

NWEA AND MAP FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is NWEA?

NWEA stands for Northwest Evaluation Association. NWEA is a non-profit organization that has assessed over 4.5 million students. NWEA has a presence in 49 foreign countries, 50 states, and 3400 districts, including 410 schools/districts in Minnesota.

What is MAP?

MAP stands for Measures of Academic Progress. MAP is an online assessment that is aligned to Minnesota standards and benchmarks and Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment testing standards.

What is different about MAP?

These computerized tests are adaptive and offered in Reading, Language Usage, and Mathematics. When taking a MAP test, the difficulty of each question is based on how well a student answers all of the previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. In an optimal test, a student answers approximately half the items correctly and half incorrectly. The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level.

Why MAP?

Results from MAP tests are typically available to teachers, schools, and districts with 48 hours of when the student completes the test. Whereas, results of State assessments are typically not available for a minimum of three months. MAP allows schools to assess students for growth during the school year and between school years. MAP data allows schools to differentiate and adjust instruction for individuals, students, groups of students, or entire classes based on results of the assessment. The results can be used by students, parents, teachers, grade levels, subject areas, schools, and the school district for a variety of purposes.

How long does it take to complete a test?

Although the tests are not timed, it usually takes students about one hour to complete each MAP test. MAP for Primary Grades (grade one in Morris) tests take from 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

How often will my child be tested?

Students in grades 1-8 just finished being tested for the first time this year. The district is planning to test all students again in January and then again in May. Students take no more than three tests during each testing period – one in mathematics, reading, and language usage.

What are MAP tests used for?

MAP assessments are used to measure each student's progress or growth in school. Parents may have a chart in their home that marks their child's height at certain times, such as on his or her birthday. This is a growth chart. It shows how much he or she has grown from one year to the next. MAP assessments do the same sort of thing, except they measure each child's growth in mathematics, reading, and language usage. The scale used to measure each child's progress is called a RIT scale (Rasch unIT), which is an equal-interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart each child's academic growth from year to year.

How will the school use the test scores?

MAP tests are important to teachers because they keep track of progress and growth in basic skills. The test scores let teachers know where a student's strengths are OR if help might be needed in any specific areas. Teachers use this information to help guide individual and group instruction in the classroom. Grade levels, subject areas, schools, and the district will use results to continue to improve teaching and learning and helping each student grow as much as they can.

Commonly Used Terms

- *District Average: the average RIT score for all students in the school district in the same grade who were tested at the same time as your child.*
- *Norm Group Average: the average score of students who were in the same grade and tested in the same term as observed in the latest NWEA norming study.*
- *Percentile Range: percentiles are used to compare one student's performance to that of the norm group. Percentile means the student score as well as, or better than, that percent of students taking the test in his/her grade.*
- *Percentile Rank: this number indicates the percentage of students in the NWEA norm group for this grade that this student's score equaled or exceeded. The percentile rank is a normative statistic that indicates how well a student performance in comparison to the student in the norm group. A student percentile rank indicates that the student scored as well as, or better than, the percent of student in the norm group. In other words, a student with a percentile rank of 72 scored as well as, or better than, 72 percent of the students in the norm group.*
- *RIT: tests developed by NWEA use a scale called a TIE to measure student achievement and growth. RIT stands for Rasch unIT, which is a measurement scale developed to simplify the interpretation of test scores. The RIT score relates directly to the curriculum scale in each subject area. It is an equal-interval scale, like feet and inches, so scores can be added together to calculate accurate class or school averages.*

For more information about NWEA, visit www.nwea.org.

For more information about how the Morris Area School District will utilize NWEA's MAP results, please contact any school administrator.