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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
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Study Highlights Local Approach to MEA Assessment

ORONO, Maine -- A study from the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine provides a framework for conducting local evaluations involving the Maine Educational Assessment. While maintaining the value of the statewide MEA, the authors support the importance of local assessment and encourage educators to use it as a tool for examining curriculum and other local factors. The MEA is designed to align with the Maine Learning Results and measure schools' progress toward meeting the new learning standards

The study provides direction and encouragement for educators who have wondered about relationships among assessment data, but, for lack of background or confidence, have not pursued their interests, according to Walter Harris, director of the Center at the UMaine College of Education and Human Development.

“Local Evaluation and the Maine Educational Assessment” was written by Theodore Coladarci, UMaine professor of education; Robert Ervin, superintendent of Bangor schools; and David Silvernail, director for the Center for Educational Policy, Applied Research and Evaluation at the University of Southern Maine.

The research paper is organized around questions that can be answered through local evaluation. For example, “Are MEA scores related to course-taking patterns?” For many of these questions, analyses and results are provided from the recent collaboration of Coladarci and Ervin using data from the Bangor School Department. The authors emphasize that local expertise in statistical procedures is not required to conduct such analyses. The most important requirement is a curiosity about how MEA scores are related to other student characteristics and the resolve to initiate local evaluations that speak to these relationships.

Copies of the study are available from the UMaine College of Education and Human Development. Contact Kay Hyatt, (207) 581-2761; kay.hyatt@umit.maine.edu

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