



## NECAP Online Writing Pilot: Checklist for Selecting Participating Schools

The New England Common Assessment Program is pleased to offer schools an opportunity to participate in the online delivery of the NECAP Grades 8 and 11 Writing Assessment. This initiative includes a pilot assessment in the spring of 2011 and, for schools that successfully complete the pilot, an operational assessment in the fall of 2011. Rather than testing the writing ability of your students, the goal of the pilot assessment is to confirm a school's capability to deliver an online assessment both in terms of technological infrastructure and administrative capacity. Therefore, no scores from student work in this pilot assessment will be returned.

This document includes a checklist of technological requirements and administrative capabilities that best ensure successful computer-based testing. Please use this checklist to evaluate your school's interest and ability to participate in the pilot assessment.

✓	Checklist Item for Schools	Notes
	We have a single point of contact that can manage correspondence with NECAP and Measured Progress representatives.	A single school representative for correspondence allows schools to keep track of all matters regarding this initiative.
	We will have a technology coordinator present in our school on days when computer-based tests are delivered.	Having a technology coordinator present during the assessment will help a great deal with diagnosing system performance issues at the schools.
	Our technology coordinator or other school representative will participate in "train-the-trainer" events to prepare for computer-based test administration, and that representative will train all staff on the technological aspects of administration for our school.	The "train-the-trainer" events (video conferences) will take place in December and January. Technology and testing coordinators will learn together for much of the training; some training sessions will separate the two groups for more detailed sessions. Topics will include working with data administration (e.g. placing students in online test sessions), managing the test administration interface during a test, reviewing the student test interface, and troubleshooting technical issues during test sessions.
	Our testing coordinator or other school representative will participate in "train-the-trainer" events to prepare for computer-based test administration, and that representative will train all staff on the test administration aspects of administration for our school.	
	We have a number of Technical-Requirement-compliant computers that is equal to or greater than half of the number of students that are eligible for the online writing assessment.	Please refer to the Technical Requirements on the last page of this document.  This quantity of computers allows schools to deliver a test in two contiguous periods on the designated testing day.
	We will have a minimum average of seven students per room in which the computer-based test is delivered.	There is value in regulating the number of rooms for a variety of security and administrative reasons. Accommodations or students with special needs may reduce the average number of students per room at a school, and this can certainly be taken under consideration. However, test coordinators will benefit from limiting the number of test administrators that they would need to assign to administrate tests.

We at NECAP and Measured Progress are excited about the opportunity to provide online assessment. We look forward to collaborating with all participating schools to deliver successful pilot tests in the spring, refine the program based on our collective wisdom, and provide the best possible experience for the operational tests in the fall.



## Best Practices for Computer-Based Testing

As schools are selected for the pilot test and administration draws near, a more detailed and comprehensive list of Best Practices will be distributed. The following is a high-level summary of key technological and administrative guidelines that will allow administrators and technology coordinators to anticipate future actions and policy implementation within their schools.

1. **Reduce traffic on school networks during test sessions.** Any non-assessment high-bandwidth network usage, such as streaming audio/video or online gaming, should be restricted.
2. **Coordinate the testing software with your anti-virus solution.** Some school networks use a centralized anti-virus solution that automatically scans applications. Avoiding these automatic scans of testing software will maximize performance.
3. **Close other applications before opening the testing software.** Closing applications that automatically open with operating systems, such as instant messaging, will provide additional bandwidth for your assessments.
4. **Allow pop-ups on machines that test administrators use.** The software for proctors makes use of pop-up windows. Pop-up blockers should be disabled for administrator machines.
5. **Hard-wire your administrator computers to your networks.** Even if all students are testing wirelessly, a hard-wired connection for the administrator machine will maximize performance.
6. **Adjust student machines with wireless connections in order to avoid hibernation.** Hibernating computers with wireless connections could lead to disconnections from test sessions. Setting wireless computers to avoid hibernation is especially important for a writing assessment because students may have longer periods of inactivity than they would for a set of multiple-choice items.
7. **Assign multiple coordinators or “hall administrators.”** Network issues in one room will normally be concurrent with issues in most or all rooms. Having multiple personnel that have been trained for troubleshooting technological issues and who are not assigned to a specific room, especially during this initial administration, can help tremendously.
8. **Consider the writing process when working with computers.** This final best practice is more about pedagogy than technology. Students learn that writing is a process that includes pre-writing and effective self-editing strategies. In advance of the assessment, teachers should work with their students to identify their own best practices given the technology and time limits that are involved.



## 2011 NECAP Online Testing: Technical Requirements for School-based Technology

Local Network		
<b>Network Connection Specifications</b>	If <b>wired</b> to network (required for each test administrator's computer): Minimum - 100 megabits/second (Mbps) Fast Ethernet TCP/IP If <b>wireless</b> : Minimum - 802.11b; Recommended - 802.11g/n	
<b>Internet Bandwidth</b>	Minimum - 1 Megabyte/second (MBps) with at least 8 Kbps per concurrent user	
<b>Firewall / Proxy</b>	Set to allow connections to *.measuredprogress.org	
<b>Ports</b>	Set to allow connections to ports 80 and 443	
<b>Email</b>	Allow emails from @measuredprogress.org, as the system sends account information via email to new users on behalf of the person creating/updating the account.	
Students' Computers - One for each student testing concurrently		
	Windows®	Macintosh®
<b>Operating System</b>	Windows XP® SP3 or Windows Vista® SP2 Windows 7® Home Premium or greater	OS X® 10.4.11, 10.5.8 or 10.6.4+ <b>Please note:</b> 10.6 Snow Leopard requires that optional component Rosetta® is installed from the OS 10.6 installation disk for Intel-based computers.
<b>RAM</b>	Windows XP SP3: 512 MB or greater, or Windows Vista SP2: 1 GB or greater Windows 7: 1 GB or greater for 32-bit, 2 GB or greater for 64-bit.	10.4 Tiger or 10.5 :Leopard: 512 MB or greater 10.6 Snow Leopard: 1 GB or greater
<b>Processor</b>	Pentium III 1.33 GHz or greater	G4 867 MHz or greater
<b>Flash® Player</b>	Version 10	
<b>Keyboard/Mouse</b>	Standard	
<b>Monitor</b>	32-bit color or greater; 1024 x 768 resolution or greater	
<b>Fonts</b>	Times New Roman, Helvetica, and Verdana	
Principal's and Test Administrators' Computers		
	Windows®	Macintosh®
<b>Operating System</b>	Windows XP® SP3 or Windows Vista® SP2 Windows 7® Home Premium or greater	OS X® 10.4.11, 10.5.8 or 10.6.x
<b>RAM</b>	Windows XP SP3: 512 MB or greater, or Windows Vista SP2: 1 GB or greater Windows 7: 1 GB or greater for 32-bit, 2 GB or greater for 64-bit.	10.4 Tiger or 10.5 :Leopard: 512 MB or greater 10.6 Snow Leopard: 1 GB or greater
<b>Processor</b>	Pentium III 1.33 GHz or greater	G4 867 MHz or greater
<b>Internet Browser</b>	Internet Explorer® 7.x or 8.x Firefox® 3.6	Safari® 3.2.3, Safari 4 Firefox® 3.6
<b>Pop-Up Blocking Software</b>	Must be configured to allow pop-ups from *.measuredprogress.org	
<b>Keyboard/Mouse</b>	Standard	
<b>Monitor</b>	32-bit color or greater; 1024 x 768 resolution or greater	