

Q&A: RIT Score Comparability Session

August 31, 2023

Has the DOE or NWEA had a chance to dig into the comparison data for students who fall in the high and low quintiles?

At this time, we are looking at the differences between assessment items rather than between student groups. For example, for high school math we have requested that NWEA provide information regarding the difficulty of questions based on the cluster of standards in which they fall. This difficulty is based on empirical data rather than the associated achievement level. We are re-examining those math items that few high school students answered correctly to determine if 1) the achievement level descriptor (ALD)-alignment was incorrect, 2) the ALD itself needs to be revised, 3) if opportunity to learn may have impacted student performance, or if there are other considerations. This will help us to refine and improve the assessment moving forward.

Will schools still have access to the MAP growth assessment this fall? Will the state continue to fund this?

As of Fall 2023, MAP Growth is no longer included in the State's contract with NWEA, and therefore it is not provided by the Department.

When will the sample communication (for boards and families) be ready?

Maine DOE will need some time to review the comparability evidence provided by NWEA on September 1st. On September 18, 2023, a second, follow-up RIT Comparability session will be held to review this new information from NWEA. Following that session, a sample communication will be provided.

Do I need to purchase MAP Growth in order roster students and have access to the MAP Growth-like reports?

No, this is not necessary.

Although the MAP Growth assessment is no longer part of the state contract, SAUs can continue to receive MAP Growth reports by rostering their students in the MAP Growth platform (teach.mapnwea.org).

Will fall values will be available in the same time as the MAP Growth assessment used to be or will they be delayed like the spring?

The spring delay was the culmination of a series of events, including required standard setting, the summer technical advisory committee meeting, and approval of cut scores by the Commissioner's Office. This is a one-time delay and we have been assured by the vendor that future results will be available within 24-48 hours within the Acacia platform.

What is the report called that will help us to cross reference rostering in Acacia and in MARC?

It is called a MAP Growth Rosters Error Report, which will be available via the Operational Reports as of 5:00pm on the final day of the window.

Are you able to share the NWEA research brief that has been mentioned?

https://www.nwea.org/uploads/Educations-long-covid-2022-23-achievement-data-reveal-stalled-progress-toward-pandemic-recovery_NWEA_Research-brief.pdf

Are the assessments in Fall and Spring directly comparable to our historical data?

RIT score information remains comparable and can be used for longitudinal measures of growth. Starting in Spring 2023, achievement level classifications (Well Below, Below, At, and Above State Expectations) will be based upon the new, Maine-specific scaled score, not RIT scores. As such, the achievement level classifications will not be comparable.

We are still unable to access some of our past and current data in the MAP Growth reports. Will we regain that access?

For questions regarding MAP Growth reports, please reach out to NWEA Maine Partner Support at (855) 430-1777. State-level users at the Maine DOE have no access to MAP Growth reports and, consequently, we are not able to assist with your access to those reports.

Would it be safe to say that the Maine-specific performance scores (aligned to achievement level classifications) can be explained to stakeholders as provisional (or as a “baseline”)?

Scores for students in grades 3 through 8 are based entirely on questions that had previously been seen by students in states that also work with NWEA. Because those questions were proven to effectively measure student performance (e.g., neither too easy or too difficult, and without bias), we do not consider those results to be provisional.

The high school assessments in both math and reading, however, were operational field tests. Because NWEA’s other State Solutions, through-year assessment partners do not use NWEA for their high school state assessments, the questions on the spring 2023 high school assessment were newly developed and never previously administered to students. As a result, the Department will be releasing provisional cut scores and achievement levels for high school while we work to review the data from the assessment items.

Are the fall and winter truly comparable to the spring test given that they are adaptive and the spring is only 1/3 adaptive?

The summative portion of the spring assessment, which comprises two-thirds of the assessment, is adaptive within one grade level below and above the student’s actual grade. The remaining diagnostic portion maintains the same adaptivity as MAP Growth. Given the number of items on the assessment, NWEA has indicated that the decreased adaptivity of the summative portion may increase the standard error of measurement but does not affect overall comparability. Of course, Maine DOE will continue to analyze the RIT score data from the Through Year Assessment to evaluate these claims, in particular the RIT data for our students who perform substantially above or below grade level in the fall and/or winter.

Will the state pivot to spring-spring growth as they will both be the MTYA?

The academic progress indicator used by the state will be fall-to-spring RIT score growth for the population of students taking the Maine Through Year Assessment. The academic achievement indicator will be based solely on spring data.

Are Alaska and Nebraska the only other states that are doing this?

Alaska and Nebraska are NWEA's other State Solutions partners, but there are assessment vendors and state education agencies across the nation developing and implementing through-year assessments. Currently, there are more than 10 states across the nation who are implementing through-year assessments. This number expands to approximately 20 states when including states that are in some stage of the development process.