

Northwest Evaluation Association

Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

Frequently-Asked Questions

1. Q: What is MAP?

A: The Measures of Academic Progress are electronically administered and scored achievement tests designed to measure growth in student learning for individual students, classrooms, schools, and districts. The tests provide accurate and immediate scores to help teachers plan instructional programs, place new students in the appropriate courses, and screen students for special programs.

2. Q: How do the tests work?

A: MAP is a computerized adaptive testing system that tailors tests to a student's achievement level. Each student takes a test that is dynamically developed for him or her as the test is being administered. The program instantly analyzes the student's response to each test question and, based on how well the student has answered all previous questions, selects a question of appropriate difficulty to display next.

3. Q: What subjects are included in the standard MAP package?

A: The standard package includes tests for reading, language usage, mathematics, and the upper math series (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Math I, and Integrated Math II).

4. Q: Are other subjects available?

A: Yes, tests for science concepts and processes and science general topics are also available.

5. Q: What test versions are available?

A: There are selected *state versions* available that align with the state standards in specific states. We currently have many state versions available, and we are adding new states every month. Please call for information on which state versions have been developed. We also have an *NWEA version*, which is aligned with nationally-recognized standards in mathematics, reading, and language usage. Districts may also develop *custom versions* aligned with their local curriculum goals.

6. Q: What types of tests are included?

A: There are four types of tests: The *Survey Tests* are 20-item tests that provide a single, accurate RIT score showing student performance in a subject area. The *Goals Survey Tests* are longer tests (35-50 items) designed to return a very accurate overall RIT score plus performance scores for the primary goals in a content area. This test stops when the score reaches a predefined level of precision. *Locator Tests* are also available for districts using NWEA's achievement level tests. These are very short tests (16 items) designed to obtain a score for the sole purpose of placing students in the appropriate level test. The *Demonstration Tests* (20 items) are designed to familiarize district staff with how the MAP system works. They are not to be administered to students. Appropriate uses for each type of test are described in *Guidelines for Choosing the Correct Test* in the MAP User's Manual.

7. Q: How long does it take to give the tests?

A: Each *Survey Test* takes 20-30 minutes to administer and each *Goals Survey Test* takes approximately 60-75 minutes, which includes time for set up, instructions, and test administration.

8. Q: Are the MAP tests timed tests?

A: No. Students should be allowed to continue as long as they are working productively.

9. Q: When can the tests be administered?

A: The MAP tests can be used for pre- and post-testing at the beginning and end of a school year, for intake and placement as new students enroll in the district, as a mid-year assessment to monitor student progress, and to monitor growth in special programs, including summer school.

10. Q: How often should a student be tested?

A: We recommend that students be tested no more than four times during the school year, with a minimum elapsed time between tests of one month. Since the item pools are finite, as a student takes a test, he or she begins using up the items in the pool that represent the most appropriate level of achievement. This means that subsequent tests tend to become less adapted to the student's level of achievement and may result in less precise measurement.

11. Q: How secure are the tests?

A: Very secure. Since all students receive a different test, it would be highly unlikely for two students taking MAP tests to see many of the same test items. In addition, a single student who takes the tests more than once will not have any items repeated.

12. Q: How many tests can a student take in one sitting?

A: A student may take all three of the *Survey Tests* (mathematics, reading, and language usage) in one testing session. For the longer *Goals Survey Tests*, we recommend giving only one test during a testing session.

13. Q: Is there a recommended testing window?

A: The length of the testing window depends on the number of students to be tested and the number of subjects to be administered. In larger districts, a testing window may need to span two to three weeks. In this case, we recommend testing all students in one subject the first week, then switch to another subject the following week, etc. That way, growth scores in each subject area are comparable for all students.

14. Q: Who typically administers the tests?

A: We recommend that districts designate one or more proctors in each school to give the tests. All proctors should be trained in the MAP test administration procedures. For occasional testing, a counselor or teacher (also trained in the administration procedures) would be an appropriate person to administer the tests.

15. Q: What are the proctor's responsibilities?

A: Proctors should have good computer skills and an understanding of appropriate testing procedures. Proctors give directions to students, monitor students' progress on the tests, answer questions related to the operation of MAP, terminate tests, record individual student results, and generally manage the operation of the computer lab. They should be part of any evaluation about how to improve the testing process in future testing sessions.

16. Q: How does the system know where to start a student on the test?

A: The system uses the best available information to decide how difficult the first item on a student's test will be. If the student has previously taken a test in the MAP system in the same subject area, the current test begins with an item that has a difficulty at the student's previous achievement level. If no previous score is available, the current test begins with an item that has a difficulty at the grade-level mean.

17. Q: What is an appropriate testing environment?

A: For districts testing large numbers of students, classroom-size computer labs will be needed. For intake testing or occasional testing to monitor individual student growth, a counselor's office is an ideal location. Since the testing environment should be as quiet and free of distractions as possible, we do not recommend administering the MAP tests in classrooms that are involved in other activities.

18. Q: How many computers are needed?

A: This depends on the number of students a district plans to test, the number of subjects to be administered, and the types of tests students will take. An Excel spreadsheet is available from NWEA to help districts calculate the number of computers needed.

19. Q: Will each student need a calculator for the mathematics tests?

A: When a calculator is required for an item, one will pop up on the screen for the student to use.

20. Q: How are the tests delivered?

A: The data for the MAP system (the tests and student data) are downloaded from our Internet Website to the district's file server via an application provided by NWEA. An application to administer the tests is also downloaded from our Website and distributed to each workstation that will be used to administer tests. The data remain only on the file server (and should be removed after test results are uploaded to our Website). The application for administering the tests remains on the workstations for future use.

21. Q: How are reports delivered?

A: After administering the tests, the district uploads student data to our Internet Website via a web application that we provide. Databases are synchronized and teacher reports are available the next day. All other reports are ordered through the report Website and are available within 2 hours. District personnel with the appropriate permissions can run the reports. Reports can be downloaded to the district in report format or various other file formats. If reports are very large, an executable file containing the reports and data can be sent to the district via the Internet. NWEA can also print reports for districts for an additional charge.

22. Q: What reports are included?

A: The standard reporting package includes Teacher reports, Individual Student Progress reports, Class reports, School reports, and District reports.

23. Q: Will the district receive training in the use of the MAP system?

A: Yes, a one-day onsite training session is required for most districts. For very small districts, training sessions are periodically scheduled at the NWEA offices in Oregon.

24. Q: Is onsite installation support available?

A: Most districts find it easy to install the MAP system. Our technical support team can assist districts with most configuration, download, and deployment issues. Installation has been fast and efficient for districts following the instructions provided in Chapter 3 of the MAP User's Manual.

25. Q: How soon will the tests be ready to administer after ordering the system?

A: That depends on which test version a district orders. For state-aligned tests and the NWEA version, it takes about 8 weeks from the time tests are ordered until they are ready to administer. For custom versions, it takes about 10 weeks. During this time, we schedule and conduct the onsite training session, districts prepare and send us their Class Roster File for loading into the MAP system, and we help resolve any firewall problems in the district's computer system. **Districts' tests cannot be downloaded until the Class Roster File is imported into the MAP system.**

26. Q: Is a pilot administration recommended?

A: Definitely. Each district should conduct a pilot prior to actual testing. This enables the district to pilot the *process* in order to prepare for full implementation. Districts should plan to test a large enough sample of students to get a good idea of how the process would work on a larger scale, focusing on issues such as scheduling, the time needed to set up the tests for all students, what instructions students will need, proctoring responsibilities, etc. The pilot should be conducted at least a couple of weeks before testing all students.

27. Q: Can districts get access to their students' raw data?

A: Districts may receive MAP data in ASCII files upon request. These data dumps are transmitted to districts via the Internet using FTP (File Transfer Protocol). Districts interested in this service may contact our Information Technology team for more information.

28. Q: Can growth be measured from fall to winter to spring using RIT scores?

A: Yes. Growth through the curriculum can be measured with the MAP system scores. We also provide norming data for students in grades 2 – 10 for fall, winter, and spring if a norm-referenced interpretation of scores is needed.

29. Q: Are median RIT scores and average growth in RIT scores available for helping to interpret results?

A: Yes. We provide districts with charts showing median RIT scores and average growth in RIT scores for each subject and grade.

30. Q: Can data from Achievement Level Tests (ALT) and MAP be combined?

A: Yes. If a district administers MAP tests and uses NWEA's scoring and reporting services for their level testing program, the MAP data may be uploaded to NWEA and combined with the ALT data prior to reporting.

31. Q: If districts score level tests locally using NWEA's Scoring & Reporting System (S&RS) software, will they be able to combine the data?

A: If a district is using the MAP system as a supplement to their level testing program and they wish to run reports out of S&RS, NWEA will send a file via the Internet or email to be imported into S&RS. This import routine manages new testing and retest data. For districts using MAP as their primary testing program, we will provide assistance with migrating the ALT data to us and we will merge it into their MAP system.

32. Q: Can districts modify the MAP items?

A: No.

33. Q: Can district-written items be included in the system?

A: If a district is interested in writing new test items to be used in the MAP system, they may order NWEA's item-writing packet of materials. The new items are first entered into our formatting software, then into the MAP system, where they become available as field test items in the district (and perhaps in other districts). It takes from twelve to eighteen months before the items are calibrated and become available for use.

34. Q: What does the MAP system cost?

A: MAP system costs are based on the district's intended use and the license purchased. *A Full District Annual License* provides the capacity to test an unlimited number of students as often as needed during the licensing year. *A Limited District Annual License* is designed for special purposes testing and is based on the actual number of students tested in specific schools and grades. *A District Supplemental Annual License* may be purchased to provide support to an Achievement Level Testing program. Please call for detailed licensing and cost information.

If you have additional questions, call and ask to speak with a member of our Client Services Team.

For technical questions, contact our IT Team.

All NWEA staff members can be reached at the number below.