This Month in Assessment

OPI Assessment Division News

MontCAS 2018-2019 School Year Changes

Roles and Responsibilities

System Test Coordinators are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the roles and responsibilities described within the 2018-2019 MontCAS Test Security Manual. It is required that school districts have a policy in place for maintaining signed test security agreements for the following roles for a period of at least three school years. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) can request signed TSAs at any time throughout the school year.

- Authorized Representative/Principal Roles and Responsibilities
- Test Administrators Roles & Responsibilities
- System Test Coordinator Roles & Responsibilities

System Test Coordinators are required to complete the online electronic test security agreement found on the MontCAS Application under the “Test Security” tab.

MontCAS Student Data Privacy Policy

Please share this information with your school Building Coordinators so they are aware of what constitutes personally identifiable information (PII) and the implications for not securely sharing PII. PII is an education record which pertains to an individual student and may easily lead to that student’s identity with reasonable certainty. Student education records are protected by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and by state law. FERPA regulations list personally identifiable student information as including, but not limited to, the following:

- the student's name;
- the name of the student's parent or other family member;
- the address of the student or student’s family;
- a personal identifier, such as a social security number or student number;

April 2019 Issue

April 2019 Newsletter: Prepared by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, Elsie Arntzen Superintendent
• a list of personal characteristics that would make the student’s identity easily traceable; or
• other information that would make the student’s identity easily traceable.

1 Sharing PII via unsecured means initiates a testing irregularity. It is a testing irregularity to send student information over a non-secure service such as email and voicemail. Sharing sensitive student information (e.g., student names/SSIDs) via unsecured methods is prohibited. You can use secure routes of transmittal to share PII (e.g., Montana’s secure file transfer process, ePass) and via direct phone discussion with OPI staff. (Do not send any PII via e-mail or fax). Please see the MontCAS Student Data Privacy Policy and OPI Student Records Confidentiality Policy for more information on this topic.

OPI Site Visits and School Observations
In 2018-2019, it is the OPI’s responsibility to observe test administration activities in schools to ensure that the statewide assessments are conducted in a standardized and consistent manner throughout Montana. For 2019 testing activities, the state will contact a few selected schools to pilot the state protocols and checklists for upcoming years. One week prior to the site visit, the System Test Coordinator will receive notice from the OPI of school selection.

Professional Development and Training Opportunities
After June 1st, the OPI Assessment Statewide Web Page will undergo an extensive refresh to reflect new administration manuals, new guidance, updated user guides, user-driven navigation, and content focused on providing a balanced assessment system.

If you have any school-specific training needs, please make this request to the OPI Assessment Team using the Assessment Professional Development/Training Request Form. All requests will be processed and considered by the OPI Assessment Team using key criteria.

Upcoming Webinars

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Link</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, April 17</td>
<td>Recorded video from the Teacher Learning Hub (Hub) providing an overview of MontCAS assessments, data uses, and data systems of the required statewide assessments.</td>
<td>ELP 101: Serving English Learners in Montana’s Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:30 p.m.</td>
<td>MontCAS Updates–Monthly Assessment Webinar</td>
<td>Join here</td>
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</table>

Professional Development and Training Opportunities
Recordings of live webinars can be found on the Assessment Webinars and Training tab of the OPI Statewide Assessments website. Various types of courses can be found on the Teacher Learning Hub. The Hub provides active learning, high-quality content, relevant topics, and offers renewal units for completion of courses.
Student Assessment Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (Committee) Updates
The OPI will present its notice of the proposed amendment with rule language as approved by the Superintendent submitted to the Board of Public Education at the upcoming May meeting. For more information on this process, visit the Student Assessment Negotiated Rulemaking Committee page on the OPI website.

ACCESS for ELLs
English Language Proficiency Assessment

Things to do this month

☐ Watch for score reports to arrive in your district. Districts are scheduled to receive online reports on April 23, 2019, and printed reports on May 6, 2019 (see below for more information).

☐ Continue screening newly enrolled students. See below for more information about screening incoming students. Per federal guidelines, this is a task that is required throughout the school year, not just prior to or during the ACCESS for ELLs testing window.

☐ Watch the Identification of ELs and the new WIDA Screener webinar for a good overview of who to screen and how to complete the WIDA screeners. The video takes less than 15 minutes to watch.

Accessing Score Reports
To access score results from WIDA AMS, select Test Results from the Report Delivery menu to display the Test Results page. You can use the Administration, District, School, and Report drop-down menus to filter the display.

On-Demand Student Reports
Individual Student Reports are available in many languages from Report Delivery>On-Demand Reports. To view On Demand Student Reports, select On Demand Reports from the Report Delivery menu.
Student English Learner Eligibility Criteria

The OPI uses the Every Student Succeeds Act's (ESSA) definition of English Learner, that is, “A student who was not born in the United States or whose native language is not English; who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English language proficiency; or who is migratory, whose native language is not English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English denies the student the ability to meet the challenging state academic standards and the ability to fully participate and successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English.” Schools must follow the English learner identification and placement guidance described in the Identification and Placement Guidance document. Frequently asked questions can be found on the Montana page of the WIDA site. For more information on this topic, see the Participation & Eligibility page on the OPI website and the OCR Requirements for ELs.

WIDA Screener

Federal guidelines require all schools to screen incoming students for English learner status. When a student enrolls at your school, the district has 14 days to administer the state-mandated Home Language Survey (HLS). If a language other than English is indicated on the HLS, or if an educator notices that there may be a language of impact while working with the student, the WIDA Screener is administered to the student. Once the screener has been administered, districts have 30 days to make a determination about whether or not the student is identified as an English learner. There is a short, 15-minute webinar available for an overview of identification of Els and the new WIDA Screener.

ACT with Writing

ELA and Mathematics

Things to do this month for initial testing

☐ Return online and accommodations and/or supports paper testing material to ACT – receipt deadline at ACT is April 23, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.

☐ *Please Note: While preparing for the ACT with Writing, agreeing to ACT testing security requirements also covers OPI requirements for schools to complete statewide testing.

Things to do this month for makeup testing (April 24, 2019)

☐ Return makeup testing materials to ACT - receipt deadline at ACT is May 1, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.

☐ Return makeup accommodations and/or supports paper testing material to ACT – receipt deadline at ACT is May 7, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.

Things to do this month for emergency testing (May 7, 2019)

☐ Order standard time materials for emergency testing on April 24 and April 25, 2019. If you have students who missed testing on April 2 and April 24, you must order makeup materials for them to test on the emergency date (May 7, 2019). See below for more information.

☐ Order ACT-Approved accommodations and/or supports materials for emergency testing on April 26, 2019. Call ACT Accommodations at 800-553-6244 extension 1788 to order these materials.

☐ Return emergency testing materials to ACT - receipt deadline at ACT is May 14, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.

☐ Return emergency accommodations and/or supports paper testing material to ACT – receipt deadline at ACT is May 20, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.
Things to do this month for Online Testing

☐ Return online and accommodations and/or supports paper testing material to ACT – receipt deadline at ACT is April 23, 2019. This means your materials must arrive at ACT by that date. Late arriving answer documents will not be scored.

☐ Purge cached content from all proctor caching computers.

☐ Enter test incidents and non-participation via the MontCAS application. Although ACT does collect this information, STCs are required to also report these incidents in the MontCAS Application.

Ordering makeup and emergency testing materials

Materials must be ordered for makeup and emergency testing during the windows referenced above. DO NOT USE April 2 test date test booklets for makeup and/or emergency testing. New materials must be ordered. Using April 2 test books will result in invalidated scores. Likewise, if using the May 7 emergency date, new materials must be ordered for that test and initial or makeup date test materials cannot be used. Makeup and emergency test materials can be ordered on the PA Next site. Instructions for ordering these materials are on page 15 of the PA Next User Guide.

GEAR UP Grant Funding

Starting this school year, the Montana Office of Commissioner of Higher Ed (OCHE) was awarded the GEAR UP Grant through the U.S. Department of Education. The GEAR UP Grant continues to allow approximately 10,000 Montana Grade 11 students to take the ACT test at no cost to themselves or their family and new this year provide the Grade 10 Pre-ACT at no charge. With this GEAR UP cycle, the OCHE has determined there are no longer resources to fund these ACT test administration reimbursements to schools. For the 2018-2019 school year, school districts will no longer be able to receive funding to assist with costs related to the administration of the test through the OPI eGrants system.

CRT Science and CRT-Science Alternate

Science

Things to do this month

☐ If you have not already done so, System Testing Coordinators (STC) MUST complete the affirmation of test security via the MontCAS Application PRIOR to testing. This task can be completed by logging into the MontCAS Application and selecting the ‘Testing Security Agreement’ from the drop down under the ‘Test Security’ tab on the home page. If you don’t see the Test Security tab, contact the OPI Assessment Division at 844-867-2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

☐ Enter test incidents and non-participation via the MontCAS application. See below for more information.

☐ Schedule pick up and ship all test materials to Measured Progress by April 9, 2019.

Test Incident Reporting in the MontCAS Application

All test incidents must be reported to the principal/authorized representative and the System Test Coordinator based on the reporting timeline specified for the incident’s severity. The System Test Coordinator will submit the incident to the OPI using the MontCAS Application. The OPI will make a determination about the type of testing incidents, that is, (1) improprieties, (2) irregularities, and (3) breaches and provide the System Test Coordinator with instruction on how to resolve the issue. If the System Test Coordinator does not have login credentials for the school system, please contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1.844.867.2569. Once logged into the system, use the Data Entry tab.

Non-Participation Reporting in the MontCAS Application

Non-participation should be reported within a week of the close of the CRT and CRT Alt windows. To report nonparticipation, use the same site and tab as above. The OPI requires all students who are unable to participate in the statewide assessments to be reported in the MontCAS Application for proper identification within our state accountability system and federal reporting. The restricted-use MontCAS reporting application allows for documentation and proper state and federal reporting of instances of non-participation. The OPI can use this reporting mechanism to also provide guidance to support schools with these rare participation decisions contrary to state law but in accordance with federal participation laws. For guidance on the rare instances where 100% participation is not possible, follow the...
MontCAS Application non-participation reporting guidance and the [Statewide Assessment Participation & Registration Guide](#).

**Returning CRT and CRT Alt Science materials**

All test materials must be shipped to Measured Progress no later than April 9, 2019. Prepaid UPS return service labels have been pre-affixed to the return boxes you received in your CRT/CRT Alt materials shipment. For specific instructions on how to collect and pack your test materials after testing, see the Test Coordinator’s Manual. For additional questions regarding the return of materials, contact the Montana Help Desk at 888-792-2741.

### MSAA

**Alternate Assessment, ELA and Math**

#### Things to do this month

- If you have not already done so, System Testing Coordinators (STC) **MUST** complete the affirmation of test security via the MontCAS Application PRIOR to testing. This task can be completed by logging into the [MontCAS Application](#) and selecting the ‘Testing Security Agreement’ (TSA) from the drop-down under the ‘Test Security’ tab on the home page. **If you don’t see the Test Security tab, contact the OPI Assessment Division at 844-867-2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.**

- Ensure **MSAA Test Security Agreements have been read and signed.** In addition to the TSAs referenced above, the MSAA requires a separate signed test security agreement for those responsible for handling testing materials and administering the assessment. STCs for systems with students taking the MSAA must complete the STC **MSAA Test Security Agreement.** Test Administrators (TAs) in these systems must complete the TA **MSAA Test Security Agreement**

- To ensure a smooth testing process this coming spring, confirm that all MSAA eligible students have the electronic IEP checked and locked in AIM. The OPI identifies eligible students in Grades 3-8 and 11 for the MSAA based on the electronic IEP in AIM. If you have questions about the electronic IEP, contact Mary Graff at the OPI at 406-444-0685 or mgraff@mt.gov.

- STCs can add users to the MSAA system after March 1, 2019. The OPI has uploaded STCs to the system. The training modules opened on March 4, 2019.

- Enter test incidents and non-participation via the [MontCAS application](#).

- STCs should check to be sure all Test Administrators (TAs) have completed training prior to beginning testing.

**The Multi State Alternate Assessment test window is open!** The MSAA test window is now open through May 3, 2019.

#### Testing Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Testing Activities</th>
<th>Completed By</th>
<th>Start Date</th>
<th>End Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STCs upload TAs and other District users to the system</td>
<td>STC</td>
<td>03/01/2019</td>
<td>05/03/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Module Live</td>
<td>STC, TA</td>
<td>03/04/2019</td>
<td>05/03/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAs complete pre-test tasks, Demographics, SRC, LCI, Accommodations</td>
<td>TA</td>
<td>03/04/2019</td>
<td>05/03/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAs access Directions for Test Administration (DTAs) to prepare/adapt materials/and familiarize with the script</td>
<td>TA</td>
<td>03/04/2019</td>
<td>05/03/2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results Reports Available: Districts download and print student reports to share with parents</td>
<td>STC</td>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Student Alternate Eligibility Criteria

Students who participate in alternate assessments make up approximately 1% of the total student population. The decision to move a special education student to an alternate assessment has significant implications for the path that a student will take in their K-12 school career. It means the student is not able to participate in the general education curriculum even when provided with accommodations. A student who participates in alternate assessment requires a modified curriculum. The following resources can aid districts in determining eligibility for the MSAA test:
• Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments
• IEP Team Guidance for Alternate Assessment Participation Decisions. This resource, created as part of the development of the MSAA, provides a more in-depth look at determining eligibility for alternate assessments.

Creating user accounts for users in your system
System Test Coordinators will create user accounts for test administrators or coordinators (district level, school level) in their systems. User Accounts can be bulk uploaded or created one at a time. Best practice for the MSAA test is to assign the role of TA to the special education teacher of the student taking the test. Step-by-step directions for creating user accounts can be found in the Test Coordinator User Guide which can be found on the MSAA System home page.

Checking the list of registered students
An important task for STCs and TAs to complete is to check the list of registered students in the MSAA system. If there are errors in the registration or if there are students that are missing, please check to be sure that the IEP is locked and the alternate assessment checkbox is marked in the statewide assessment section of the IEP. Contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569 with any questions. Districts should not enter any students into the system. The OPI will complete this task. Step-by-step instructions for accessing the student list can be found in the Test Coordinator User Guide which can be found on the MSAA System home page.

** View the schedule for OPI student uploads to the MSAA system

Smarter Balanced

ELA and Math

Things to do this month

☐ If you have not already done so, System Testing Coordinators (STC) MUST complete the affirmation of test security via the MontCAS Application PRIOR to testing. This task can be completed by logging into the MontCAS Application and selecting the ‘Testing Security Agreement’ from the drop down under the ‘Test Security’ tab on the home page. If you don’t see the Test Security tab, contact the OPI Assessment Division at 844-867-2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

☐ MacOS users must download and update to the new Secure Browser 10.6.

☐ Add school users to the Test Information and Distribution Engine (TIDE). Users in TIDE were cleared in August. STCs were then uploaded to the system by the OPI and STCs need to add all other users for their districts and schools. STCs can refer to the User Roles and Access Document found on the Resources tab on the AIR portal for assistance in choosing the correct role assignment for local users.

☐ Complete the TA Certification Course. All users in TIDE administering Smarter Balanced assessments are required to take the Test Administrators Certification Course annually. If taking the course as a group, ensure each user is logged into the portal so the system will auto-update course completion for each user.

☐ Ensure your secure browser has been updated. See below for more information on downloading the current browser.

☐ Enter test incidents and non-participation via the MontCAS application.


☑ The Smarter Balanced Assessment test window is open! The Smarter Balanced test window is now open through May 24, 2019.
TIDE Appeals Process for 2018-2019

Test incidents falling into the ‘Impropriety’ category and occurring during the administration of the Smarter Balanced summative assessments must be reported via the [Smarter Balanced TIDE Appeals Request Form](#). Incidents falling into this category are those that occur during testing that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are being tested. These incidents have a low risk of potentially affecting the student performance on the test, test security, or test validity (example: student leaving the testing room without authorization, or a student's test becoming inactive due to an absence or other reason).

Those with the TIDE role of School Coordinator (SC) or District Coordinator (DC) can fill out and submit the TIDE Appeals Form. Once the TIDE Appeals Form has been submitted, the OPI will make a determination and the status of the appeal will be sent to the email indicated in the TIDE Appeals Form. **Note:** The OPI may instruct the appeal submitter to have the STC complete a testing incident if the appeal description warrants it.

Meeting the Needs of All Students

Only students with a flag for IEP, 504, or LEP in the Office of Public Instruction’s (OPI) student information system, Achievement in Montana (AIM)/Infinite Campus will be eligible for accommodations in the [Test Information and Distribution Engine (TIDE)](#) online portal. New this year, Smarter Balanced accommodations are restricted. School Coordinators trying to input accommodations for students without these AIM flags they will receive the following error message stating:

> "Invalid Value. Text-To-Speech (Designated Supports and Accommodations). Passages and Passages and Items for ELA CAT are Accommodation Only. Use must be written into the student’s IEP/504 plan. Cannot be ELA: Passages since IDEA Indicator/IEP is set to No. and section 504 is set to No."

For step-by-step visuals on this page setup, please select the [TIDE Designated Supports and Accommodations Test Setting Illustrative Guide](#).

Prior to making any decisions or determinations about how students will participate in the statewide assessments, educators most familiar with the student’s individual needs should review the OPI accommodation guidelines and use a systematic data-based process informed by the student’s IEP, 504 plan, and/or English Learner plan to select appropriate accommodations. These selections should match those supports and accommodations that are provided for classroom instruction and assessments throughout the school year and should be made at least one week in advance of testing.

Please note that the [MontCAS Application Non-Routine Accommodations Request Process](#) is only intended for accommodations that are not regularly provided. The assessment-specific usability, accessibility, and accommodation guidelines are published on the [OPI Statewide Testing website](#).

**NAEP**

**National and International Assessment Studies**

**Things to do this month**

- ✅ Store Red Envelope

**NAEP Assessment Window Now Closed**

The NAEP window has closed. The results should be available late this fall or early winter. The feedback survey has closed. The OPI will review feedback and make recommendations to the NAEP Support and Service Center for improvements to implement 2021 NAEP assessments of reading, mathematics, and writing. Thank you to those who took time out of their busy schedules to complete the survey. Your feedback is invaluable.

**Red Envelope**

The red envelope should contain all NAEP materials until Wednesday, May 1, 2019. The materials should be securely disposed of by the last day of school.

If you have questions or concerns, contact Shantel Niederstadt at (406) 444-3450 or sniederstadt@mt.gov. You can receive immediate assistance from the NAEP Help Desk at (800) 283-6237 or email naephelp@westat.com on Monday through Friday between 8 am and 5:30 pm ET.
Science News

Science Assessments

The OPI is in the transition phase with its new three-dimensionally aligned science assessment; however, this transition timeline is VERY similar to the transition that occurred in Montana with the Smarter Balanced Assessment. Implementing new statewide assessments takes time and typically for large-scale assessment, the process is about five years from the time of standards adoption to reporting score results. Best practices also recommend states allow two years of exposure to new content before assessing such content for accountability purposes.

Montana Content Standards from Science Adoption to New Science Assessment:

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<tr>
<td>Standards adoption event</td>
<td>Implemented new science standards</td>
<td>MT ESSA State Plan Approved</td>
<td>Last year of CRT-Science</td>
<td>Secure Federal Waiver</td>
<td>First operational year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted new science standards</td>
<td>Contract extended for two years for CRT-Science</td>
<td>Accountability system uses the 5th indicator with 2016-2017 data</td>
<td>Census Fielding Testing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use results for reporting and accountability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Passwords

Many of the MontCAS programs require separate passwords to access test management sites, training materials, and test results. The following is a list of programs that require separate passwords.

- **Access for ELLs 2.0**: Test administrator training, assessment management system, WIDA Access Placement Test (W–APT), result reports.
- **ACT with Writing**: Test administration, reports, and test results.
- **CRT and CRT Alt**: Test results.
- **MSAA (Multi State Alternate Assessment)**: Test administration and training, results, and student reports.
- **MontCAS Online Reporting**: Nonparticipation and testing irregularity reports and requests for accommodations not routinely approved.
- **Smarter Balanced**: Test administration, administration certification, interim tests, and test results.
- **Smarter Balanced Digital Library**: Formative assessment processes.

Online Assessment System Links

**ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and W-APT Screener, English Language Proficiency Screener**
- Training and online resources
- Assessment Management System
- OPI ELP page link

**ACT with Writing**
- Assessment Management: Pearson Access Next
- ACT State and District Testing
- ACT Academy

**MSAA**
- Assessment Management System
- OPI MSAA

**Smarter Balanced**
- Assessment system (AIR portal)
- OPI Smarter Balanced

**My NAEP**
MontCAS Assessment Help Desk Contact Information

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and W–APT English Language Proficiency Screener

- WIDA help desk phone: 866-876-7735
- WIDA help desk email: help@wida.us
- WIDA AMS help desk phone: 855-787-9615
- WIDA AMS help desk email: WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com

ACT with Writing

ACT General Inquiries
- Phone: 800-553-6244, Ext. 2800
- Email: Contact Form

Accommodations Questions
- Phone: 800-553-6244, Ext. 1788
- Email: ACTStateAccoms@act.org

CRT Science and CRT Alt Service Desk

- Phone: 888-792-2741
- Email: montanahelpdesk@measuredprogress.org

Multi State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

- Phone: 866-834-8879
- Email: MSAAServiceCenter@MeasuredProgress.org

Smarter Balanced Service Desk

- Phone: 888-792-2741
- Email: montanahelpdesk@measuredprogress.org

NAEP

- Phone: 800-283-6237
- Email: naephelp@westat.com

Assessment Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Division</th>
<th>Mcary Fortner</th>
<th>Data Control Specialist</th>
<th>Whitney Mitchell</th>
<th>Administrative Specialist</th>
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<table>
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<th>Paula Schultz</th>
<th>Pam Birkeland</th>
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<tr>
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