

NWEA Parent Informational Guide

What does NWEA™ stand for?

NWEA™ is a global not-for-profit educational services organization with over 30 years' experience developing adaptive assessments, professional development, and educational research. Using the mission of *Partnering to help all kids learn*™ as a guide, NWEA™ advocates for a kid-centric education policy based on highly accurate, reliable data.

What is the assessment that my student takes?

Measures of Academic Progress®, or what we call the MAP® tests, are adaptive computerized tests. They are 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 a student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. In an optimal test, a student answers approximately half of the items correctly and half incorrectly. The final score is an estimate of the student's achievement level.

How long does it take to complete a test?

On average, it usually takes students about one hour to complete each MAP® test. Through the winter testing of 2015, students were given unlimited time to take these tests. For the spring of 2015 and in future testing opportunities, students will be encouraged to move forward with their testing to complete it within one to one and a half hours. Accommodations will be made for students with IEPs who require extended time.

When will my child be tested and how often?

Quakertown Community School District administers the tests three times each year – once in the fall (September), once in the winter (December/January/February), and once in the spring (April/May/June). Currently, all students in Grades 5-9 are tested in RELA, and all students in Grades 5-8 are tested in math. Middle school students who are taking Algebra 1 only took baseline testing in the fall, unless it was determined that additional data was required for certain students.

Do all students in the same grade take the same test?

No. MAP® assessments are designed to target a student's academic performance in mathematics, reading, and language usage. These tests are tailored to an individual's current achievement level. This gives each student a fair opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do. The computer adjusts the difficulty of the questions so that each student takes a unique test.

What are NWEA assessments used for?

MAP® assessments are used to measure your child's progress or growth in school. You may have a chart in your home on which you mark your child's height at certain times, such as on birthdays. This is a growth chart; it shows how much your child has grown from one year to the next. MAP® assessments do the same sort of thing, except they measure your child's growth in mathematics, reading, and language usage. The scale used to measure your child's progress is called the RIT scale (Rasch unit). The RIT scale is an equal-interval scale much like feet and inches on a yardstick. It is used to chart your child's academic growth from year to year. The data from these assessments also serve as one of many measures used to determine acceleration decisions in RELA and Math.

How do teachers use the test scores?

MAP® tests are important to teachers because they keep track of progress and growth in basic skills. They let teachers know where a student's strengths are and if help is needed in any specific areas. Teachers use this information to help them guide instruction in the classroom.

The individual student data from the assessments is used internally by teachers and administrators to ensure that students' instruction is personalized to meet their needs. The data is only used for instructional purposes and is not publicized.

Commonly Used Terms

Here are some terms you will hear and use as you are talking with teachers and your child(ren) about MAP scores and reports.

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.

Lexile Measures: Lexile measures help a reader find books and articles at an appropriate level of difficulty and determine how well that reader will likely comprehend a text. Lexile measures can also be used to monitor a reader's growth in reading ability over time. (Source: <https://lexile.com/about-lexile/lexile-overview/>)

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 scored as well as, or better than, that percent of students taking the test in his/her grade. There is about a 68 percent chance that a student's percentile ranking would fall within this range if the student tested again relatively soon.

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 performed in comparison to the students in the norm group. A student's percentile rank indicates that the student scored as well as, or better than, the percent of students 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 RIT 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. RIT scores range from about 100 to 300. Students typically start at the 180 to 200 level in elementary school and progress to the 220 to 260 level by high school. RIT scores make it possible to follow a student's educational growth from year to year.

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