Design Team; *Grand Ideas and Practical Work*, a collection of local assessment design efforts; *What Maine's Assessment System Should Do*, a self-assessment continuum; *Measured Measures*: *Technical Considerations for Developing a Local Assessment System*; the recently released Balance of Representation report; and a wide variety of tools and models that have been used in professional development events throughout the state. In addition, support for local districts has come from a number of organizations, regional partnerships, higher education institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. Support and leadership have also come from school districts themselves through presentations at statewide conferences and by regional sharing. It is a goal of this document to honor this extensive body of work and to build on it wherever possible.

Maine has employed a dynamic, evolving method in building our comprehensive assessment system. This has been due largely to the fact that there are no existing models of a system of state *and local* assessments that meet technical standards of validity and reliability. Thus, our work has been iterative, including periodic pauses for reflection and adjustment. This type of approach has produced enormous innovation in schools, districts, and among professional development agencies and organizations, but has also led to frustration and anxiety as practitioners have eagerly awaited guidance on the "big picture." Many parts of the system—the building blocks—have been developed, but with increasing urgency educators have called for guidance on the whole to which the parts contribute. This document

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is intended to provide sufficient guidance on how to construct a local assessment system to serve as a plan for local action.

A Balance of Purposes:

Chapter 127, Section 4, of the Department's regulations governing Instructional Programs, Assessment, and Diploma Requirements states that the purpose of assessment is to provide high-quality information about student performance that will allow for:

- Informing teaching and learning;
- Monitoring and holding school administrative units accountable for students achieving the content standards set by the *Learning Results*; and
- Certifying students' achievement of the content standards.

To a degree, these purposes can be seen as supportive of one another, at least in the abstract. However, in practice, it can be argued that a dynamic tension exists between using assessment to inform teaching and learning (i.e., for formative purposes) and using assessment to certify achievement of standards (i.e., for summative purposes). Too much emphasis on assessment for summative purposes, for instance, could affect students' attitudes about learning and impinge upon the time available for instruction. On the other hand, too little emphasis on summative purposes could weaken school-level and district-level accountability efforts and undercut the overall fairness to all Maine students. A balanced system allows all three purposes to be achieved.

Throughout the descriptions of the Principles and Criteria set forth as Parts I and II, respectively, of this document, other underlying tensions are also suggested: between fairness to individual students and fairness to all students; between fairness to individual districts and fairness to all districts; between local flexibility and common standards across all districts; and between the need to move forward with urgency and the need to take adequate time to develop local systems at a comfortable pace. Many of these tensions can only be resolved by policy decisions, which by their nature are less exacting. The truth is that we still face unknowns in how these technical guidelines will affect schools and districts in Maine. It is important to recognize that monitoring the overall impact of state and local assessment systems—at all levels and for all purposes—will be critical to ensuring that the broad goals of Maine's *Learning Results* are met. Assessment is not an end in itself; rather, collecting and using the *evidence* of learning should not interfere with, but rather support, the *experience* of learning.

Maine's approach to assessment also rests on the belief that careful alignment of curriculum, instruction, assessment—*and* professional development—with standards will produce better results, for both formative and summative purposes. The countless hours spent by local committees to revise school and district curricula, the attention to detail by Maine teachers in developing aligned lessons and unit plans, and the focused professional development at the district level have set the stage for a truly integrated system, one that is capable of meeting *all* the purposes of the assessment system and reaching broader educational goals as well.

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Building a System for Certification:

The third purpose listed above, certifying that students have met *Learning Results* standards, has proven to be a rather tall order, one that has extended and refined our understanding of the potential capability of a local assessment system. Though many studies have sought to document the validity and reliability of large-scale external tests—like the MEA— the same cannot be said for systems of *local* assessments. Much wonderful work on using assessment thoughtfully has been published, the effect of which has been to deepen our understanding of designing classroom assessments; but we have few roadmaps to help us in building valid and reliable "systems" of local assessments capable of carrying the burden of certification, that is, ensuring valid and reliable decisions at each grade span.

Measured Measures: *Technical Considerations for Developing a Local Assessment System*, published by the Department's Technical Advisory Committee in June 2000, offered local districts conceptual guidance for initial system design work. The purpose of *this* document, *Local Assessment System Guide: Principles and Criteria*, is to build on the ideas presented in *Measured Measures* and to provide *procedural* guidance on how to build a fully developed framework for local assessment systems that will serve, in particular, the third purpose of assessment, namely the certification of student achievement. (Note: reviewing *Measured Measures* prior to, or while, reading this document is strongly encouraged. It is available at http://www.state.me.us/education/g2000/mm.htm.) *Measured Measures* presented three technical considerations that local assessment systems must address to serve the purposes above: validity, reliability, and standard setting. These three considerations are elaborated on in this Guide, with specific Principles and Criteria for implementing a Local Assessment System consistent with Chapter 127 to allow for valid inferences and reliable decisions. However, a fundamental commitment runs throughout this Guide: to establish *only* those criteria and rules that would be *necessary* to comply with Chapter 127, leaving up to local discretion all other aspects of assessment system design and implementation. The necessary requirements are stated in this Guide as Rules. Options for local decision-making are suggested through Considerations and Examples of local assessment system plans that illustrate, wherever possible, more than one approach to meeting the criteria.

It should also be noted that the Principles and Criteria in this document have been developed to provide a level of technical rigor to meet the needs of Maine's *Learning Results*, not to comply with the recently passed federal "No Child Left Behind Act" (NCLBA). There may, in fact, need to be "connecting points" between our state's requirements and the federal law; however, at this writing the extent and nature of those connections are still emerging (see Conclusion). As work is completed on our state's NCLBA plan, the Department will provide regular updates for local districts designed to clarify any implications for local assessment system design. Though many of the goals of the NCLBA and Maine's *Learning Results* are identical (e.g., high learning expectations for *all* students), key differences exist in the accountability approaches embodied in the two laws, and these differences argue in favor of caution as we examine or develop the points of contact between them.

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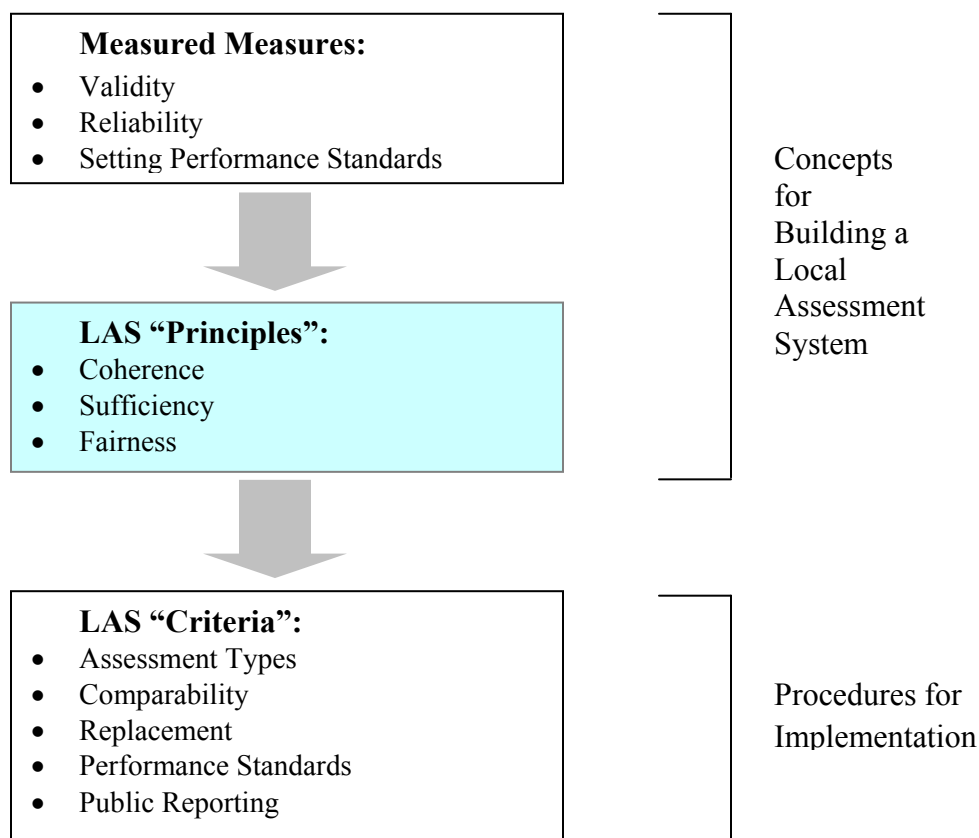## Part I: The Principles of Coherence, Sufficiency, and Fairness

The standards for Local Assessment Systems outlined in Chapter 127 and the criteria for implementing those standards contained in this document derive from three overarching principles: coherence, sufficiency, and fairness. These principles grow out of the design considerations described in *Measured Measures* namely, validity, reliability, and standard setting. To provide valid and reliable information about progress on achievement of the *Learning Results*, a local assessment system, as a component of a comprehensive assessment system, must:

- Be a *coherent* system of assessments aligned with the content standards of the *Learning Results*;
- Provide *sufficient* information to support valid and reliable inferences about achievement of the *Learning Results*; and
- Be *fair* to all students, schools, and school administrative units.

While these principles are not in themselves guidelines for local action, they do **apply to all three avenues of assessment: (standard administration, administration with accommodations, or alternate assessment)** and form a conceptual foundation that will help the reader interpret and understand the criteria outlined later in this document (see Figure 1).

A Framework: From Conceptual to Procedural

Figure # 1

Measured Measures:
- Validity
- Reliability
- Setting Performance Standards

LAS "Principles":
- Coherence
- Sufficiency
- Fairness

Concepts for Building a Local Assessment System

LAS "Criteria":
- Assessment Types
- Comparability
- Replacement
- Performance Standards
- Public Reporting

Procedures for Implementation

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Coherence

Coherence refers to the extent to which the individual assessments that make up the Local Assessment System function in an integrated and balanced fashion within that system to capture both the depth of understanding (or cognitive complexity) and breadth of content knowledge and skills in each content area as defined by Maine's *Learning Results*. Establishing validity—or the match with the specific language of standards in each content area—is at the heart of building a truly coherent system. In addition, coherence refers to the manner in which the components of a local assessment system provide a complete picture of student learning, the extent to which the assessments are **representative** of both the discipline and of the students' skills and knowledge. A coherent local assessment system will include a variety of assessments designed for specific purposes (e.g., informing instruction, certifying performance, and program evaluation.)

Finally, coherence refers to the manner in which a local assessment system is designed to measure student progress on the content standards of the *Learning Results* across time – that is, across grade spans PK-12, as well as across grade levels within grade spans. The system of Maine's *Learning Results* is organized, within each content area, around a system of outcomes with the outcomes increasing in depth and complexity across grades levels PK-12. A coherent local assessment system should be designed from that same broad perspective, not as a set of discrete pieces of information.

Sufficiency

Sufficiency refers to the amount of evidence needed in a local assessment system to allow valid and reliable inferences about achievement of the standards of Maine's *Learning Results* by an individual student, school, or school administrative unit. There must be enough assessment opportunities and enough *variety* in assessment methods to produce consistent or reliable indications of student performance in the content area. As noted in the Introduction, the need for sufficiency in *assessment* must be balanced with the need for sufficiency in *instruction*. Instruction and assessment must work in concert so that the number of assessments administered to an individual student does not detract from necessary instructional opportunities.

The models of assessment systems that accompany this document provide examples of systems designed to meet both aspects of sufficiency when providing information for certification of student performance. As will be seen in those models, and throughout the discussion in this document, concerns about sufficiency will have a major impact on the organization of local assessment systems. The Local Assessment System must be able to provide valid and reliable results about student performance in the content area as a whole (Chapter 127, Section 4.02C10). Chapter 127, states: "This does not require the assessment of each performance indicator specified in [Maine's *Learning Results*]."(Section 4.02C7). The outstanding question, therefore, is: What level of assessment is necessary to produce sufficient information about student performance in the content area as a whole?

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The Department of Education has introduced the concept of content "clusters," or groupings of closely related content standards within a content area, to establish an intermediate level of organization of the *Learning Results* so that the answer to the sufficiency question might remain within the parameters of "practical and manageable."

The use of content clusters will be illustrated and discussed in the Criteria section of this document, and in the models of assessment systems that accompany this document. Though both the *Learning Results* and Chapter 127 speak to the significance of providing evidence at the content standard level, the Rules for sufficiency permit "aggregating up" to the level of content clusters for reporting purposes. **Districts may choose, however, to report at the content standard level if local decisions about other aspects of system design would make this level of reporting advantageous to the district.**

Fairness

In *Measured Measures*, fairness is discussed in terms of opportunity to learn, develop, and demonstrate their knowledge and skills, as well as fairness with respect to gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and disability (pp. 15-16). First and foremost, a local assessment system—and the curriculum and instructional systems from which the assessments are derived—must ensure adequate opportunities for students to learn the standards on which they will be assessed. As the accompanying case studies amply demonstrate, building a local assessment system begins with ensuring that all courses or instructional offerings are aligned with the standards. Building an assessment system that includes a purpose as significant as certification—including graduation from high school—requires not only that students have fair opportunities to learn the standards but that they and their parents are informed and knowledgeable about this component of the system. More so than with the other principles of assessment systems, fairness is indeed a matter for public understanding.

Organizational Framework of Maine's *Learning Results* (MLR)

Figure # 2

Guiding Principles: • Characteristics of a well-educated person
Content Areas: • MLR levels at which student achievement is certified
Content Clusters: • Level added to provide school level data for reporting purposes and to keep necessary amount of assessment evidence "practical and manageable."
Content Standards: • MLR level that is assessed through a sampling of performance indicators
Performance Indicators: • MLR level that can be measured to provide evidence of achievement of content standards (not all)

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Measured Measures also implicitly discusses an aspect of fairness in its discussion of standard setting:

> Where assessment information is intended to serve as part of a comprehensive system, classroom performance standards must be consistent with grade level standards and with school-wide standards. Standard setting must be aggregated up; this is, in the classroom a teacher may make an independent decision but it should be consistent with standards set at the grade level. Teachers at each grade level should talk with each other and come to consensus about what the standard should be across the school. Schools come to consensus across the district, and districts across the state. (p. 28)

(Note: the Department will be conducting a statewide standard setting process to help local districts calibrate their local standard setting processes.)

It is this latter interpretation of fairness—holding all students, schools, and school administrative units to the same standards—that applies directly to the discussion about performance standards for local assessment systems provided in this document.

To support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance within a classroom, school, and school administrative unit, it is essential that all students be measured against the same standards—content standards and performance standards. Further, to support valid and reliable conclusions about school administrative unit performance as part of a statewide comprehensive assessment system, as well as to determine statewide performance (Chapter 127, Section 4.02E), it is essential that all school administrative units be measured against the same content standards and performance standards statewide.

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Part II: Criteria

This section of the document presents, and provides rationales for, five Criteria that contribute to the development of a local assessment system that will conform to the principles of coherence, sufficiency, and fairness. In particular, the Criteria are designed to help local educators design, develop, and adopt local assessment systems that are aligned with Maine's *Learning Results* and that support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance in each of the content areas measured.

Organization

The five Criteria presented in this section are:
Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution
Criterion 2: Comparability
Criterion 3: Replacement
Criterion 4: Performance Standards
Criterion 5: Public Reporting

The order of presentation of the Criteria is intended to begin the initial design of a local assessment system with the selection of individual assessments (Criterion 1), and the administration of assessments (Criteria 2 and 3), then move to the application of performance standards (Criterion 4), and conclude with the aggregation and reporting of assessment results (Criterion 5).

Each Criterion is introduced with a brief description and a list of Rules summarizing the responsibilities local educators have in implementing the Criteria. Local flexibility is provided within the Rules and is addressed in the "Considerations" section intended to support thoughtful implementation of the Criteria. **The Rules and Considerations are presented in a side-by-side format with the left column applying to students who participate in assessment through standard administration or administration with accommodations. The right hand column applies to students who participate through alternate assessment.** One or more brief examples follow each Criterion for purposes of illustrating important points, followed by a detailed description of the background and rationale for the inclusion of the particular Criterion in this document.

Throughout the Criteria, the assumption is implicit that all assessments must meet the requirements of Chapter 127, Section 4.02D. Each assessment in the system included *for the purpose of certification* must demonstrate validity and reliability. While the Criteria provide guidance for steps that will contribute to the validity and reliability of the system, the system itself relies on the technical quality of individual assessments.

At their core, both the Principles and Criteria involve a combination of complex technical issues and practical issues related to the design, development, and adoption of a local assessment system. As is usually the case with complex issues, there is no single correct and easy-to-implement solution to these issues. It is often necessary to strike a balance among conflicting demands to arrive at the best available solution.

The Criteria, Rules, Considerations, and Examples provide a summary of the key technical issues that will support and inform local educators' decisions.

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Criterion 1: Assessment Types - Selection and Distribution

The term "Assessment Type" is used to classify methods of assessment that measure content and skills within a content area at a specified breadth and depth. The distribution of assessment types across a content area is the key to determining whether the system of assessment is coherent, and whether it is sufficient to support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance in the content area as identified by Maine's *Learning Results*. Each school administrative unit will identify a combination of specific assessments for certification that is representative of the character, depth and breadth of the content area.

RULES
To fulfill the requirements of this criterion, each school administrative unit must:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Assess each content standard for each grade span and content area.	→ Assess as many of the Content Standards as appropriate, given the students' course of study with a minimum of ½ of the content standards (and round up) for each grade span and content area.
• Include a minimum of 8-12 assessments for each grade span and content area for certification.	→ Same rule applies
• Include a minimum of 1 assessment for each health education content (topic) area groupings. (Chapter 125 – 5.02.D, 6.01.D, 7.01.A.4) Health Education Content (Topic) Area Groupings 1. Personal Health and Nutritional Health 2. Family Life and Growth and Development 3. Consumer Health and Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Use Prevention 4. Safety and Accident Prevention 5. Community Health, Environmental Health and Prevention and Control of Disease and Disorders	→ Measure as many Content Area Groupings as appropriate given the student's course of study with a minimum of one assessment in one Content Area Grouping.
• Select a sample of performance indicators based on a method of prioritization. Use Maine's Balance of Representation results (available from the Department) or another method - e.g., the **Measured Measures** procedure or another strategy - to identify high priority or "core" ideas.	→ Same rule applies
• Measure each school level reporting category (content cluster) 5 times.*	→ Measure as many content clusters as appropriate given the student's course of study with a minimum of two content clusters per content area and 5 measures in every cluster assessed in the grade span.

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• Use a variety of assessment types for each school level reporting category (content cluster)*. Select types based on Form and Function (provided in the *Form and Function Regional Workshop Information* – posted on the DOE website), considering the requirements of selected indicator(s), the development levels of students, and the purpose of the assessment (certification).	→ Rule does not apply. See Considerations for further guidance.

*Districts must report at the content cluster level at a minimum. They may report at the content standard level if they choose by assessing each content standard a minimum of 5 times.

CONSIDERATIONS
To thoughtfully implement these rules, each school administrative unit should consider:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Including assessments of both the PK-2 and the 3-4 performance indicators when selecting the 8-12 assessments for the PK-4 grade span.	→ Same Consideration applies
• Including fewer assessments (within the minimum of 8-12) to accommodate the self-contained classroom structure (a single teacher being responsible for all or many of the content areas).	→ Same Consideration applies
• Including more assessments at the high school level because of graduation requirements.	→ Same Consideration applies
	→ Encouraging a variety of assessment types with the recognition that some students, due to challenges with communication, may be able to demonstrate knowledge and skills through only one assessment type.
	→ The need to maximize accommodations for students in order to minimize the number of students who require alternate assessment.
	→ The Guidance for decision-making teams as they determine the appropriate avenue for student participation in assessments used for certification and reporting. (See Appendix C)

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EXAMPLE for Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution

The K-4 Science Committee for SAU #007 met to discuss assessment selection. They had already identified one or more high priority performance indicators for each content standard in their content area and appropriate assessments for each one. Now they are considering the collection of assessments to ensure that it meets all of the requirements of Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution. The set includes 10 assessments with each content cluster measured at least 5 times (see table below). They have selected a variety of assessment types and are now reviewing to ensure that each assessment conforms to the guidelines of Form and Function.

LAS Example – Science & Technology (K-4)		Types below represent suggested science assessment models - see discipline-specific examples packet	Life Sciences Cluster			Physical Sciences Cluster			Earth and Space Sciences Cluster			Nature and Implications of Science Cluster			
Assessment	Source	Assessment Type	A	B	C	E	H	I	D	F	G	J	K	L	M
Life Cycle Book(PK-2)	MAP	Structured Response	4						4				4	4	
Melts in the Sun (PK-2)	LAD	Scientific Investigation					4					4	4		
Insects and Me (PK-2)	LAD	Research Project			4								4	4	
Energy Everywhere (PK-2)	LAD	Bundle					4 4								
Food Web (3-4)	LAD	Bundle		4 4											
Science Around Us (3-4)	Local	Scientific Critique				4				4 4				4	4
Soils (3-4)	LAD	Exhibition Assessment (with ELA)								4		4	4	4	
Moving Massive Things (3-4)	Local	Scientific Investigation						4				4		4	
Plot Study (3-4)	MAP	Scientific Investigation	4									4	4		
Earth and Its Moon (3-4)	LAD	Bundle									4				
Total # of Assessments=10		**6 different assessment types**	5 measures of Cluster 1			5 measures of Cluster 2			5 measures of Cluster 3			15 measures of Cluster 4			

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Please Note: This illustrative example is intended to clarify Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution. It should not be considered exemplary and should not be construed as discouraging the selection of locally developed assessments.

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The Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) at SAU #007 determined that this student could not participate in the assessment of Science and Technology through standard administration or administration with accommodations. This student has demonstrated progress toward achievement of the Learning Results through an alternate assessment. Due to the fact that this student's primary from of communicating is pointing, it was determined that he could really only use three different assessment types. The PET is reviewing this collection of assessments to ensure that the student meets all the Alternate Assessment requirements for Criterion 1. The set includes over half of the content standards (7 out of 13); reflects as many assessment types as possible for this student while still keeping the guidelines of Form and Function in mind; has a total of 8 assessments during this grade span and measures a minimum of two content clusters, at least 5 times each.

**NOTE: This example actually has assessments in 3 clusters, each with a minimum of 5 measures.

LAA Example – Science & Technology (K-4)		Types below represent suggested science assessment models - see discipline-specific examples packet	Life Sciences Cluster			Physical Sciences Cluster			Earth and Space Sciences Cluster			Nature and Implications of Science Cluster			
Assessment	Source	Assessment Type	A	B	C	E	H	I	D	F	G	J	K	L	M
Task 1	MAP	Structured Response	4										4		
Task 2	LAD	Structured Response					4					4	4		
Task 3	Local	Bundle			4								4		
Task 4	LAD	Bundle					4 4								
Task 5	Local	Structured Response		4								4			
Task 6	Local	Structured Response	4			4									
Task 7	Local	Exhibition Assessment (with ELA)		4		4						4			
Task 8	Local	Structured Response			4							4			
Total # of Assessments= 8		**3 different assessment types**	6 measures of Cluster 1			5 measures of Cluster 2			0 measures of Cluster 3			7 measures of Cluster 4			

PLEASE NOTE: This example illustrates the selection and distribution of assessments for an individual student, unlike the previous example that reflects the selection and distribution of common assessments at the system level. This illustrative example is intended to clarify Criterion 1: Assessment Types for Alternate Assessment. It should not be considered exemplary.

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Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution
Background and Rationale

Form Follows Function
Measured Measures

As noted earlier, the term "Assessment Type" is used to classify methods of assessment that measure content and skills within a content area at a specified breadth and depth. Breadth refers to the range of performance indicators assessed (within or across content standards and clusters). Depth refers to the level of cognitive demand indicated by the performance indicators assessed. A coherent and sufficient local assessment system will consist of a collection of different assessment types that is representative of the content standards and their related performance indicators contained in Maine's system of *Learning Results*.

The Selection of Assessment Types

Particular methods of assessment are better suited than others for assessing certain content and skills. *Measured Measures* discussed methods of assessment in terms of the type of response elicited from students. Other references may define them somewhat differently. In any case, a range of types such as those shown below must be part of any system.

Range of Assessment Types

Selected Response	Constructed Response	Performance Tasks	Personal Communication

As explained in *Measured Measures*, some types of assessment are better suited for accommodating the cognitive and behavioral demands of particular performance indicators than others. For example, a selected-response item (e.g., multiple-choice, true-false, matching) might be a more efficient tool than a performance assessment for measuring a student's ability to identify the purpose of the text or to recall factual information (*Measured Measures*, p. 9-11). Other considerations concerning the relationship between assessment format and the who, what, and why of the assessment are provided in *Form and Function Regional Workshop Information*. The requirement of variety within the local assessment system is directly related to the consideration of form serving function.

Because of their precision in defining methods of assessment in terms of the content of the content standards and performance indicators assessed, many assessment types are intrinsic to particular content areas. For example, the demands of the science content standards necessitate an assessment type such as a "scientific investigation". Similarly, the demands of the English language arts content standards inevitably result in an assessment type such as "reading fluency". The particular relationship between the content of a discipline and assessment type is the most important consideration in selecting the combination of assessments to make up the Local Assessment System. To facilitate this process, the Department will prepare Content Area- Specific Assessment Type Definitions and Specifications for each of the five content areas included in the Local Assessment System. (Visual and

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Performing Arts, Career Preparation and Modern and Classical Languages will be developed on a later time line.)

Standardized norm-referenced tests and other commercial assessments (norm-referenced or criterion-referenced) can play an important role in a local assessment system, although they are not necessary for certification. The loosely defined class of assessments referred to as standardized tests (norm-referenced achievement tests like the TerraNova, ITBS, Stanford-10 or other commercial assessments) are not classified as separate assessment types in and of themselves. The variation in the content and complexity among those instruments does not permit identification of the standardized test as an assessment type. Each standardized assessment *item* considered for inclusion in the system must be reviewed to ensure alignment with Maine's *Learning Results*.

All students are required to participate in the Maine Educational Assessment through standard administration, administration with accommodations, or through an alternate assessment. For the MEA, the alternate option is the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP). None of the avenues of participation for the MEA are considered an assessment type. In addition, neither the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) nor the Personalized Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP) are considered an assessment type. The Policy Advisory Committee will provide alternative ways to use information obtained from the MEA in conjunction with information obtained from other selected assessment types. Within the Local Assessment System, the same three avenues for participation must be available to students as are available on the MEA. The Department will provide a model that districts may choose to use to meet the alternate assessment requirement.

The Distribution of Assessment Types

A collection of assessments does not entail a system
any more than a pile of bricks entails a house.
Measured Measures

As noted above, the distribution of assessment types across a content area is the key to determining whether the system of assessment is coherent, and whether it is sufficient to support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance in the content area as identified by Maine's *Learning Results*. The fundamental question to address regarding the distribution of assessment types is whether or not the content and cognitive demand required by the collection of assessments is **representative** of the content area as identified by the content standards and their related performance indicators contained in Maine's *Learning Results*. Assuming that the local curriculum is aligned with the *Learning Results* (i.e., students have a full and fair opportunity to learn the concepts, knowledge, and skills articulated in Maine's *Learning Results*), and that the local assessment system is aligned with the local curriculum, then it follows that the distribution of assessments embedded in the curriculum must be aligned with Maine's *Learning Results*.

A second, but equally important, question regarding the distribution of assessment types is whether the collection of assessments is sufficient to support the level of reporting required. Each local assessment

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system must: a) support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance in the content area as a whole (i.e., students have a full and fair opportunity to learn the concepts, knowledge, and skills articulated in Maine's *Learning Results*); and b) support the reporting of school level performance data on each content cluster. In order to collect sufficient evidence to support school and school administrative unit level reporting at the content cluster level, a minimum of five measures within each cluster is necessary. **(In order to collect sufficient evidence for the alternate assessment avenue of student participation over ½ of the content standards must be assessed in a minimum of 2 clusters, each with no fewer then 5 measures.)** This does not mean five separate assessment tasks (see Example on page 15). This provides the students five separate opportunities to demonstrate achievement, allows for depth and breadth, and generates a total of 20 (commonly considered an adequate sample for analysis) potential score points (see Example on page 15).

To support valid and reliable conclusions about student performance in the content area as a whole requires a minimum of 8-12 assessments distributed across a variety of assessment types. This is shown in the accompanying Example for Criterion 1, which includes 10 assessments.

Criterion 1: Assessment Types – Selection and Distribution for Alternate Assessment Background and Rationale

The commitment to make the alternate assessment avenue of participation as similar as possible to the Rules and Considerations outlined in the LAS Guide designed for assessments (including standard administration or administration with accommodations) must be balanced with the fact that alternate assessments are at the individual student level and have to allow for the extreme circumstances associated with the unique learning needs of these very few students. The local alternate assessment system must recognize that some students may have very limited communication systems and therefore are unable to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a variety of ways. A student who can communicate only through pointing to pictures may be able to validly show knowledge through selected response items and some of the types included in a bundle. Through the use of technology the student may also be able to put together a performance exhibition but not be able to participate in any of the other assessment types. It is for this reason that the Rules and Considerations for the alternate assessment vary a bit by not requiring a variety of types but encouraging as many types as possible (determined on a student by student basis) and reducing the required amount of evidence necessary to meet this criteria.

Given the significant learning needs of the students who participate in Alternate Assessment this reduction in amount of evidence in the collection – over ½ of the content standards, a minimum of 2 clusters each with at least 5 measures in every cluster assessed - should still provide sufficient data to support the level of reporting required. This reduction in amount of evidence should by no means be considered a way to expect less from a student. All students should be engaged in teaching and learning associated with as much of the System of *Learning Results* as possible and ultimately evidence of that learning should be documented through the assessment system.

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Criterion 2: Comparability

Comparability means that similar judgments of student performance in the content area (e.g., Meets the Standard v. Partially Meets the Standard) reflect similar levels of proficiency in terms of content and skills as identified for Maine's *Learning Results.*

RULES
To fulfill the requirements of this criterion, each school administrative unit must:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Include a minimum of 75% "common" assessments in each grade span and content area (i.e., the same assessment is administered to each student within the school administrative unit at a time when it is instructionally appropriate for the individual student or group of students). (See Figure 3.)	→ This rule does not apply for students who participate in alternate assessment in a content area. The 75% rule would apply for any content area in which a student participates through standard administration or administration with accommodations - see considerations.
• Follow rules for selection and distribution of types when including classroom assessments (up to 25%) for certification. Classroom assessments *included for certification purposes* must meet the requirements for validity and reliability as described in ***Measured Measures***. (See Figure 3.)	→ This rule does not apply – see considerations.
• Administer and score assessments at each grade span and at each of the following levels: classroom, school, school administrative unit; and administer state assessments.	→ Same rule applies
• Apply state-established performance standards based on Criterion 4.	→ Same rule applies
• Measure all students against the same standards, providing appropriate accommodations or alternate assessments as necessary.	→ See Appendix C for further information on accommodations and alternate assessment decision-making process.
Continued on next page	

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• Place scores for each performance indicator on a 4-point scale (1-Does Not Meet, 2-Partially Meets, 3-Meets, 4-Exceeds). Scores from assessments that are aligned with performance indicators can be converted to a 4-point scale if they have been scored using another rubric (see the Example for this Rule, below).	→ Same rule applies – NOTE - all alternate assessment rubrics provided by the state are on a scale of 4 performance levels → (Alternate assessment rubrics for all content standards in ELA, Health and PE, Mathematics, Science and Technology, and Social Studies can be found at: www.mecas.org/paap/rubrics)
	→ Tasks submitted must consist of a minimum of six points as defined in "LAA Framework of Assessment Formats" (see Appendix D)
	→ Provide a collection of Alternate Assessments that meets the rules in the *LAS Guide* and this companion document. There may not be a 1:1 match between the components of the alternate assessment collection and the components in the assessment collection for other students.
	→ Provide Alternate Assessment data for those assessments used for certification and incorporate that data into the reporting system.
• Compare results from classroom, common, state and national assessments (when available) for consistency – similar percentages of students achieving at each level of proficiency.	→ Compare results of state and local Alternate Assessments for consistency in level of proficiency - also see considerations for additional information.
	→ Assess students in all content areas through any combination of standard administration, administration with accommodations or alternate assessments. (It is recommended that decision making teams determine the appropriate avenue(s) of participation based on the grade span assessments that are part of the district's LAS.) See Appendix C for details.

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CONSIDERATIONS
To thoughtfully implement these rules, each school administrative unit should consider:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
	→ The number of students participating in alternate assessment is likely to be so small that results cannot be compared at the school or district level due to issues of confidentiality, but student data should be included and compared whenever possible
	→ Using the State's recommended alternate assessment model.
	→ Alternate Assessments are individualized and may not be appropriate for common assessments at the classroom, school, or district levels.

EXAMPLE for Criterion 2: Comparability

Converting a 6-point rubric to the required performance levels for an individual task:

Performance Levels	DNM	PM	PM	M	M	E
4 Point Rubric Score	**1**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**3**	**4**
6 Point Rubric Score	1	2	3	4	5	6

This example illustrates the conversion of points on a single assessment task. In order to determine performance levels for the content area and make a judgment regarding certification, all scores from the 8-12 assessments must be considered.

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EXAMPLE for Criterion 2: Comparability for Alternate Assessment

Rubrics provided by the State are Content Standard rubrics within which each of the performance indictors have been back down to allow access for students. There are 4 rubric levels. Each rubric level is based on grade span performance indicators. Rubric Level 1 is based on the pk-2 performance indicators; Rubric Level 2 is based on grade 3-4 performance indicators; Rubric Level 3 is based on grade 5-8 performance indicators and Rubric Level 4 is based on 9-12 performance indicators.

All alternate assessment rubrics provided by the state are on a scale of 4 performance levels.

Performance Level	Initial Understanding	Emerging Understanding	Partial Understanding	Consistent Understanding
Rubric Levels 1, 2, 3, & 4	1	2	3	4

A second variable in determining the student performance level is the Level of Accuracy.

Level of Accuracy				
IN	1	2	3	4
Student work was not corrected or the % correct was 0.	Student work related to this Content Standard was completed with an average score of 1-25%.	Student work related to this Content Standard was completed with an average score of 26-50%.	Student work related to this Content Standard was completed with an average score of 51-75%.	Student work related to this Content Standard was completed with an average score of 76-100%.

A third variable in determining student performance level is the Level of Assistance a student requires to participate in the alternate assessment task.

Level of Assistance	Task Specific	Not Task Specific
	1	2

A combination of the Rubric Level Performance Level, Level of Accuracy, and the Level of Assistance determine the overall Student Content Performance Level. The combination is addressed further in Criterion 5: Reporting.

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Levels of Assessment

Figure # 3
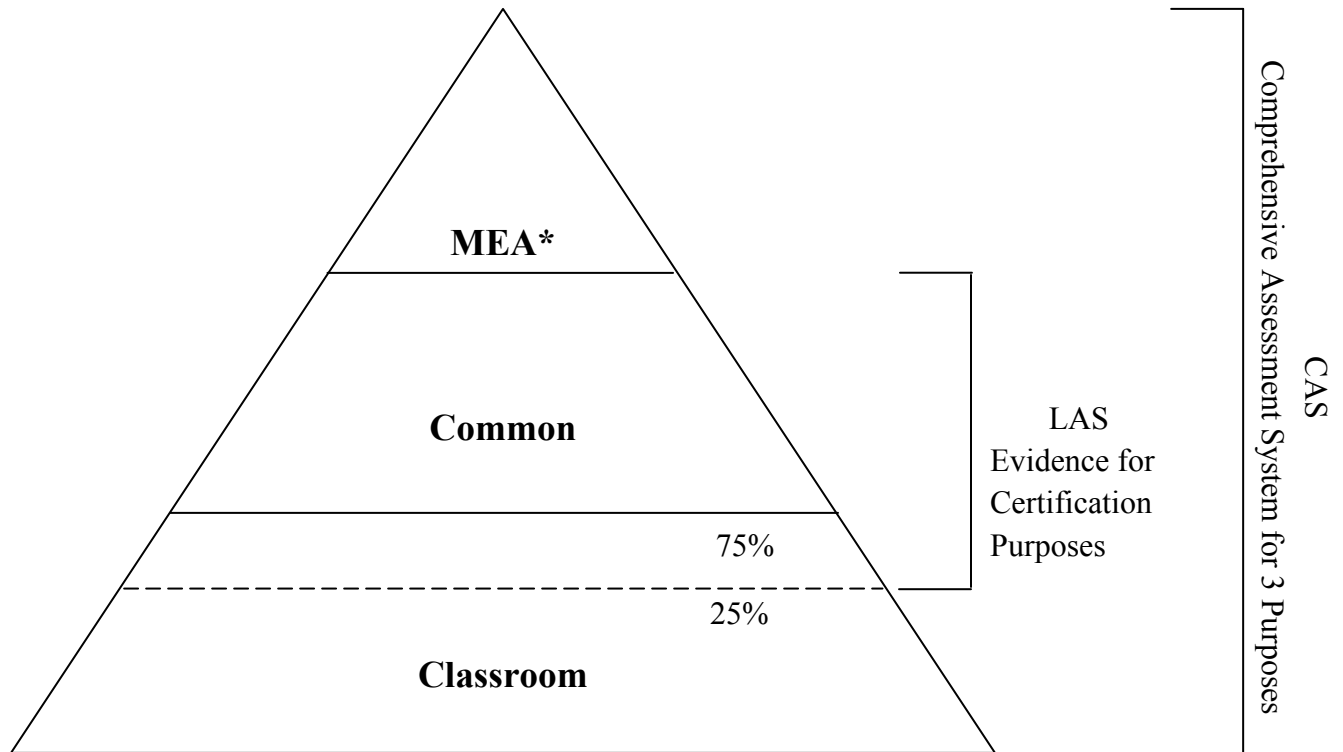
Note: Though Common and Classroom assessments are depicted separately above, common assessments should be integrated into instructional units and administered at an instructionally appropriate time.

* And standardized tests for districts that choose to include them.

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Criterion 2: Comparability
Background and Rationale

> ***The adoption of common standards and an accompanying mix***
> ***of measures which assess learning is widely regarded as the***
> ***most important next step in improving the quality of public***
> ***education for all students.***
> *Measured Measures*

Comparability means that similar judgments of student performance in the content area (e.g., Meets the Standard v. Partially Meets the Standard) reflect similar levels of proficiency in terms of content and skills as identified for Maine's *Learning Results.* To produce a local assessment system that is fair for all students, schools, and school administrative units, comparability must apply to the assessment results across students within schools, across schools within school administrative units, and across school administrative units within the State. In short, comparability means that all students must be measured against the same content standard and performance standards.

As discussed previously in this document (see discussion of Fairness in Part 1), the underpinning of comparability is based on the state's adoption of a common set of learning standards for all Maine students (i.e., Maine's *Learning Results*) and a common set of performance standards (See Criterion 4). The performance of all Maine students must be based on those common content standards and measured against the common performance standards.

Comparability within a Local Assessment System

Within a school administrative unit, all students are measured against the same content standards and performance standards identified by the *Learning Results*. The most direct way to ensure that all students are measured against the same standards is to administer the same set of assessments to all students within the school administrative unit. If all students are administered the same set of assessments, one important source of variation in student results (i.e., different assessments) is eliminated.

As a starting point, the Department requires that a minimum of 75% of the assessments in the local assessment system included *for certification of student performance* be common assessments – that is identical assessments administered to all students within the school administrative unit at a time when it is instructionally appropriate for the individual student or group of students. This proportion is set intentionally high to ensure that, even with replacement, the majority of the assessments will be common (see Criterion 3). To provide statistical stability to the local assessment system, there must be a set of assessments that have been administered to all students (i.e., common assessments).

However, for reasons such as variations in instructional programs for particular groups of students, the desire to promote assessment development skills among teachers, or the need to offer replacement assessments to students with weak performance (see Criterion 3), local educators may wish to allow

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variation in the collection of assessments administered to students within the school administration unit. Therefore, a school administrative unit may choose to have up to 25% of classroom assessments within their collection of assessments. The need for comparability must be balanced with the need for flexibility within the Local Assessment System.

Comparable assessments include the use of appropriate accommodations for students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan and students with limited English proficiency. Assessments that are administered to students with appropriate accommodations or in alternate forms are considered common assessments.

Comparability across Local Assessment Systems

The system of Maine's *Learning Results* was adopted to provide common standards for all Maine students. It follows logically that there should be comparability in the performance standards (see Criterion 4) against which the performance of all Maine students is measured through local assessment systems. Furthermore, in Chapter 127, the Standards for Assessments (Section 4.02D) and presentation of data (Section 4.02E) address the need for local assessment systems to provide data that can be used to provide information about statewide performance.

Comparability Across the Alternate Assessment Components of the Local Assessment Systems

In an attempt to honor the significant learning needs of some of Maine's students and the requirement to be able to make similar judgments about their student performance (comparability), some of the Rules and Considerations have been adjusted in the alternate assessment avenue of participation.

Whenever possible, aspects of the alternate assessment avenue of participation in the LAS have been kept the same as participation through standard administration or administration with accommodations. To ensure comparability across districts common rubrics, tools, frameworks and criteria for tasks are provided that will lead to similar judgments in all areas of the state (See Appendix C and D for examples). The intent is that the alternate assessment avenue is for a very small number of students and that accommodations should be maximized for any student who requires them, encouraging participation in the regular assessment with decisions made for each assessment. These assessment decisions may differ even within the particular content area based on the assessment offered and it's match to the individual student. It is also the intent of the alternate assessment system that the administration of assessments and gathering of student work be integrated with daily instruction and occur when it is instructionally appropriate for the student.

Because all students in Maine are working toward the same academic Content Standards and Performance Indicators (PIs), it has been necessary to review the Performance Indicators and back them down to allow access for all students. This has been done through the use of State created rubrics that make sure the key concepts of the PIs has been maintained, that the instruction and assessment can be age appropriate and that the manner in which

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student evidence is submitted does not limit the student (ex. Does not require speaking an answer if there are any other ways that the knowledge can be demonstrated.)

As pointed out in the rationale for Criterion 1, the alternate assessment system occurs at the individual student level. Because of this, some of the Rules and Considerations need to be addressed differently. A key aspect for this criterion is related to the first rule of requiring 75% "common assessments". The avenue of participation may be different for each assessment within a content area. However, for a student seeking a diploma through a combination of avenues, the rule requiring 75% common assessments still applies. Due to the personalized nature of alternate assessments, it is important to note that there may not be a 1:1 match between the local set of assessments and the alternate assessments but the alternate should still be assessing student progress within the same content clusters as outlined in Criterion 1.

Appendix D, the *LAA Framework of Assessment Formats*, can be used as a tool to help teams think about different types of assessment while honoring individual learning needs and the concepts of form follows function. This Framework is intended to provide guidelines for sufficiency and comparability when evidence included for each student will be different.

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Criterion 3: Replacement

Replacement is the means by which the assessment system provides the opportunity for a student with low performance to demonstrate an acceptable level of proficiency for certification in a content area through another assessment.

RULES
To fulfill the requirements of this criterion, each school administrative unit must:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Provide the opportunity for a student who has not met the standard across the 8-12 assessments for a content area, at a grade span, to replace low performance on a specific assessment with a higher result from another assessment.	→ Same rule applies
• Replace an assessment with another assessment that ensures a variety of types, reflects the belief that form must serve function, and maintains distribution across the content area (each content standard must be measured). Note: each health education content (topic) area groups must be measured. Health Education Content (Topic) Area Groupings 1. Personal Health and Nutritional Health 2. Family Life and Growth and Development 3. Consumer Health and Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drug Use Prevention 4. Safety and Accident Prevention 5. Community Health, Environmental Health and Prevention and Control of Disease and Disorders	→ This rule does not apply but when choosing replacement assessments it is important to, when possible, 1) maintain/encourage a variety of assessment types 2) match form with function, and 3) maximize distribution across the content area.
• Determine how many times, and when, a student is allowed to replace each assessment across the system and under what circumstances, based on the purpose of replacement. (See Bullet 1 above.)	→ Same rule applies
	→ Replace alternate assessments that measure performance in the same cluster.

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CONSIDERATIONS
To thoughtfully implement these rules, each school administrative unit should consider:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Choosing replacements that address content as close to the content of the original assessment as possible, and at least within the same cluster.	→ Same consideration applies
• Developing a process for scheduling and administering original assessments that minimizes the need for replacement assessments while maintaining the efficiency of the system.	→ Same consideration applies – reminder that the need for replacements will be minimized if assessment is integrated with daily instruction and occurs when instructionally appropriate for the student.
• Determining the level of instruction/remediation and ongoing assessment required before allowing a replacement opportunity.	→ Same consideration applies
• Determining which assessments measure broad content or process skills (such as a research project or health plan) and may be repeated, and which assessments must be replaced with a completely different assessment. It is not the intent of replacement that students continually retake the same assessment. (See Bullet 3 in the above Rules.)	→ Same consideration applies

EXAMPLE for Criterion 3: Replacement

Note: This sample replacement policy is adapted from the Squirrel High School Case Study (see Case Studies Document [http://www.state.me.us/education/lsalt/CaseStudiesDoc.pdf]).

SAU #007 has established the following policy regarding replacement for certifying a student for graduation. This policy will be reviewed at the end of the first year of implementation. Adjustments will be made, as needed, that respond to balancing concerns about fairness and resources.

1) Students will be provided the opportunity to replace a weaker performance with a stronger performance at the end of every school year if the total number of aggregated points at the end of the third marking period of a given year indicates that the student is "not on track" for graduation.

2) SAU #007 will inform all students and their parents/guardian if the student is "not on track" for graduation at the end of the third marking period of each school year. The notification will indicate the content area, the cluster(s), and the standard(s) in which the performance is low.

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Yearly 3rd Quarter Review (Shaded area)

Mathematics	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Integrated 1				
Integrated 2				
Integrated 3				

3) The student must receive additional instruction before s/he takes a replacement assessment. (Note: It is the student's responsibility to arrange for additional instructional time with the classroom teacher.)

4) A student may have only two replacement opportunities per assessment, and only if the student is in danger of not meeting certification requirements for graduation.

Replacement of assessments must maintain the distribution of assessment types across the grade span for the content area and follow Form and Function.

NOTE: The same policy for replacement applies for Alternate Assessment.

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Criterion 3: Replacement
Background and Rationale

> *Inferences are more defensible when students have multiple*
> *opportunities to demonstrate proficiency.*
> *Measured Measures*

The goal that all Maine students achieve the standards contained in Maine's *Learning Results* and the consideration of the technical standards required to be met in using assessments for high-stakes decisions involving individual students lead to this conclusion: each school administrative unit must provide, within locally set limits, the opportunity for a student who does not "Meet the Standard" on the Local Assessment System for a content area at a grade span, to replace low performance on a specific assessment with a higher result from an additional assessment. This is true at all grade spans but particularly true at the high school grade span (9-12), where graduation will be linked to the certification of student performance through the Local Assessment System.

To the extent that individual assessments within the collection of assessments for certification are administered at a time when it is instructionally appropriate for the individual student, the likelihood of low performance and the need for replacement assessment should be minimized (see Criterion 2).

Consistent with Criterion 1 (Comparability), the replacement of an assessment with another assessment must ensure distribution across the content standards of the content area, maintain a variety of types, and reflect the belief that form must serve function as adopted by the school administrative unit. That is, to maintain the distribution, an assessment must be replaced with another assessment that addresses content that is as close as possible to the content of the original content of the assessment and is, at least, within the same cluster. Within that structure, there is ample opportunity for replacement assessments to reflect individual learning and assessment styles of students in terms of both presentation and response.

Criterion 3 Replacement Background and Rationale for Alternate Assessment

The replacement criterion allows for a great deal of flexibility and encourages participation of all students in ways that meet their individual learning needs and styles. This is of great benefit to all students, but especially so for students with identified disabilities. Teachers and Pupil Evaluation Teams (PETs) should be mindful of this criterion as they review student progress toward meeting the *Learning Results* standards for graduation and diploma purposes. Chapter 127 clearly states that "Beginning with the 2006-2007 school year, diplomas may be awarded only to students who have met the content standards of the system of Learning Results as determined by the local assessment system adopted by the school board …" It goes on to state that "The school board may provide students who leave school without meeting the standards of the system of Learning Results with a certificate that is not a diploma." Additional guidance in Administrative Letter #27 states that the standards for student diplomas of Maine's *Learning Results* apply to all students and that only those students who meet the system of *Learning Results* as outlined in Chapter 127 may be awarded diploma.

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As referenced in the previous section, replacement assessments can reflect the individual learning and assessment styles of students in terms of both presentation and response. This allows for really personalizing the assessments for students with unique learning needs and allowing them to show what they know and can do, regardless of the challenges they may bring to the assessment experience.

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Criterion 4: Performance Standards

Performance standards are the level of student performance across and within the Local Assessment System that provide sufficient evidence that the student "Meets the Standard" in the content area as a whole.

The proposed performance standards below will be validated and adjusted as necessary through a statewide standard setting procedure based on an examination of student work. This procedure will establish the consistency of the performance standards when applied to different collections of student work. The standard setting exercise will also seek to validate the alternative (Pattern of Performance) set of performance standards compared with the recommended set (and the percent of points earned).
Note: Student performance data recorded in terms of a 1-4 point scale can be prepared for the application of either set of performance standards.

Recommendations related to performance standards for alternate assessment will be announced after the validation and standard setting process has occurred for the entire Local Assessment System

RULES
To fulfill the requirements of this criterion, each school administrative unit must:

- Apply either the **recommended** or the **alternative** set of performance standards identified below to certify at each grade span and content area.

Recommended: "Percent of Points Earned"
Students must earn the specified percentage of all possible points for the content area and no fewer than the specified percentage of the available points for any content cluster to achieve each level of performance.

Performance Level	All Points	No Cluster Lower Than
1. Does Not Meet	0-37.4%	
2. Partially Meets	37.5-62.4%	
3. Meets	62.5-87.4%	37.5%
4. Exceeds	87.5-100%	62.5%

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Alternative: "Pattern of Performance"

Students must establish a pattern of performance with a specified modal score (mode is the most frequently occurring score) for the content area and no less than the specified mode for any content cluster to achieve each level of performance.

Performance Level	Mode* Across All Assessments	No Cluster Mode Lower Than
1. Does Not Meet	1	1
2. Partially Meets	2	1
3. Meets	3	2
4. Exceeds	4	3

*For bimodal performance (equal number of two different scores), use the mean (average of all scores) of the modal scores.

CONSIDERATION

To thoughtfully implement these rules, each School Administrative Unit should consider:

- Reviewing performance on individual assessments and assessment types at the end of each grade span to analyze and address students' strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis **the performance standards.**

Note: These performance standards procedures and their application will be further refined. (See italicized and bolded section on page 32.)

EXAMPLE for Criterion 4: Performance Standards

At the end of her third year of high school science, Alice reviewed her collection of certification assessments to see if she was meeting the standard. If not, she figured she would need to take an additional science course during her senior year. Her scores were as follows:

Content Cluster	Life Science	Physical Science	Earth and Space Science	Scientific Tools of Inquiry and Habits of Mind	ACROSS ASSESSMENTS
Scores	3, 3, 3, 3, 3	2, 3, 2, 2, 4	3, 3, 2, 3, 1	3, 4, 1, 2, 3	
Per Cent of Points	75%	65%	60%	65%	66%
Mode	3	2	3	3	3

Happily, Alice meets standards by demonstrating achievement of 66% (at or above 62.5%) of possible points across assessments and no lower than 60% (above 37.5%) of possible points in any cluster. In

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the alternative "Pattern of Performance" model, Alice also meets standards with an overall mode of "3" and no cluster model lower than "2".

Criterion 4: Performance Standards
Background and Rationale

How good is good enough?
Measured Measures

What level of student performance across the collection of assessments provides sufficient evidence that the student meets the standards of proficiency for Maine's *Learning Results* in each of the content areas?

The performance standards defined in Criterion 4 will be applied to all students, schools, and school administrative units across the State to ensure fairness (holding everyone and every system against the same standards) and to enable the aggregation of local assessment system results across school administrative units to determine statewide performance (Chapter 127, 4.02D5). Educators already will have established performance standards for each assessment included in the Local Assessment System to indicate the level of a student's achievement of the particular performance indicator(s) measured (Chapter 127, 4.02D5).

The determination of whether a student performance "Meets the Standard" for the content area will be based on the student's body of work across the content area.   The definition of performance at the level of proficiency that "Meets the Standard" requires student performance that demonstrates consistent knowledge of content and skills. Both sets of performance standards described above are based on a system where scores for all performance indicators assessed have been placed on a 4 point scale indicating the level of student performance on that indicator (i.e., 1 = Does Not Meet, 2 = Partially Meets, 3 = Meets, 4 = Exceeds) as described in Criterion 2: Comparability.

The recommended method of determining consistency is to review the mean or average of student performance across the content area as a whole, as well as student performance within each content cluster. By this method, a student is determined to meet the performance standard for the content area as a whole by: a) scoring at least 62.5% of the possible points across all of the assessments; **and** b) attaining at least 37.5% of the possible points within each content cluster.

Note that a student who "Meets the Standard" on every assessment will earn 75% of the possible points. The percentages above are based on a calculation of an average of 2.5 points divided by the 4 possible points. Requiring a mean of 3 out of 4 points would establish a performance standard of near-perfect performance. A mean of 2.5 (or 62.5% of all points) allows for a balance of "Partially Meets" and "Meets the Standard" scores.

The alternative method of determining consistency is to examine a Pattern of Performance that a student establishes across the content area as a whole, as well as his or her performance within each

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content cluster. In this model, a student is determined to meet the performance standard for the content area as a whole by: a) scoring a mode of 3 across all assessments; **and** b) attaining a mode of no lower than 2 on any content cluster. This system is based on the pattern of performance most frequently demonstrated by the student. The mode represents the score or level of achievement the student most often received. This system also requires a student to demonstrate proficiency across all of the content standards in a content area, and no lower than partial proficiency (a mode of 2) in any content cluster.

Local educators should select the model that is most consistent with the philosophy and design of their assessment system. As data become available from local assessment systems over the course of the next several years, the Department will conduct validation studies to compare results provided by each of the models and will provide additional guidance regarding performance standards. In the meantime, assessments scored or converted to a 4-point scale can use either set of performance standards.

Criterion 4: Background and Rationale for Alternate Assessment

A core belief that has guided the development of both the state and local assessment systems is that all students must participate through one or a combination of three avenues – standard administration, administration with accommodation or through alternate assessment and that the results of theses assessments should be reported within the same system of accountability. In order for this to occur, the performance levels of all students must be identified in such a way that the reporting system is possible. The state is working at performance level language descriptors, benchmarks and models that will be provided at a later time.

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Criterion 5: Public Reporting

"Public Reporting" refers to the processes and procedures used to record and aggregate student performance information related to the Local Assessment System in order to support annual reporting at each grade span for certification of student achievement of the *Learning Results* and school level information about performance at the content cluster level (at a minimum) as required by Chapter 127.

RULES
To fulfill the requirements of this criterion, each school administrative unit must:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Report annually on the percentage of all students at each performance level for the 5 content areas at the end of each grade span (4th, 8th, and 12th grade).	→ Same rule applies
• Report school level information annually for the 5 content areas at the end of each grade span (4th, 8th, and 12th grade) at a level of greater specificity than content area. At a minimum, the reporting must be at the content cluster level. (See Considerations below, second bullet.)	→ Same rule applies
• Aggregate and disaggregate as necessary to report at the two levels noted above and for identified subgroups.	→ Same rule applies
• Ensure that reporting of results for individual students or groups of students maintains the confidentiality of individual students.	→ Same rule applies
	→ Allow a maximum of 10% of the students with disabilities in the test population to have assessment results reported based on alternate standards. → LEP students must be reported against grade level standards unless they also have a disability that is their primary identification
	→ Aggregate student scores for students participating in alternate assessment in only the clusters for which individuals have completed assessment tasks.

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CONSIDERATIONS

To thoughtfully implement these rules, each school administrative unit should consider:

Standard Administration	Alternate Administration
• Ensuring that scores on all assessments reflect student achievement of Maine's *Learning Results* and are not influenced by extraneous factors (e.g., effort, neatness)	→ Same consideration applies
• Balancing the desirability and utility of specificity in reporting school level performance information against the resources available to accomplish the corresponding amount of assessment necessary.	→ Same consideration applies
• Developing a communication strategy to clarify the levels of reporting, e.g., public reporting, report cards.	→ Same consideration applies

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EXAMPLE for Criterion 5: Public Reporting

The whole SAU #007 community eagerly opened the morning paper to read about student performance. They expected to read about the percentage of students in each performance level and the identified areas of strength across the content clusters.

TPW COURIER
Area Schools Report on Student Performance

English Language Arts	% of Students who Do Not Meet	% of Students who Partially Meet	% of Students who Meet	% of Students who Exceed	Area of Strength	
PK-4	7%	25%	62%	6%	Cluster 2 Writing & Speaking	73% of possible points
5-8	4%	18%	70%	8%	Cluster 1 Reading & Viewing	67% of possible points

NOTE: Guidelines for the State reporting of Alternate Assessment will be made available for local reporting use. This System will reflect student performance based on a combination of three variables: the Performance Level identified on the Content Standard Rubric, the Level of Accuracy, and the Level of Assistance required by the student to complete alternate assessment tasks.

Criterion 5: Public Reporting
Background and Rationale

Individual assessments do not exist in isolation.
Measured Measures

"Public Reporting" refers to the processes and procedures used to record and aggregate student performance information related to the Local Assessment System. Within the Local Assessment System, reporting of student performance for certification occurs at the content area level. Reporting of school level performance occurs at the content cluster level as discussed below.

Reporting Student Performance by Content Area

In order to report student performance across students in the school, the school administrative unit and particular subgroups, content area performance standard results must be aggregated. The process will be straightforward, requiring only the counting of students and calculating the percentage of students in each performance level category (Does Not Meet the Standard, Partially Meets the Standard, Meets the Standard and Exceeds the Standard).

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Reporting School and School Administrative Unit Performance by Content Cluster

In order to report school or school administrative unit and particular subgroups information across students in the school, content cluster performance standard results must be aggregated. This will be done according to future guidelines.

A complete discussion of the reporting of results from local assessment systems is beyond the scope of this document. The Department will provide additional guidance in this area at a later time.

Criterion 5: Background and Rationale for Alternate Assessment

There have been three primary influences on the development and implementation of the alternate assessment component of the Comprehensive Assessment System. One is the input and guidance from educators, policy makers, parent groups and student work. A second is the three purposes for assessment outlined in Chapter 127. "The purpose of assessment is to: Produce high quality information about student performance that will inform teaching and enhance learning; monitor and hold school administrative units accountable for students achieving the content standards of the system of Learning Results; and certify student achievement of the content standards of the system of Learning Results." The third influence has been long standing special education legislation at the State and federal level. A more recent variable has been the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). These combined perspectives have led to the current system

In many instances the reporting criteria will be most significantly impacted by the fact that there will be subgroups in which the number of students will be so small that the data will not be made public. Schools will want to look at this and think about its impact on school and district reporting. For some subgroups, Maine may actually have only district or State level reports. With the commitment to maximizing accommodations and minimizing the number of students who require alternate assessments, the number participating through alternate assessment is sure to be very small in most schools.

NOTE: The sub group size (often referred to as "N") has yet to be determined for local assessment system reporting requirements. More guidance will follow.

Separate from the "N" issue, it is critical to recognize that for students who participate in alternate assessment it is possible for them to generate student evidence in a minimum of ½ of the Content Standards and in at least two clusters (see criterion 1). In order to report progress on all students, it will be necessary for the reporting system to provide data that accounts for students generating evidence in only some clusters. Results must be reported at all levels of the system for those clusters in which they do participate– student to state.

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Conclusion

Areas for Further Investigation and Work to be Accomplished:

Though this document is intended to clarify the next phase of work on local assessment systems, a number of critical technical and policy considerations must be addressed in the coming months:

- It is not clear whether each district in the state has the capacity to complete work on its Local Assessment System within the timelines required in Chapter 127. While this document has been developed on the assumption that building such a system is indeed feasible, it must be remembered that nowhere in the country does such a fully developed system exist. The Department will be gathering additional survey data from districts attending the summer assessment system design institutes, both to inform policy making and to develop appropriate services and strategies to support districts at their individual levels of need.

- It is not clear what student interventions and support systems will be required to ensure that all students meet *Learning Results* standards as the basis for graduation. We will have assessment data to support informed decision making at the local level, but it is not at all apparent whether other aspects of local systems (e.g., extended learning times, personal learning plans, etc.) will be developed on the same timeline. The Department will place a high priority on identifying best practices from around the state and the nation and on strengthening internal communication and dissemination of information on this critical issue.

- The Department is committed to conducting a field study during the 2003-04 school year that would examine all aspects of the implementation and impact of the Comprehensive Assessment System (state and local). Through the field study, the Department will be able to validate the application of these Principles and Criteria across a range of school districts in all regions of the state. In addition, at a more detailed level, the field study will suggest areas where refinements and adjustments could be made to state Criteria, models, case studies used to illustrate the Criteria, and Local Assessment System plans. The commitment to this study reflects the Department's overall commitment to conduct business as a learning organization, and to continue to learn as we go. The Department is also committed to developing additional tools and models to support the evolving focus of this work, including the possible publication of a *Measured Measures II,* if the need exists. Also, the Balance of Representation report, distributed at this spring's Curriculum Coordinators' Conference, will be disseminated widely this summer.

- All students are expected to achieve the standards of Maine's *Learning Results*, including those who attend the vocational-technical schools. Years of effort have gone into linking and aligning the programs at these schools to the *Learning Results*. It is not clear how Maine's vocational-technical schools will be affected by these Principles and Criteria. Remaining questions are whether the vocational-technical school assessments can be fully utilized for certification, or whether students will have a full opportunity to learn the standards that are assessed. It is also not clear how effectively sending schools will be able to capture the assessment data from vocational-technical schools in support of certification and graduation decisions.

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- Additional discussion and guidance is required to help local districts address the issue of diploma requirements for special needs students. At present, Chapter 127 allows for a diploma to be awarded only on the basis of meeting *Learning Results* standards. However, it is not clear how special education students' needs will be met by such a uniform diploma requirement.

- It is not clear how effective the new Maine Educational Data Management Systems (MEDMS) will be in providing a record-keeping template for all local systems. If all systems were identical, problems would be minimal. However, it remains to be seen whether the state system will be flexible enough to allow local district discretion regarding key aspects of their assessment system designs. The Department is committed, however, to developing a record-keeping tool that will have maximum utility for local districts.

- The initial phase of implementation for Local Assessment Systems addresses the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Social Studies, and Health and Physical Education. The remaining three content areas—Career Preparation, Modern and Classical Languages, and Visual and Performing Arts—have been tied to Essential Programs and Services (EPS). Future action on developing Local Assessment Systems will be, of necessity, linked to legislative action on EPS. Based on critical actions by the Legislature, the Department will adjust professional development programming, as well as print and on-line resources, to support local work in these three areas.

- As noted above, these Principles and Criteria are being developed at a level of rigor necessary for certifying achievement of Maine's *Learning Results*, not to comply with the NCLB. One area of impact on local curriculum, instruction, and assessment will be the federal requirement to develop grade level expectations (GLEs) in Reading and Math for grades 3-8. The Department will be developing these GLEs through an open, broadly based process during the late summer and early fall of 2003. The Department will also develop an assessment framework for the GLEs that will be designed to have minimal negative effects on local assessment systems. Data on how students are doing against these GLEs must be reported to the United States Department of Education at the end of the 2005-06 school year; this does allow adequate time to phase in both GLEs and the assessment framework. The process of developing the GLEs will begin in the summer of 2003 and it will include ample opportunities for input from local educators. Once the GLEs are completed—including review of draft GLEs by the field—they will be disseminated to all Maine school districts to ensure that local curricula and instructional practices can be reviewed in light of these additional learning expectations. At present, the Maine DOE is carefully reviewing our NCLB accountability plan to be certain that whatever assessments are used to measure achievement of the new GLEs will be consistent with our broad goals for local assessment systems and of Maine's *Learning Results* in general.

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A Shared Enterprise:

This document has benefited greatly from the feedback of local educators during the months preceding publication. The Department wishes to thank all those who participated in focus groups or who submitted comments in writing or through e-mail. The development of Maine's Local Assessment System model has been, and will continue to be, a shared endeavor. As such, the Department of Education will continue to welcome input on ways to strengthen this document and to support local districts in their efforts to build local systems in accordance with these guidelines.

The Commissioner of Education's key advisory groups—the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Learning Results Steering Committee (LRSC)—on matters related to assessment and *Learning Results* implementation will continue to monitor all aspects of this long-term effort to build a standards-based system in Maine. As we move forward to ensure Maine students are prepared for life in the 21st Century, we will do so through a system of *shared* accountability—with all stakeholders playing a supportive role as is consistent with the best traditions of Maine life and is, in reality, the only way to reach the vision of Maine's *Learning Results*: high expectations for *all* Maine students.

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Appendices

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DOE Content Clusters

English Language Arts

1. Reading and Viewing
- A. Process of Reading
- B. Literature and Culture
- D. Informational Texts

2. Writing and Speaking
- E. Process of Writing and Speaking
- F. Standard English Conventions
- G. Stylistic and Rhetorical Aspects of Writing and Speaking

3. Integrated Literacy
- C. Language and Images
- H. Research-Related Writing and Speaking

Health and Physical Education

1. Health Knowledge
- A. Health Concepts
- B. Health Information, Services, and Products
- D. Influences on Health

2. Health Skills
- C. Health Promotion and Risk Reduction
- E. Communication Skills
- F. Decision-Making and Goal Setting

3. Physical Education Knowledge and Skills
- A. Physical Fitness
- B. Motor Skills
- C. Personal and Social Interactions

Mathematics

1. Numbers and Operations
- A. Numbers and Number Sense
- B. Computation
- I. Discrete Mathematics

2. Shape and Size
- E. Geometry
- F. Measurement

3. Mathematical Decision Making
- C. Data Analysis and Statistics
- D. Probability
- J. Mathematical Reasoning

4. Patterns
- G. Patterns, Relations, and Functions
- H. Algebra Concepts
- K. Mathematical Communication

Science and Technology

1. Life Sciences
- A. Classifying Life Forms
- B. Ecology
- C. Cells

2. Physical Sciences
- E. Structure of Matter
- H. Energy
- I. Motion

3. Earth and Space Sciences
- D. Continuity and Change
- F. The Earth
- G. The Universe

4. Nature and Implications of Science
- J. Inquiry & Problem Solving
- K. Scientific Reasoning
- L. Communication
- M. Implications of Science & Technology

Social Studies

1. Economics
- A. Personal and Consumer Economics
- B. Economic Systems of the United States
- C. Comparative Systems
- D. International Trade and Global Interdependence

2. Geography
- A. Skills and Tools
- B. Human Interaction With Environments

3. History
- A. Chronology
- B. Historical Knowledge, Concepts, and Patterns
- C. Historical Inquiry, Analysis, and Interpretation

4. Civics and Government
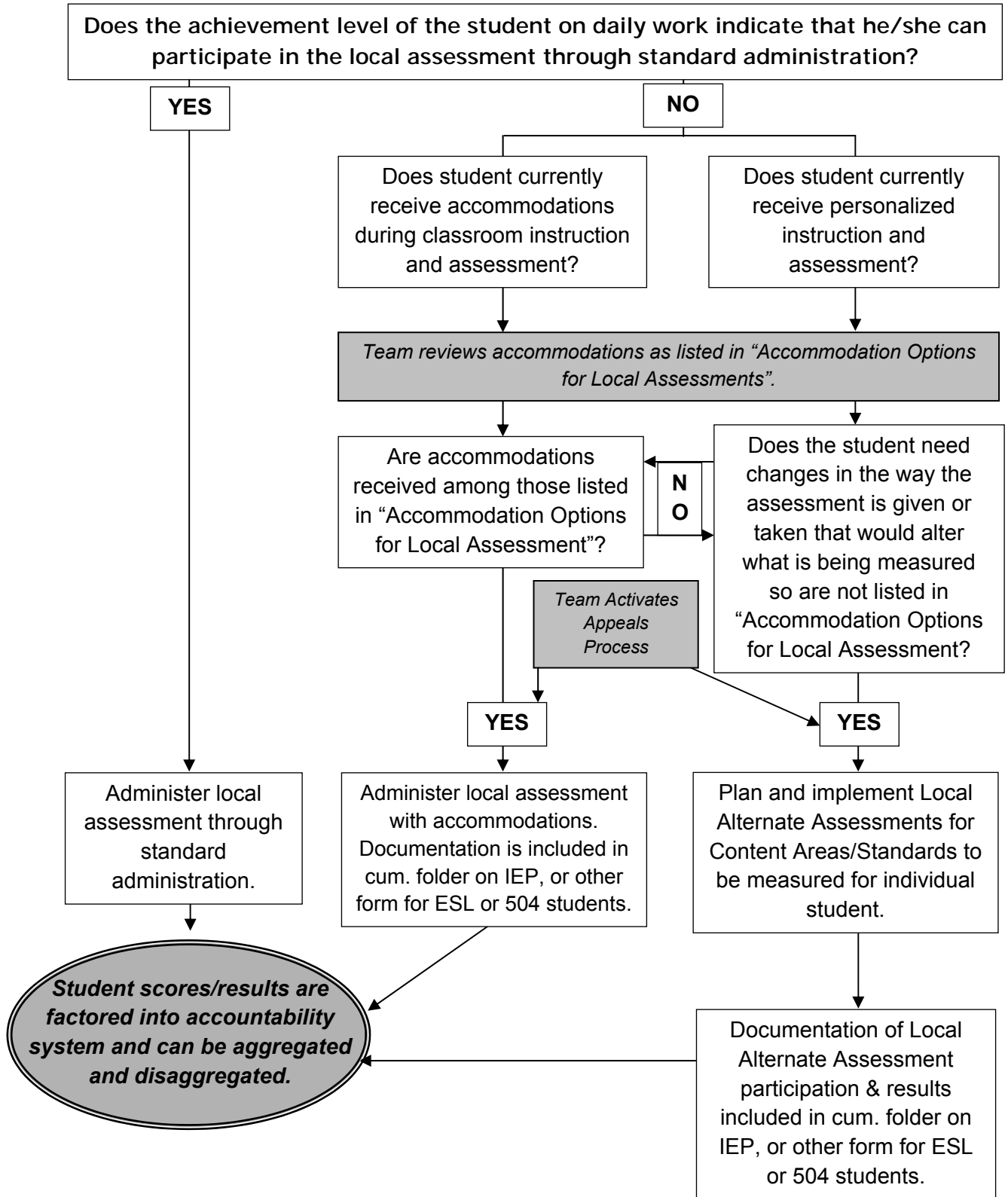- A. Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation
- B. Purposes and Types of Government
- C. Fundamental Principles of Government and Constitutions
- D. International Relations

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Assessment Contacts

Name	Content Area	E Mail Address	Phone Number
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Byers-Small, Beth	MMSA-Math & Science	bsmall@mmsa.org	794-6986
Cottrell, Marsha	DE Local Assessment	Marsha.Cottrell@maine.gov	624-6783
Cote, Linda	DE Health& Phys. Ed	Linda.Cote@maine.gov	624-6686
Demers, Anne	DE Eng Lang Arts	Anne.Demers@maine.gov	624-6615
Doiron, Diana	English Language Arts	Diana.Doiron@maine.gov	624-6823
Downing, Lora	Career Preparation	Lora.Downing@maine.gov	624-6740
Furber, Melanie	Asst- Alternate Assessment	Melanie.Furber@maine.gov	624-6678
Hatch, Denice	DE Local Assessment	Denice.Hatch@maine.gov	624-6786
Hupp, Dan	Mathematics	Dan.Hupp@maine.gov	624-6827
Johnston, Tad	Mathematics	Tad.Johnston@maine.gov	624-6829
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McIntyre, Debra	MMSA-Math & Science	dmcintyre@mmsa.org	338-4201
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Maxcy, Brud	MEA	Brud.Maxcy@maine.gov	624-6774
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Parkin, Linda	DE Alternate Assessment	Linda.Parkin@maine.gov	624-6782
Phillips, Patrick	Deputy Commissioner	Patrick.Phillips@maine.gov	624-6606
Pooler, Jennifer	Project Assistant	Jennifer.Pooler@maine.gov	624-6638
Reutershan, Don	Modern & Classical Lang	Don.Reutershan@maine.gov	624-6826
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Rosenblum, Jill	MMSA- Assessment	jrosenblum@mmsa.org	287-6644
Seaberg, Valerie	Education Team Leader	Valerie.Seaberg@maine.gov	624-6834
Smith, Susan	Assessment- State & Local	Susan.Smith@maine.gov	624-6775
Stivers, John	Career Preparation	John.Stivers@maine.gov	624-6745
Swan, Stephanie	Health Education	Stephanie.Swan@maine.gov	624-6697
Wilbur, Katherine	Health Education	Katherine.Wilbur@maine.gov	624-6696

DE indicates Distinguished Educator

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Process for Determining the Appropriate Avenue for Participation in Local Assessments

Does the achievement level of the student on daily work indicate that he/she can participate in the local assessment through standard administration?

YES

NO

Does student currently receive accommodations during classroom instruction and assessment?

Does student currently receive personalized instruction and assessment?

Team reviews accommodations as listed in "Accommodation Options for Local Assessments".

Are accommodations received among those listed in "Accommodation Options for Local Assessment"?

N O

Does the student need changes in the way the assessment is given or taken that would alter what is being measured so are not listed in "Accommodation Options for Local Assessment?

Team Activates Appeals Process

YES

YES

Administer local assessment through standard administration.

Administer local assessment with accommodations. Documentation is included in cum. folder on IEP, or other form for ESL or 504 students.

Plan and implement Local Alternate Assessments for Content Areas/Standards to be measured for individual student.

Student scores/results are factored into accountability system and can be aggregated and disaggregated.

Documentation of Local Alternate Assessment participation & results included in cum. folder on IEP, or other form for ESL or 504 students.

A comparison of student work samples And local items to be included in assessment is recommended as part of the information to be reviewed during the decision making process.

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POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCOMMODATIONS AND ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT TO LOCAL ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

State and Federal legislation requires that all Maine students be assessed by state and local assessments against the Maine standards, the *Learning Results*. This combination of state and local assessments make up the State's Comprehensive Assessment System (CAS), and provides the opportunity for students to show what they know and are able to do through a variety of assessment formats. Within the CAS a student can participate in any assessment through one of three avenues: standard administration, administration with accommodations, or through alternate assessment. The avenue most appropriate for a particular student may differ depending on the type of assessment and the content being measured. Decisions regarding how the progress of an individual student towards the Learning Results will be measured on each component of the Comprehensive Assessment System will be made by a team. The procedures and areas for consideration by that team are detailed below.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who may be considered for accommodations include, but are not limited to, those who are ill or incapacitated in some way, who have limited English proficiency (LEP), who have an identified disability under IDEA-97, who are identified as having disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or who are unable to work independently in any of the subjects assessed, or on particular types of assessment.

All students being considered for accommodations on any of the variety of assessments which are part of a Local Assessment System, must have their individual situations reviewed by a team prior to the time of assessment. This team should include at least one of the student's teachers, the building principal, related services personnel, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and, whenever possible, the student. If it is not possible for the parent and/or student to attend the meeting, they should be consulted regarding the committee's recommendations for accommodations prior to the time of assessment.

For a student who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), schools are required to address needed accommodations at a Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) meeting. Accommodations do not change or alter what is being measured and are considered changes in the way an assessment is given or taken (e.g., different test setting, timing or scheduling changes, translation of directions, use of assistive technology). Recommended accommodations should be consistent with accommodations already being employed in the student's instructional program. Accommodations identified for use during administration of a given assessment must be either included on the list "Accommodation Options for Local Assessments", or have been approved by the local district's Assessment Appeals Panel. *Any accommodation(s) recommended for a student and the reasons for the accommodation(s) must be reflected in a statement in the student's cumulative folder (in the IEP for a student with an identified disability under IDEA-97).*

REPORTING STUDENTS' SCORES FOR ASSESSMENT WITH ACCOMMODATIONS

State regulation Chapter 127 Instructional Programs, Assessment and Diploma Requirements articulates three purposes for Maine's Comprehensive Assessment System, of which common local assessments are a part. These purposes are: 1) to produce high quality information about student performance that will inform teaching and enhance learning; 2) to monitor and hold school administrative units accountable for students achieving Content Standards of the system of *Learning Results*; and, 3) to certify student achievement of the system of *Learning Results*. All students will be included in the school's accountability system. Scores of all students will be aggregated and disaggregated to meet the requirements of the three purposes of the Comprehensive Assessment System.

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Policies and Procedures for the Participation of Students in Alternate Assessment

If, in order to participate in any of the varied components of a local assessment system, a student needs such significant accommodations that they would alter what is being measured (ex., extended time on a test measuring reading speed for fluency, use of a spell checker on a spelling test, use of a calculator on a test of computation), the student may be considered for an alternate assessment. A student's need for accommodations beyond those listed on "Accommodation Options for Local Assessments" would indicate that the student would be appropriate for inclusion through alternate assessment. Every effort should be made to include students through standard administration or administration with accommodations on as many of the Local Assessment System components as possible. A student, for example, might need an alternate for a paper and pencil test, but be able to participate in a performance task.

Section 4.02 C (5) of Chapter 127 requires that alternate assessment be a component of the Local Assessment System, with clear guidelines for participation. The Maine Department of Education provides an Alternate Assessment model for optional use by school districts in connection with local assessment components.

Students who may be considered for an alternate assessment include, but are not limited to, those who are ill or incapacitated in some way, who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP), who have an identified disability under IDEA-97, who are identified as having disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, or who are unable to work independently in any of the subjects assessed, or on particular types of assessment.

All students being considered for an alternate assessment for any of the variety of assessments which are part of a Local Assessment System must have their individual situations reviewed by a team prior to the time of assessment. This team should include at least one of the student's teachers, the building principal, related services personnel, the parent(s)/guardian(s) and, whenever possible, the student. If it is not possible for the parent and student to attend the meeting, they should be consulted regarding the committee's recommendations for assessment. For a student who has an Individual Education Plan (IEP), schools are required to address the need for an alternate assessment at a Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) meeting. ***An alternate assessment recommendation for a student and the reasons for the alternate assessment must be reflected in a statement in the student's cumulative folder (in the IEP for a student with an identified disability).***

Reporting Students' Scores for Alternate Assessment

State regulation Chapter 127 Instructional Programs, Assessment and Diploma Requirements articulates three purposes for Maine's Comprehensive Assessment System, of which common local assessments are a part. Those purposes include: 1) to produce high quality information about student performance that will inform teaching and enhance learning; 2) to monitor and hold school administrative units accountable for students achieving Content Standards of the system of *Learning Results*; and, 3) to certify student achievement of the system of Learning Results. All students will be included in the school's accountability system. Scores of all students will be aggregated and disaggregated to meet the requirements of the three purposes of the Comprehensive Assessment System.

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Accommodation Options for Local Assessments

For the MEA you must use the list of accommodations included in "Policies and Procedures for Accommodations and Alternate Assessment to the MEA". Many of these accommodations are included in the list below.

A. Timing/Scheduling Accommodations
Test was administered:
1. with extended testing time (*same day*)
2. with testing over several days (*some extended time*)
3. in appropriate blocks of time followed by breaks
4. in several (*shorter*) sessions
5. at a time of day or day of week most beneficial to student
6. through flexible scheduling (*of subtests*)
7. with other timing/scheduling accommodations

B. Setting Accommodations
Test was administered:
1. in a small group
2. Individually
3. in a separate location or carrel
4. with preferential seating
5. in an alternative setting
6. at the student's home, by school personnel
7. with special lighting/acoustics
8. in an environment with minimal distractions
9. with student use of adaptive or special furniture

C. Presentation Format Accommodations
Test was administered:
1. with use of additional practice activities before administration of assessment
2. with use of brainstorming activities
3. with oral reading of questions in English by tester
4. with oral reading of directions by tester
5. with oral reading of assessment by tester, except for reading passages
6. with directions given by tester and verified for understanding
7. with tester repetition of directions
8. with use of task focusing prompts
9. with clarification of words (*spelling, defining, explaining*) and/or highlighting of key words by tester
10. with verbs highlighted in instructions by tester
11. with color coded instructions to emphasize steps
12. by person other than teacher familiar with student
13. with tester facing student
14. with opportunity for student to reread and restate directions in his/her own words
15. with student use of place markers to maintain place
16. with additional sample items provided
17. with student use of magnifying equipment
18. with student use of noise buffers (*ex., headphones, earplugs*)
19. with student use of amplification equipment (*larger monitors, monitors with high resolution, glare guards, external monitor magnifiers, screen magnification software, large-print keyboard, Braille display terminals, CCTV [closed circuit TV], optical low-vision aid, hand held magnifiers, monocular devices*)
20. with student use of audio cassette
21. with student use of a template (*electronic and/or hard copy templates*)
22. with visual cues (*arrows, stop signs*) on answer form
23. using an interpreter (*sight translator*)
24. with adapted equipment/manipulatives for use in physical activities
25. with adapted playing space for physical activities
26. with adapted form for standard movement skills (*locomotor and/or non-locomotor*)
27. with adapted rules for games, sports, etc.

28. with interpretation for deaf or hearing impaired student (*with the exception of reading assessments*) *through use of a person for interpretation or sign language interpreter software* (*ex., iCommunicator*)
29. with oral reading of questions in native language by tester
30. with oral reading of directions in native language by tester
31. with tester translation of directions
32. using translation of test into native language
33. using "Sheltered English"
34. using bilingual version of the test
35. with student use of bilingual dictionary/word lists
36. in large print (*electronic and/or hard copy*)
37. in Braille
38. with increased space between items
39. with different color contrast
40. with fewer items per page
41. with opportunity for student to move, stand, pace during the assessment

D. Response Format Accommodations
Test was administered:
1. with student dictation of answers; use of scribe (ex., digital recorder used and transcribed by tester after assessment session)
2. with copying assistance between drafts
3. with student responses in native language
4. with student marking answers in test booklet or on large-spaced paper
5. with student using machine, typewriter, and/or word processor
6. with student use of brailler
7. with use of digital or analogue tape recorder for later verbatim translation
8. with student use of augmentative/alternative communication system
9. with use of paper with dark or heavy raised lines, lines, or grid
10. with paper secured to work area, slant board, or with paper/pen grips
11. with student use of an abacus
12. with student use of arithmetic tables for assessments of math skills other than computation
13. with student use of a calculator (*including talking calculator*) for assessments of math skills other than computation
14. with student use of a paper or talking dictionary/spell checker when not assessing spelling
15. with student use of bilingual word lists
16. with student use of voice activated technology*, including voice/speech recognition software*
17. with student use of text to speech, screenreaders, word prediction, conceptual mapping, and/or alternate input devices

E. Other Accommodations
Test was administered:
1. using other accommodations not listed, but locally approved through appeals process

> **Note: For an accommodation to be used for a specific local assessment, it must be on this list and/or must not alter what is being measured. If a proposed accommodation is not on the list, it must be reviewed and approved through the district's Accommodations Appeals Process.*

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Maine's Local Assessment System
An Accommodations Planning Worksheet for Decision Making

Step 1

Consider the Purpose of the Assessment:
- ❑ Is the purpose of the assessment clear? What is the assessment supposed to tell us about the student?
- ❑ Is there a match between the standard being assessed, the instructional content, the assessment content, the purpose of the assessment, and the individual student?

Step 2

Consider the characteristics of accommodations:
- ❑ Is the proposed accommodation(s) familiar to the student? Integrated in daily instruction and assessment? Based on individual student need?
- ❑ Does the accommodation(s) enable the student to participate without altering the content of the assessment or standards being assessed?
- ❑ Is the accommodation related only to the way in which the assessment is given or taken?

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Step 3

Consider accommodations available:
- ❑ Review the accommodations(s) listed in Accommodation Options for Local Assessment.
- ❑ Is the accommodation being considered on the list?
- ❑ If yes, circle the specific accommodations below to be used for the individual student on the assessment being considered. If no, proceed to Step 4.

A.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

B.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9

C.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12   13   14   15   16   17

      18   19   20   21   22   23   24   25   26   27   28   29   30   31   32   33   34

      35   36   37

D.   1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10   11   12   13   14   15   16   17

E.   1

- ❑ What preliminary work/planning must be done in order to provide the student with appropriate assessment accommodations?
- ❑ Are changes in instruction needed to integrate appropriate accommodations in the student's daily program prior to assessment?

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Step 4

Prepare a local assessment appeals board request for review of proposed accommodation. Include in the request:
- ❑ the purpose of the assessment;
- ❑ an identification of the information is to be gained about the student from the assessment;
- ❑ a description of the match between the standard being assessed, the instructional content, the assessment content, the purpose of the assessment, and the individual student;
- ❑ an identification of the connection between the proposed accommodation and the student's regular instructional program;
- ❑ an explanation of how members of the team feel the proposed accommodation(s) does or does not alter the content of the assessment or the standards being assessed; and
- ❑ information supporting the opinions of team members that believe the proposed alteration is an accommodation and information supporting the opinions of team members who believe the proposed alteration is a modification and would, therefore, not be allowed.

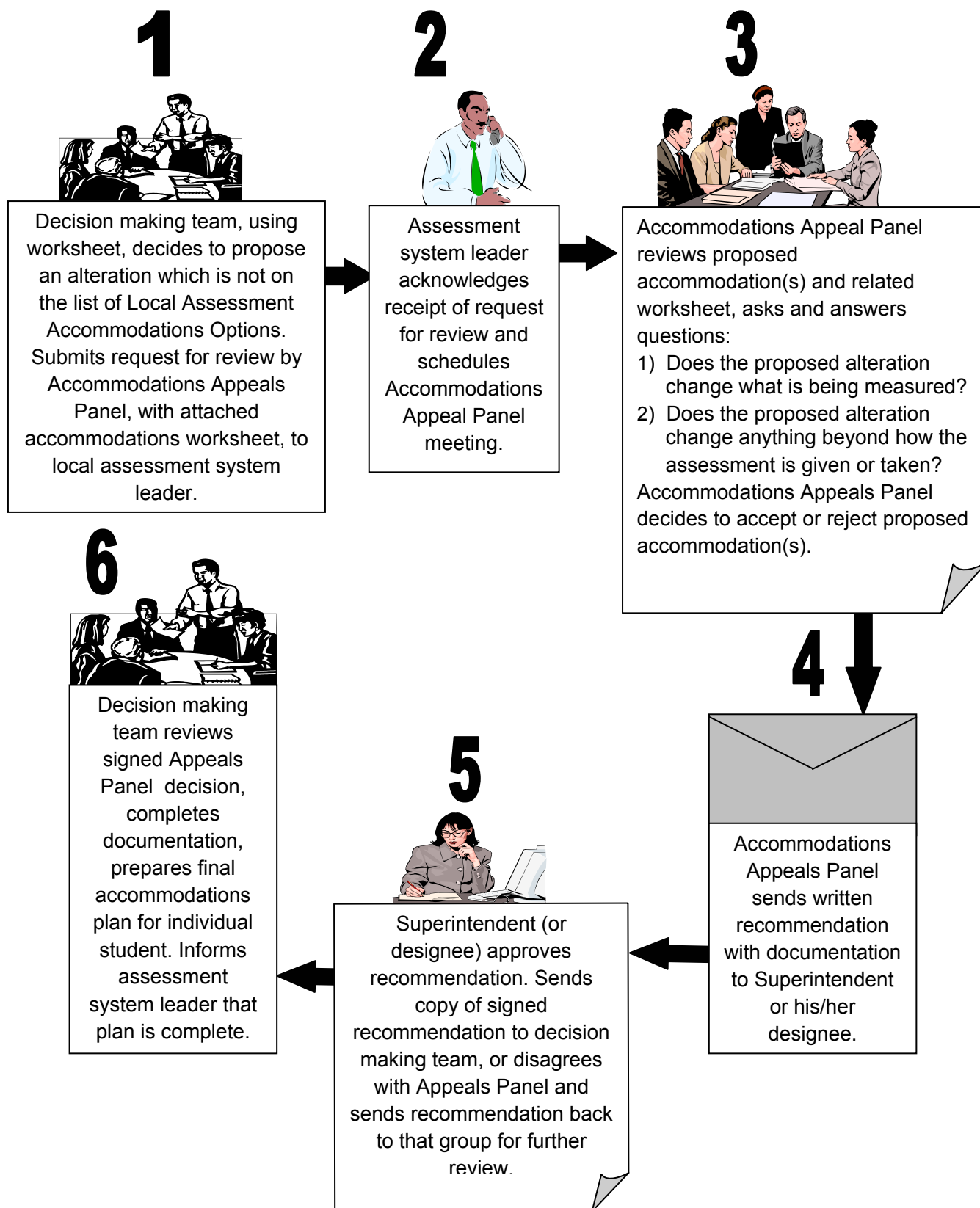**Submit the request to the local assessment appeals board for review.**

Appeals Board decision: **Accept as accommodation**   ☐

                                              Reject proposed accommodation   ☐

I agree that all alterations to standard administration of the local assessment considered are appropriate accommodations; that is they do not change what is being measured.

Signature of Superintendent (or Designee)_____ Date_____

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Local Assessment Accommodations Appeals Process

1

Decision making team, using worksheet, decides to propose an alteration which is not on the list of Local Assessment Accommodations Options. Submits request for review by Accommodations Appeals Panel, with attached accommodations worksheet, to local assessment system leader.

2

Assessment system leader acknowledges receipt of request for review and schedules Accommodations Appeal Panel meeting.

3

Accommodations Appeal Panel reviews proposed accommodation(s) and related worksheet, asks and answers questions:
1) Does the proposed alteration change what is being measured?
2) Does the proposed alteration change anything beyond how the assessment is given or taken?

Accommodations Appeals Panel decides to accept or reject proposed accommodation(s).

4

Accommodations Appeals Panel sends written recommendation with documentation to Superintendent or his/her designee.

5

Superintendent (or designee) approves recommendation. Sends copy of signed recommendation to decision making team, or disagrees with Appeals Panel and sends recommendation back to that group for further review.

6

Decision making team reviews signed Appeals Panel decision, completes documentation, prepares final accommodations plan for individual student. Informs assessment system leader that plan is complete.

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Questions and Answers about Accommodations for Maine Local Assessment Systems

As the stakes get higher and the performance levels of all students are included in school/district/state accountability systems for the first time, new and interesting issues are being considered. Those working on the development of local assessment systems must decide how to make it possible for all students to participate in both general curriculum and related assessments, and, in doing so, consider the implications of that work on the system as a whole. <u>The fact that multiple types of assessments will be included in local assessment systems raises new issues regarding the appropriate avenue through which a student may participate (standard administration, administration with accommodations, or alternate assessment). The avenue most suitable for a student may differ from assessment to assessment</u>. Below are a few of the most frequently asked questions in Maine regarding approaches to the inclusion of all students in a district's assessment system, and answers to help support the work.

For more information please contact Maine Department of Education staff:
* *Alternate Assessment Coordinator*   *Mona.Baker@maine.gov*
* *Local Assessment Coordinator*   *Pam.Rolfe@maine.gov*
* *Maine Educational Assessment Coordinator*   *Brud.Maxcy@maine.gov*

1   What is the difference between an accommodation and a modification?

Some students may require instructional and/or assessment approaches not generally used for all students. Such approaches may be categorized as either accommodations or modifications. These two words are often used interchangeably, even in federal language. Maine, along with many other states, has a long history of differentiating between the two. As defined in Maine: an accommodation is a change in the way an assessment is given or taken that **does not alter** what is being measured (ex., different test setting, timing or scheduling changes, translation of directions, some uses of assistive technology); a modification is a change in the way an assessment is given or taken that **does alter** what is being measured (ex., (e.g. extended time on a speeded test for reading fluency, spell checker on a spelling test, calculator on test of computation of basic four operations).

2   How do you decide which to use?

Decisions should always be made by a team that includes school personnel who know the student, the parents, and the student whenever possible. If a comparison of student work to items similar to those to be used on a particular assessment indicates that standard administration would not be an appropriate avenue for participation, the team should discuss

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the accommodations and personalized instructional components needed by the student in his/her daily program.

The list of "Accommodation Options for Local Assessments" should then be reviewed to determine whether one or more of the accommodations listed reflect those from which the student is benefiting in the classroom. If those regularly used by the student are listed and they do not alter what is being measured, they should be utilized to make the assessment accessible to the student.

If additional changes, beyond those listed as accommodation options are needed, or the accommodation(s) suggested alters what is being measured on a particular assessment, the team should consider the student's participation through an alternate assessment. If agreement cannot be reached on which accommodations are appropriate, an request for review may be filed with the local district appeals board. The team may be guided by the document, "Process for Determining the Appropriate Avenue for Participation in Local Assessments".

3 | Where do I begin with assessment accommodations?

It is important that team discussions about accommodations begin the school year prior to the assessment, or early on in the testing year and be implemented throughout that year. It is the responsibility of school personnel to recommend how a student should participate in state and local assessments. Participation can be through any of 3 avenues: standard administration, administration with accommodations, or alternate assessment.

The team, following the procedure outlined in "Process for Determining the Appropriate Avenue for Participation in Local Assessments", will decide, based on a student's current level of performance, which avenue is most appropriate to ensure access to a particular assessment. If a review of accommodations regularly used in the classroom matches accommodations listed as "Accommodation Options for Local Assessments", and none of them alters what is being measured on the assessment, one or more of those accommodations will be identified and used to allow the student access to the assessment through administration with accommodations. The list of accommodation options for local assessments was developed by combining elements from varied sources*.

Resources for this list include, "Policies and Procedures for Accommodations and Alternate Assessment to the Maine Educational Assessment"; An analysis of State Policies for the Inclusion and Accommodation of English Language Learners in State Assessment Programs during 1998-1999, Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at George Washington University; "Guidelines about Assessment Accommodations", NCEO; "Testing Students with Disabilities": Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements, Thurlow, Elliott, Ysseldyke (1998); Assessment Accommodations Checklist, CTB, McGraw-Hill (1999).

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4   What if what the student needs is not an approved accommodation?

You are probably familiar with pre-approved accommodations lists that accompany many assessments including the Maine Educational Assessment, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In each case, alterations to standard administration not listed are probably missing because they would compromise the validity of the assessment (alter what is being measured). By definition, they would be a modification rather than an accommodation, and therefore not allowed.

An accommodations list ("Accommodation Options for Local Assessments") and a worksheet for team identification of accommodations appropriate for a specific assessment, have been prepared to be used with local assessments that are part of Maine's Local Assessment System. There are expanded accommodations on the list of options because they will be applied to multiple types of assessments.

If there is disagreement among team members regarding whether a proposed alteration is an accommodation or a modification for a particular assessment, whether or not it is listed among "Accommodations Options for Local Assessment", the appeals process should be activated.

The appeals process would require that:
1. the decision-making team submit a request for consideration of the proposed alteration to the district's assessment system leader;
2. the request be reviewed by an appeals panel made up of a special education teacher or administrator, a regular education teacher familiar with the student, and district assessment leader(s);
3. the appeals panel's decision be made using a consistent procedure/tool setting the parameters for consideration (a decision-making worksheet is available);
4. that documentation supporting the decision be kept on file; and
5. that the Superintendent sign off on the decision.

5   What if the student needs accommodations that alter what is being assessed (compromises the validity)?

If a student requires accommodations for an assessment that are so significant that they change what is being measured, the student should be considered for an alternate assessment. Teams need to meet to determine the appropriate avenue of participation and document their decisions in the student's Individual Education Plan (if a special education student) and/or in the student's cumulative folder.

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6   Are accommodations fair?

Consider this: You are a person who needs to wear corrective lenses to read and write. You enroll in a class and attend all classes wearing your glasses during lectures, class activities and completion of assignments in class and at home. The night of the final exam arrives, and your instructor enters the class with the exam. The instructor announces you will have 3 hours to complete the exam and requires all students wearing corrective lenses to remove them. The instructor notes that there will be no unfair advantages given those students who wear glasses.

If this sounds absurd, it is. This however, is what happens when we do not allow students to use accommodations for assessments. In this example, you needed the corrective lenses and wearing them did not in any way change what was being measured. We must provide assessment accommodations based on students' needs. Denying students the use of accommodations because of the fairness argument doesn't make sense.

7   Do assessment accommodations invalidate test scores?

Some people argue that accommodations automatically invalidate student scores. The truth is that decision-making teams must be knowledgeable in the constructs or skills the test is attempting to measure if they are to make appropriate decisions. A blanket decision that the use of a calculator on a mathematics test would invalidate the assessment may be inaccurate. If the assessment is measuring basic computation skills then the use of a calculator might result in invalid results. Using a calculator on an item that is measuring a student's understanding of a theorem, steps or procedures would be appropriate.

Knowing the test and understanding what each subtest is measuring is the only way a team can make sound decisions. It is important for every team to know that there are no accommodations that can be automatically used.

8   How do I make connections between classroom accommodations and state and local assessments?

The content of the classroom curriculum should be identified and aligned with Maine's Learning Results and school district standards. Teachers as members of teams make decisions about the use of instructional accommodations to help students meet these standards. Accommodations may range from reduced numbers of items on an assignment, to extended time to complete assignments, assignments translated into the student's native language, among others. Decisions are then made to determine which accommodations the student needs for classroom assessments. Later on, the decision about providing assessment accommodations on state or local assessment is inextricably linked to accommodations that have been consistently used in the instructional process. This connection makes the assessments at all levels more valid.

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| **9** | What about accommodations for English Language Learners (ELL)? |

Most lists of accommodations are based on the needs of students with disabilities. Teams who support children for whom English is a second language may need a slightly different lens for their accommodation decisions. A study conducted by the Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at George Washington University suggests that accommodations for ELL students be organized by Native-Language Accommodations, English-Language Accommodations and Non-Linguistic Accommodations. The "Accommodations Options for Local Assessments" list previously referred to includes most of their recommended accommodations but does not organize them in this fashion.

Portions of the information presented above come from: What About Assessment and Accountability? Practical Implications for Educators, Judy Elliott, Jim Ysseldyke, Martha Thurlow, Ron Erickson, Teaching Exceptional Children, Sept/Oct. 1998

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2005 LAA Framework of Assessment Formats

Any assessment response may be given through written, oral, technology based, signs, or other means of communication. Data sheets may serve as evidence of performance for students unable to produce their own evidence.

Selected-Response Format	Constructed-Response Format 6 points = 1 piece of evidence			
1 pt	**Brief Constructed Response**	**Performance-Based Assessment (Product or Performance)**		
		6 pts	**6 pts**	**6 pts**
❑ True-False ❑ Matching ❑ A choice made from given options through paper and pencil, oral response, pointing, eye gaze, or other means of communication ❑ Answer "Yes" or "No" to a given question ❑ Matching, including placement of a given label on a diagram (1 pt. per match) ❑ Other	**2 pts** ❑ Fill in the blank with words, phrases, or numbers ❑ Math computation ❑ Short Answer – sentence(s) ❑ Illustration of a single thought ❑ Other **3 pts** ❑ Short Answer – paragraph ❑ Given graphic organizer for which student generates 3 components related to a topic/subject ❑ Student arrangement of 2 or more sets of data on a template for graph or table. ❑ Reading of passage and answering of 2 related questions. ❑ Retelling of main ideas of short passage. ❑ Sequencing of three or four steps in a process/events in a story ❑ Running record including documentation of multiple strategies and related comprehension. ❑ Other	❑ Essay – multiple paragraphs related to same topic ❑ Research paper ❑ Student created story/play/poem with multiple paragraphs, or stanzas ❑ Illustration(s) of concept, process, system, or thing (ex., map) ❑ Science Project ❑ Scientific Critique ❑ Model of concept, process, system, or thing (ex., 3-D shape) ❑ Student created video/audio tape presentation ❑ Student created spreadsheet representation of data ❑ Lab report ❑ Student generated graphic organizer for 3 components related to a single topic/subject	❑ Student generated graph or table including representation of 2 or more sets of data ❑ Student created log/journal maintained over school year ❑ Learning log – student maintained record of learning during the school year ❑ Oral or sign language presentation ❑ Dance/movement for audience ❑ Scientific investigation ❑ Athletic skills performance ❑ Oral reading of story or group of paragraphs ❑ Enactment of given story, historical event, concept, process, etc.	❑ Debate – presentation of one point of view for audience ❑ Musical presentation to for audience ❑ Teach others lesson ❑ Student created computer slide show ❑ Retelling of multi-paragraph whole story, historical event, etc., with beginning, middle, end ❑ Sequencing of five or more steps in a process/events in a story ❑ Role play ❑ Demonstration of a process ❑ Interview conducted by student ❑ Other

*Adapted from: <u>Assessing Learning in the Classroom</u>, by Jay McTighe and Steven Ferrara, NEA 1998

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