

**Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE)
Assessment and Accountability in the Fifty States: 1999-2000**

MAINE

*This profile was verified by the staff of the Maine Department of Education in June of 2000.
All information is current as of that date.*

Index:

State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

Performance Standards

Reporting Performance Data

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

State Assessment System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the assessment system as the context.*

The **Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)** is a comprehensive statewide testing program that was initiated with the Education Reform Act of 1984 and since 1985 has measured the academic achievement of Maine students. In March of 1996, the legislature adopted new state *Learning Results* to establish educational standards that apply to all of the state's students and passed *An Act to Initiate Education Reform in Maine* that requires that a system of assessment be established with the following characteristics:

- Student achievement must be measured by a combination of state and local assessments
- The 4th, 8th and 11th grade results of the state assessment be used to measure the *Learning Results*
- LEAs may develop additional assessments to measure achievement, including student portfolios, performances, demonstrations, and other records of achievement.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state assessment system, including:*

- *Name of Assessment Instrument(s) or Program(s)*

Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)

- *Grade Levels and Subjects Tested*

MEA 2000: Grades 4, 8 and 11 are tested in the following subjects:

1. English/Language Arts – Reading and Writing
2. Writing
3. Mathematics
4. Science/Technology
5. Social Studies
6. Visual and Performing Arts
7. Health Education

- *Norm or Criterion Referenced: Criterion*

- *Matrix or Census Testing:*

Matrix sampling is used to administer all of the assessments. However, while the Visual and Performing Arts and Health Education assessments are solely matrix, the other five assessments include common items as well as a mix of different items on multiple versions of the assessments. For this reason, only school and district results are reported for Visual and Performing Arts and Health Education while the other five subjects are reported at the individual student level as well.

- *Item Types*

Short answer, constructed and extended response items: 60%

Multiple-choice items: 40%

In the 4th grade, along with the multiple choice items, only constructed response questions and NOT extended response items are used; these are used in grades 8 and 11. The writing assessment is composed of only two writing prompts: a “stand alone” prompt in which students have 45 minutes to respond to a question, and an integrated reading and writing prompt with a passage to read and questions for response.

- *Time of Testing (specific month(s) or testing window)*

Maine Educational Assessment subjects and times of testing:

- English/Language Arts – Reading (November-December 1999)
- Writing (November-December 1999)
- Mathematics (March 2000)
- Science/Technology (March 2000)
- Social Studies (March 2000)
- Visual and Performing Arts (March 2000)
- Health Education (November-December 1999)

- *High School Exit Exam (date of implementation and/or phase-in timeline)*

No such exam exists in the state, and students are not held accountable for assessment results. The decision to grant a high school diploma is made locally.

- *Other Assessments:* None
- *Transitional or Final Assessment System:* Final state system

3. *Who designed and produced the assessment(s) used by the state?*

The commissioner appointed a 30-member Assessment Design Team which included educators and those outside of education, including a state senator and professionals from business and industry. They composed the Assessment Design Report, a set of recommendations to the commissioner on how the MEA and local assessments should be structured to measure the state *Learning Results*. These were incorporated into the design of the current MEA. Next, the development process started with the selection of committees of 12 –15 teachers in each of the content areas tested; these committees are on-going. They worked on the initial development of test items and have continued to create new items with new versions of the assessment. The items were developed to be aligned with the Learning Results in the state. The assessment was produced and distributed under contract with Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation, Inc.; the state has been working with the company for at least 15 years.

A technical advisory committee, composed with state and university staff with expertise in assessment, continues to work with the state to address the issues of test reliability and validity. A policy advisory committee was also created with practitioners and educators that provide counsel to the Commissioner on education policy and implementation issues.

4. *What are the state requirements for local assessment, including the types of assessments and their use in areas such as reporting and accountability, as well as Title I adequate yearly progress? What grade levels and subjects are tested?*

The assessment system has both State and local components. State initiatives also include assisting educators in clarifying standards for local assessment systems, including developing and evaluating performance tasks and student portfolios, serving as a clearinghouse for exemplary local assessment practices, and developing a framework for alternative assessments to ensure that all Maine students reach high standards. Local assessment includes traditional methods of assessment such as teacher tests, reports, projects, nationally-normed achievement tests, and presentations. To better inform students, teachers, and parents, local schools may also use portfolios, writing prompts, district-wide assessments and other tools. Specifically, the SDE is currently training local school personnel in the development of portfolio assessment systems called the **Maine Assessment Portfolio (MAP)**. The use of this approach is optional.

5. *Is the state assessment system aligned with the state standards? Are there plans for alignment, and if so, how will the assessment and standards become aligned?*

The MEA has this year been aligned with the Learning Results, with individual student scores being reported in five content areas.

6. *What is the state’s approach for ensuring alignment and what evidence of that alignment is provided?*

The state assessment system was designed to be aligned with the state standards as part of the development process. MEA questions are “directly linked to the content standards and performance indicators” described in Maine’s *Learning Results*.” An item may address “part of, all of or several of the performance indicators” (Guide to the Maine Educational Assessment: 1998-99). Further, the state has designed protocols for aligning assessments with Maine’s Learning Results, based on “Criteria for Alignment of Expectations and Assessments in Mathematics and Science Education” by Norman Webb (National Institute of Science Education, Research Monograph 6). The protocols address the following topics:

- Balance of Representation
- Depth of Knowledge Consistency
- Range of Knowledge Correspondence
- Cognitive Soundness
- Cumulative Growth in Content Knowledge
- Fairness, and
- Categorical Concurrence.

7. *How is the data included in the state assessment system used?*

Data from the MEA is used to inform school improvement planning in the state and is reported to individual students, schools, districts and the state. MEA data is also used specifically for Title I as the criteria for determining adequate yearly progress.

8. *Are there changes planned for the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The Health Education assessment will be expanded to include grade 11. The design will begin to develop assessment strategies in Career Preparation and Modern and Classical Languages, as well as the performance aspects of Physical Education and Visual and Performing Arts.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of state assessment? Explain.*

A challenge in the state has been to work with local districts on how to design, measure and interpret local assessment systems so that they are reliable indicators of student performance on the state standards.

Inclusion Policies for Assessment

1. *What exclusions are made in the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP? Who makes the decision about exclusion of a particular child? Does the state collect*

data or in other ways monitor the number and types of students excluded? Does that vary by test?

Learning Results legislation clearly articulates that all students will be included in state assessment at the fourth grade, eighth grade, and secondary levels.

2. *What accommodations and/or modifications are made on the current state assessment for students with disabilities? LEP?*

Students with disabilities and LEP students may require testing modifications or accommodations as defined by the *1999-2000 Policy and Procedures for Accommodations:*

Scheduling Accommodations: Tests were administered

- A.1. at a time of day or a day of the week most beneficial to the student.
- A.2. in appropriate blocks of time for individual student needs, followed by rest breaks.
- A.3. with time extended beyond the regular test administration allotments until, in the administrator's judgment, the student could no longer sustain the activity.

Settings: Tests were administered

- B.1. individually.
- B.2. in a small group.
- B.3. in a carrel.
- B.4. in an alternative setting.
- B.5. at the student's home, by school personnel.
- B.6. with the student seated in front of the classroom.
- B.7. with the teacher facing the student.
- B.8. by other school personnel known to the student (e.g., LEP, Title 1, Compensatory Education, Special Education).

Equipment Accommodations: Tests were administered

- C.1. with the student using magnifying equipment.
- C.2. with the student wearing noise buffers.
- C.3. using a template.
- C.4. with the student using amplification equipment (e.g., a hearing aid or auditory trainer).
- C.5. with the student using a typewriter or word processor.
- C.6. with the student using a calculator for non-calculator sessions (only if the use of a calculator is part of the student's IEP).
- C.7. using voice-actuated technology
- C.8. using other assistive technology.
- C.9. using a bilingual dictionary.

Recording Modifications

- D.1. The student's answers were dictated to the test administrator and recorded in the Student Test Booklet/Student Response Booklet by the test administrator (except writing).
- D.2. The student wrote answers by machine, or on large-spaced paper.

Modality Accommodations

- E.1. Tests were administered in large print.
- E.2. Tests were administered in Braille.

- E.3. Tests were read to the student by the test administrator (with the exception of the reading session).
- E.4. An interpreter (for the hearing-impaired) gave test directions.
- E.5. An administrator gave test directions with verification that the student understood them.
- E.6. Tests were translated into native language for LEP student, if the student is participating in a native language instruction program. (Translation is to be done by local personnel.)
- E.7. Tests were read in “Sheltered English” content for LEP student in a manner that does not compromise test integrity.

Alternate Assessment Needs (must be reported in the Accommodations/Alternate Assessment section on the front page of the Student Test Booklet)

The student was excluded from

- F.1. the reading session.
- F.2. the mathematics session.
- F.3. the writing session.
- F.4. the science and technology section
- F.5. the social studies section.
- F.6. the visual and performing arts section
- F.7. the health and physical education section.

NOTE: *Oral dictation of a writing sample is **NOT** an approved accommodation.*

Other Accommodations must be approved by the Department of Education in advance.

All students being considered for accommodations on the MEA must have their individual cases 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 accommodations prior to the time of the assessment.

For a student who has an identified disability and an Individual Educational Plan (IEP), schools are required to address needed accommodations at a Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) meeting. Membership for this meeting is prescribed in the special education regulations. Students who may be considered for accommodations include, but are not limited to, those who are ill or incapacitated in some way, who are limited English proficient (LEP), who have an identified disability, or are unable to work independently in any of the subjects assessed. Recommended accommodations should be consistent with accommodations already being employed in the student's instructional program. Any accommodations recommended for a student will be reflected in a statement in the cumulative folder of the student (in the IEP for a student with an identified disability).

3. *Does the state provide assessments in languages other than English? If so, describe. In what grades and subjects?*

If possible, an assessment of an LEP student's proficiency in his/her first language is advised by the state to give his/her Language Assessment Committee (LAC) more enhanced data about the child's learning, comprehension, and retention of information. The Language

Assessment Committee (LAC) is a group of school staff and parents of students that meets to discuss and develop an appropriate and effective structured language support program for limited English proficient children. It is recommended that the LAC meet on a regular basis, such as quarterly, to review the student's progress, the effectiveness of the program, and to re-direct certain instructional activities if necessary.

Two resources would be necessary for a formal first language assessment to take place:

- A first language assessment tool; and,
- A test administrator who is fluent in the child's first language and understands the child's culture.

If a native language assessment tool is available, the school department may seek out a person who could administer it. If only a test administrator is available, that person could give an informal, translated assessment to obtain an initial perspective of the child's first language.

4. *Does the state provide alternative assessments for students with disabilities? If so, describe. For which students and in which subjects and at what ages?*

The alternate assessment initiative currently underway will develop alternatives to the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) for those students unable to participate in either part or all of the assessment. The Federal legislation mandating alternate assessment has an implementation date prior to the requirement for full Learning Results implementation. Therefore, the monitoring expectations for development and use of alternate assessments will change incrementally over the next three years as local assessment systems for all students develop. Alternate assessments must be a part of the local system, although only a few students will access it. For the 2000-2001 school year, each student with an identified disability who does not participate in part or all of the MEA must participate in an alternate assessment that informs teaching and learning in the content area(s) not completed on the MEA. The great majority of students who are eligible for alternate assessment will be students who have Individual Education Plans (IEP), and the Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) will make the decision regarding appropriate assessment methods. These decisions should be reflected in PET meeting minutes and in the student's IEP. There may be a few other students statewide who need assessment accommodations that will not provide valid MEA scores. These students may be eligible for alternate assessments.

5. *Does the state have a goal for the inclusion of students with disabilities and/or LEP students on the statewide tests? Does the state use any strategies to encourage the inclusion of students with disabilities? LEP students?*

Learning Results legislation clearly articulates that all students will be included in state assessments at the fourth grade, eighth grade, and secondary levels. The state has worked through multiple versions of their list of accommodations so as to be able to include as many students as possible in the state assessment. The use and further development of alternative assessments have and will continue to help include more students.

6. *Are changes planned for the inclusion of SWD and LEP students in the state assessment system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

The procedures for inclusion and accommodations of students are being updated to reflect changes in state and federal law. The intent is to provide all students a fair opportunity to show their progress toward meeting the high standards represented by the Learning Results.

Performance Standards

1. *How many and what performance levels has the state established for its assessments?*

The performance levels for the MEA in all subjects are the following:

- Exceeds the Standards (561 – 580)
- Meets the Standards (541 – 560)
- Partially Meets the Standards (521 – 540)
- Does Not Meet the Standards (501 – 520)

in that section of the assessment system. Using a scaled score from 501-580, students and schools are assigned their level of achievement on the tests by the state.

2. *Has the state set acceptable levels or targets for schools, districts or the state on tests, drop-out rates or other measures (e.g. 70% of students in Maryland pass the MSPAP)?*

No specific year-to-year or long range expectations or projections have been set for all schools in the state, although it is expected that schools and districts should consistently work to move more students toward “meets the standards.”

3. *How are these performance standards calculated? What data are included in the calculations, and at what proportions (e.g. assessment results 60%, dropout and attendance rates 40%). How are the calculations made? What is the final unit of analysis for reporting school and district achievement levels (e.g. performance index, grade, category)?*

Schools across Maine have received student and school reports from the first Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) that is redesigned to measure the state’s new Learning Results standards. The tests taken by all 4th, 8th, and 11th grade students in the 1998-99 school year establish the **baseline** for measuring progress as schools begin to implement the new higher standards adopted by the Maine Legislature in 1996, scheduled to be implemented by 2002-03. State-level summary results were released in November.

4. *Are all students, schools and districts included in these performance calculations? If not, who is excluded?*

All students will be included in the school's accountability system. Scores of all students who take the MEA will be included in the school's aggregate scores, except those who miss one or more sections of the test battery.

5. *Are changes planned for the state performance standards (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the state reporting or accountability systems (Title I or in general)?*

No changes are planned at this time.

6. *What proportion of schools and/or districts fail to meet acceptable levels on performance targets?*

Schools are not rated in the state as having met a target of student proficiency, and so no count or record has been made in this area.

Reporting Performance Data

1. *Describe the characteristics of the state performance data reporting system (by whom, what data, who is the audience) for each of the following levels:*

- *Student and School reports*

The MEA tests produced **individual student reports and school reports** in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science & Technology, and Social Studies. In addition, the school reports include Health Education and Visual and Performing Arts results that are sampled only at a school level. The new student reports provide parents more information than earlier MEA reports and, for the first time the test provides student scores in Social Studies and Science & Technology. Each school report contains a seventeen page analysis that displays results in the four performance categories tied to the Learning Results standards: Exceeds the Standards, Meets the Standards, Partially Meets the Standards, and Does Not Meet the Standards. Sections of the report include:

- a student performance profile or parents/guardians
- a summary of test results for students permanent records, and
- the class report of released items, which lists individual results for each student in a class or school.

While the report on student performance in reading will be distributed with the report on other subjects, the writing assessment report is released separately each year.

- *District reports*

School and district reports provide a summary of results and a profile of student performance for each of the Learning Results content areas tested. Data will be presented as performance level results including a standard for acceptable performance of Learning Results. Data will also be presented to show the progress of sub-groups of students in achieving Learning Results.

- *State reports*

Summary scores, which align with the Learning Results content standards, will be released to the media. The Maine Department of Education Internet home page will continue to provide summary scores. In addition, the Internet will be used to provide background information on the MEA, including released test questions, scoring guides and samples of student responses.

2. *How are the data distributed? When during the year (month or time period after assessment)? To whom (students, teachers, parents, the media, the community)?*

MEA results will be available in May or June of 2000; in the past they were not available until January of the year following the assessments. Test questions and student responses to those questions that are common in subject areas producing individual student results will be released to the schools. Common test questions will be publicly released through the World Wide Web. A Guide to the MEA, demonstrating student work that meets or exceeds Learning Results standards will be published.

Reports to individuals will provide a summary score for each content area and will provide a profile of the student's performance in relation to the Learning Results content standards. Scores will be expressed in performance levels using a scale to show the position within each level.

3. *At what level(s) are data disaggregated (state, district and school levels)? For what groups are disaggregated data reported (see Internet sites for state, district and school level report cards)?*

Maine disaggregates data by all six of the categories required under federal legislation. However, the state reports at the schools level disaggregated data in only four of the six categories, specifically:

- Gender
- LEP status
- Migrant status, and
- Student with Disabilities.

The state does not report assessment data by ethnicity or socio-economic status. The state had in the past reported by levels of poverty, but sensed that the public was interested in results regardless of student background. Ethnicity has not been a significant factor in the state due to its widely homogeneous population, and so that data is only collected and made available for analysis, but not reported.

5. *Does trend data exist from the state assessments (example: Texas State Assessment data is available from "1996-97 on")?*

MEA data on the state web site is available from the 1995-96 school year to the present.

6. *How are the results of students with disabilities and limited English proficiency reported? Are they included in the aggregate scores reported to the public, or disaggregated by group?*

All students will be included in the school's reporting system. Scores of all students who take the MEA will be included in the school's aggregate scores, except those who miss one or more sections of the test battery. More detailed information on these procedures will be available in a technical assistance manual, which is under development.

7. *What are the state's requirements for the use of data in school and district improvement planning?*

School districts are required to file school improvement plans with the state, regardless of their students' achievement levels on the state assessment. These plans must include data and report on what strategies will be implemented to address the weaknesses in student assessment results as identified by the data.

8. *Are changes planned for performance reporting (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline? Are there implications for the accountability system (Title I or in general)?*

No changes were reported.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of performance standards and reporting? Explain.*

No issues were addressed.

State Accountability System (1999-2000 school year)

1. *Provide a brief overview and history of the accountability system as the context.*

The state does not have a system of accountability beyond that of public reporting, although each school is required to create a school improvement plan to be submitted to the state.

2. *What are the characteristics of the state accountability system? Organize the response into the following subsections:*
 - *Student Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*
 - *School Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*
 - *District Accountability/Rewards and Sanctions*

The state does not have a system of holding students, schools or districts accountable for student performance outside of the reporting system described previously. The consequences for strong or poor student performance on the state assessment include only disclosure to the public.

3. *What methods of measuring progress are used in the state accountability system?*

No targets have been set for schools or districts by the state.

4. *Are all students included in calculating the measures of progress? If not, who is excluded (probe on inclusion of SWD and LEP students)?*

All participating students are included in student performance reporting at the school, district and state levels.

5. *How do the general state accountability system and the system of accountability for Title I schools compare? Are they the same, or different? How?*

The state as a whole does not have an accountability system beyond the reporting structure, whereas Title I schools must meet adequate yearly progress or be identified for school improvement, so the systems are not aligned.

6. *Are subgroup performance results used as an indicator in the calculation of state accountability measures? If so, how? To identify schools or districts in need of improvement? For recognition and rewards?*

Although subgroup data is collected and in some cases reported, it is not a general indicator of school or district performance as there is not a statewide system of accountability.

Under Title I, however, data used to determine AYP will be taken from either the MEA or local assessments and based on the results from the following groups (*see Title I section*):

- 1) the *entire student population* that completed the tests, or
- 2) *subgroups* selected by the school from the following options:
 - student receiving free or reduced priced lunch
 - special education students
 - LEP students
 - migrant students, and
 - racial/ethnic minorities.

7. *Are charter and/or non-public schools included in the accountability system? If so, how?*

Not applicable, the state does not have a formal system of sanctions and rewards.

8. *Are changes planned for the state accountability system (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state is considering identifying low-performing schools for assistance, but this is only in the stage of discussion and no structure or proposal has been presented.

9. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of accountability? Explain.*

Not applicable, the state does not have a formal system of sanctions and rewards.

Identifying and Assisting Low Performing Schools and Districts

1. *How are schools and districts identified as low performing? Using what criteria? Do the identification processes and/or criteria differ for Title I and non-Title I schools?*

Not applicable; the state does not identify schools or districts as low performing outside of the system of reporting MEA results to the public.

2. *Does the district or the state decide whether a school is low performing? If the district is involved in the process, how much discretion do they have?*

Not applicable; the state does not identify schools or districts as low performing outside of the system of reporting MEA results to the public.

3. *What types of assistance are provided to these schools and districts by the state?*

Although not specifically meant to address low performing schools, the Data Strategies Network is a capacity building model sponsored by the SDE. The Network provides professional development for schools on how to work with data and create improvement plans that will result in real change and higher student achievement. Workshops are provided by the state and school staffs come to training sessions. The state opens these sessions to all schools and districts, but those Title I schools that are low performing are strongly encouraged to become involved.

To become involved in this Network, each school must have a trained facilitator to work with a school improvement team, and the team must have approval and authority granted to it by the district. The team will bring data to the conference and state officials and consultants will offer technical assistance and training on how to provide professional development and data analysis. The schools will then work on the problems they have identified and craft a school improvement plan for the state officials to review.

4. *Who provides the state assistance?*

These services are primarily provided by state officials, but the state department office struggles with issues of capacity.

5. *Does support to Title I and all low performing schools and districts differ? Is support generally provided for all schools and districts, or are services specifically designed to help those that are low performing?*

The Data Strategies Network is open to both Title I and non-Title I schools.

6. *Has the state established a set of criteria and/or a process for getting schools and districts out of low performing status? If so, what do they include?*

Not applicable; the state does not identify schools or districts as low performing outside of the system of reporting MEA results to the public.

7. *Once a school or district is identified as low performing, what types of plans must it prepare? Who are they submitted to once completed? How do they differ from other planning documents?*

Not applicable; the state does not identify schools or districts as low performing outside of the system of reporting MEA results to the public.

8. *Are changes planned for the state system of identifying and assisting low performing schools or districts (proposed or enacted and to be implemented)? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

Not applicable; the state does not identify schools or districts as low performing outside of the system of reporting MEA results to the public.

Title I and Adequate Yearly Progress

1. *What criteria are included in the definition of adequate yearly progress for schools and districts under Title I?*

The results of the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA) in math, reading and writing in grades 4, 8, and 11 are used as the basis for determining adequate yearly progress, as well as commonly used local assessments at the elementary level only. The data used to determine AYP will be taken from either the MEA or local assessments and based on the results from the following groups:

- 3) the *entire student population* that completed the tests, or
- 4) *subgroups* selected by the school from the following options:
 - student receiving free or reduced priced lunch
 - special education students
 - LEP students
 - migrant students, and
 - racial/ethnic minorities.

If the local assessment option is used, results will be based on assessments of commonly used kindergarten through 4th grade literacy tools and programs (i.e. Basal readers). The state has created performance levels for these local assessments that are equivalent to those four levels used to measure student performance on the MEA.

The federal government has not yet approved this system, although the state has planned this as the final definition and criteria.

2. *What are the definitions of adequate yearly progress for the following:*

There are **three** adequate yearly progress measures; two measures are based on the LEA's and/or school's MEA scores, and the third is based upon local assessment measures. To make adequate yearly progress, for both targeted and schoolwide programs, a school must move a targeted percentage of students from the lower two performance levels (partially meets the standards (Levels 3) and does not meet the standards (Level 4)) to "meets the standards" (Level 2).

Measure 1: Improving the MEA performance of students most at-risk of failure

The goal for this measure is for all students to meet the MEA standard in English/Language Arts and Math within two years.

Choice A: To determine the level of improvement using the **MEA**, the following formula must be calculated:

$$\frac{\% \text{ Level 3 students} + \% \text{ Level 4 students}}{10} = \text{Target for AYP in math, reading and writing}$$

The sum of the percentages is divided by 10 because the state has decided that getting all students to meet the standards will be a ten year process. The result is the target for improvement each year for ten years.

Choice B: Schools may also decide to target only the Level 4 students instead of combining the results of both Level 3 and Level 4 students to determine the target. With this option, the percent of students in the lowest performance level is divided by 10 and the result is the annual target for improvement for a period of 10 years.

Measure 2: Equity

The goal for this measure is that all students who have traditionally received unequal treatment in the public education system meet Learning Results Performance Levels.

Choice A: For large schools

Students such as those eligible for free or reduced lunch, migrant students, LEP students, students with disabilities and racial and ethnic minority students are included when identifying those students who have "traditionally received unequal treatment." To calculate Choice A, districts and schools disaggregate the performance of special population groups listed by the percentage of students scoring at each performance level in each content area. The percent of students scoring at the lowest two performance levels in each group are added together and divided by ten. This percentage is the percent of students that must move from Level 4 or 3 to Level 2 every year for ten years.

Choice B: For small schools (30 or fewer students)

Once the performance of each of the special populations listed above has been disaggregated, very small schools may select the largest group with ten or more students and calculate a performance target for that group, or add all of the special population students together and divide by ten to monitor improvement.

Measure 3: Improving the reading of Title I students using local assessments

If local assessments are used, adequate yearly progress may be met if 80% of Kindergarten through third grade students meet or exceed the state's end-of-year reading performance standards within 1 through 5 years. The measure uses calibrated measures of text-reading levels K-4 for the most commonly used assessments in Maine.

At the **district** level, if $\geq 50\%$ of the schools in a district fail to make adequate yearly progress, then the district also has not made adequate yearly progress.

3. *What is the process for identifying those schools and districts that are not making adequate yearly progress under Title I? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools? If the districts play a role, does the state provide guidance on local criteria?*

The state has identified the schools and districts that have not made adequate yearly progress or have been identified as a school in need of improvement; the district has not played a role in this process.

4. *What are the criteria and processes for identifying schools and districts in need of improvement under Title I? What plans must be prepared? How can a school or district get out of Program Improvement? Does the district or the state make this determination for schools?*

The state has a "two years in, two years out" model in which a school or district not making AYP for two consecutive years is in need of improvement and once identified a school or district will no longer be identified if they make adequate yearly progress for two consecutive years. Once identified as in need of improvement, an improvement plan must be created to address student needs and select strategies to improve student achievement. Such plans must specifically address how professional development funds and activities will be used to help teachers improve teaching and learning.

5. *What types of assistance are provided to those in need of improvement under Title I?*

Priority schools, defined by the state as those in greatest need of assistance, as well as all needs improvement schools must dedicate an amount equal to ten percent of their Title I allocation to staff development over a period of two years under the proposal being reviewed by the USDOE. This money does not have to come solely from Title I funds; other Title and/or local dollars may be used to meet this requirement. Priority schools will also receive additional technical assistance from the IASA Clearinghouse.

As stated in the previous section, the Data Strategies Network is a capacity building model sponsored by the SDE. The Network provides professional development for schools on how to work with data and create improvement plans that will result in real change and higher student achievement. Workshops are provided by the state and school staff come to training sessions. The state opens these sessions to all schools and districts, but those Title I schools that are low performing are strongly encouraged to become involved.

To become involved in this Network, each school must have a trained facilitator to work with a school improvement team, and the team must have approval and authority granted to it by the district. The team will bring data to the conference and state officials and consultants will offer technical assistance and training on how to provide professional development and data analysis. The schools will then work on the problems they have identified and craft a school improvement plan for the state officials to review.

6. *Who provides the assistance?*

These services are primarily provided by state officials, specifically the IASA Clearinghouse, but the state department office struggles with issues of capacity.

7. *Have waivers played a role in this process?*

Waivers have not played a role in this process of developing guidelines for adequate yearly progress.

8. *Are there future plans for the state system for schools or districts receiving Title I funding (proposed or enacted and to be implemented) or for the definition of adequate yearly progress? If so, what do these plans include? Why are these changes being made and what is the timeline?*

The state is in the final stages of the planning and implementation of this process for determining AYP and program improvement, and so the future will involve complete approval and implementation of the plan being reviewed by the USDOE. The Title I staff are also waiting to see if and how the state as a whole will address rewards and sanctions for low performing schools in the state.

9. *Is there alignment between Title I and non-Title I systems for adequate yearly progress?*

The state does not have a general accountability system outside of Title I, and so there is no alignment.

10. *What have been the major issues and challenges in the area of Title I? Explain.*

The primary issue addressed was lack of capacity at the state department level to provide support and assistance to schools.

Contact Information

Assessment and Accountability

Dr. Horace (Brud) Maxcy
Maine Department of Education
State House Station #23
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 287-5996
brud.maxcy@state.me.us

Title I

Susan Wishkoski
Maine Department of Education
State House Station #23
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 287-5306
susan.wishkoski@state.me.us