



This Month in Assessment

ACCESS for ELLs	ACT with Writing	CRT/CRT Alt	MSAA
NAEP	Science News	Smarter Balanced	Professional Development & Training
Contact Us	Help Desk Numbers	Test Portal Links	

2018-2019 Statewide Assessment Calendar	ACCESS for ELLs English Language Proficiency (ELP)	NAEP Math, Reading and Science	CRT-ALT Alternate Science	CRT Science	MSAA Alternate English Language Arts (ELA) and Math	SBAC ELA and Math	ACT with Writing ELA and Math
Dates	Dec. 5–Jan. 30	Jan. 28–Mar. 8	Feb. 19–Mar. 26	Feb. 28–Mar. 26	Mar. 18–May 3	Mar. 20–May 24	Initial: April 2 Make Up: Apr. 24 Emergency: May 7
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1	✓						
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3	✓				✓	✓	
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Professional Development and Training Opportunities

Date	Topic	Link
	Recorded video from the Teacher Learning Hub (Hub) providing an overview of MontCAS assessments, data uses, and data systems of the required statewide assessments.	ELP 101: Serving English Learners in Montana's Schools
Wednesday, Sept. 12 2-3 p.m.	MontCAS Updates	Join here

Professional Development and Training Opportunities:

Recordings of live webinars can be found on the [Assessment Webinars and Training](#) tab of the Office of Public Instruction (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.

MontCAS 2018-2019 School Year Changes

What's new this year? Starting in September on a flow basis, the OPI will refresh the [OPI Statewide Testing Web Site](#), based on the feedback we received from last year's OPI Data and Assessment Conference. A few other improvements to our online applications will also be released to schools on a flow basis.

Student Assessment Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (ARM 10.56.101): The next Student Assessment Negotiated Rulemaking Committee meeting will be Monday, October 1, 2018, in Helena, Montana. For more information on this process, visit the [Student Assessment Negotiated Rulemaking Committee](#) page.

If you have questions about these improvements or the negotiated rulemaking committee, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 844-867-2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

What is the System Testing Coordinator (STC)? This person is assigned by the authorized representative and is responsible for communicating roles and responsibilities to all authorized staff. The STC must ensure school staff in their district have completed the OPI-specified training and are familiar with the standardized testing procedures found in the assessment-specific Test Administration Manuals. STCs are also required to use the centralized, restricted-use online MontCAS Application to confirm compliance with test security, supplying testing dates in the OPI-provided test windows, requesting accommodation appeals, reporting nonparticipation statuses, and reporting testing incidents. In general, STCs have oversight and responsibilities for all administration activities in their district.

ACCESS for ELLs

English Language Proficiency Assessment

Things to do this month

- Update user accounts for the WIDA websites.** See "User Accounts" below for more information.

Testing Calendar

Test Cycle	Testing Specifics	Start Date	End Date
Pretesting	OPI Loads Pre-ID File into AMS	Fri 10/26/18	Fri 10/26/18
	WIDA AMS Test Setup Available for Test Sessions	Fri 11/2/18	Wed 1/30/19
	Districts Receive Test Materials	Tue 11/27/18	Tue 11/27/18
During Testing	Test Window	Wed 12/5/18	Wed 1/30/19
	Additional Test Material Ordering Window in AMS	Tue 11/27/18	Wed 1/23/19
Post Testing	Deadline for Shipping Completed Test Materials to DRC		Tue 2/5/19
	Districts Receive Reports, Printed and Online	TBD	TBD

Getting Started with the new WIDA website

The updated [WIDA website](#) has been launched. The old URL will still work, but the site has a new address. There is still a [Montana page](#) on the WIDA website with important Montana specific documents to help system test coordinators and test administrators to prepare for identification and assessment of English Learners. The [ACCESS for ELLs Checklist](#) is an important document that provides role-specific tasks to complete before, during, and after testing. This document has been edited to reflect our policies and processes in Montana.

WIDA created The [Secure Portal User Guide](#) to help users to become familiar with the changes to the areas of the website that require a login to access.

Montana Identification and Placement Guidelines Resources

The guidelines document is a new resource that is available on the [WIDA website](#). The document provides an overview of state-specific guidance. This document is a resource that can be used in addition to the EL guidance document: [Montana's English Language Learners: Guidance for School Districts](#).

WIDA Screener Info Pages

The WIDA screener online has replaced the W-APT for Grades 1-12 for the 2018-2019 school year. The kindergarten W-APT is still the screening tool for kindergarteners and will remain in place as WIDA updates the kindergarten assessments. More information about the WIDA screeners are available on the [WIDA Screener Online](#) page.

User Accounts

In September, it is time to update user accounts for the WIDA websites. STCs should review the test administrator (TA) and other district users to remove anyone who is no longer working in the district, and add new users who will assist with test administration of the ACCESS for ELLs or WIDA screeners.

WIDA has created the [WIDA Accounts for Montana Document](#) to help STCs and TAs understand the accounts that are needed for the WIDA websites.

New STCs that do not have WIDA-user accounts may contact the assessment division at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov, 844-867-2569 or yfield@mt.gov, 406-444-0748.

Registration for the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

The OPI will register all students who are identified as EL/LEP in AIM as of the fall program participation deadline of 10/26/18. Ensure that all students who meet the exit criteria have been exited and new students have been assessed with the W-APT screener. Students who have been identified must be entered into the AIM system as EL by 10/15/2018. Contact Yvonne Field with questions at yfield@mt.gov or 406-444-0748.

ACT with Writing

ELA and Mathematics

Things to do this month

- Access score reports in Pearson Access Next (PA Next).** The ACT Profile Report and Student Level Data are available in PA Next on the *Published Reports* tab on the *Reports* drop-down menu. Instructions for accessing reports can be found in the [Pearson Access User Guide](#). Additional reports were mailed to schools in late July.
- Watch for state aggregate reports.** State aggregate reports will be available on the [GEMS page](#) for the 2018-2019 school year. The GEMS reports are expected to be available in mid-September.

ACT with Writing Results Resources

The following resources for reading and understanding ACT score reports are available on the [ACT State Testing Site](#).

- [ACT User Handbook for Educators](#)—This handbook is designed to help educators at high schools and colleges, and professionals at the district and state level, as they administer ACT testing, advise students, and use ACT data.

- *Understanding Your Scores*—ACT site providing information about results including score interpretation, making sense of ACT scores, standards and benchmarks, and national ranking information.
- *Using Your ACT Results*—Written with students in mind, educators may find useful information in this guide to help students understand their scores.

CRT and CRT-Science Alternate

Science

Things to do this month

- Access score reports in the [Montana Analysis and Reporting System \(MARS\)](#).** CRT-Science and CRT-Science Alt scores are available on the [MARS site](#). See below for more information about MARS. *Note that the MARS application is best viewed using Windows Internet Explorer version 7 or 8. Other browsers are not supported.*
- Watch for printed copies of student reports.** Student reports, cumulative labels, and the interpretive guide to the CRT and CRT Alt should arrive in system offices the first week of September.
- Distribute score reports to parents.** Districts should plan to distribute score reports to parents by early October. A parent letter template for both [CRT-Science](#) and [CRT-Science Alternate](#) is available from the OPI for school/district use. [Parent level interpretive guides](#) are also available and should be included with the parent letter.
- Watch for state aggregate reports.** State aggregate reports will be available on the OPI [GEMS page](#). The science data is expected to be available on GEMS in mid-September.

Montana Analysis and Reporting System (MARS)

The MARS is the secure, online site where digital results for the CRT-Science and CRT-Science Alt can be accessed and analyzed. It is best viewed using Windows Internet Explorer (IE) as other browsers are not supported. [MARS](#) is accessible by usernames and passwords assigned to schools and districts. Passwords are master passwords and are only for superintendents, building principals, authorized representatives, or STCs. All other educators needing access to MARS should be assigned a separate username and password using the accounts management tool in MARS. For instructions on using the MARS site, refer to the [MARS User and Training Guide](#).

For password assistance, contact your principal or superintendent. Superintendents or principals needing login assistance should contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 844-867-2569. *Those credentials cannot be shared via email or voice mail.*

If a teacher was assigned to a student in the “sort by” field in AIM for 2018 testing, a new 2018 password will automatically be generated and posted in the “teacher roster.” The teacher roster can be accessed on the principal’s homepage in MARS. If a teacher was not assigned to a student(s) in AIM, the STC/principal needs to make the assignments and create new passwords using the accounts management tool in MARS.

CRT and CRT-Science Alt Results Resources

- For detailed instructions on using MARS, see the [MARS User Manual](#).
- The MARS [Report Interpretation Guide](#) provides support to local educators in understanding and using test data to better serve the academic needs of students and to evaluate and improve curriculum and instruction.

MSAA

Alternate Assessment, ELA and Math

Things to do this month

- Access score reports in the [Online Assessment System](#).** Results reports will be available in late August. Districts have a four-week window to download and print student reports to share with parents.

Resources to help access and interpret score information

- The [MSAA Interpretive Guide](#) provides information on each results report and suggestions for interpretation. This guide includes information that identifies the demonstrated skills of a student performing at each performance level.
- The [Online Assessment System](#) is the MSAA online assessment portal. STCs will need to log in, download the results reports file for the district, and print out the Individual Student Reports (ISRs) for distribution to parents and educators.

NAEP

National and International Assessment Studies

Things to do this month

- Register on the restricted-use MyNAEP site.** School-designated test coordinators for NAEP-selected schools must register on the restricted-use [MyNAEP](#) website by September 1, 2018.

MyNAEP Registration Has Begun!

The 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments, also known as *The Nation's Report Card* will take place *January 28 to March 8, 2019*. On August 21, NAEP-selected Grade 4 and 8 schools were sent MyNAEP registration instructions. School coordinators need to register for a new 2019 account on the restricted-use [MyNAEP](#) website before September 14. For a complete list of communications sent to districts and schools for the year, visit the [2019 Electronic Communication History](#) page. If you have questions or concerns, contact the OPI at 844-867-2569 or email OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov. You can receive immediate assistance from the NAEP Help Desk at 800-283-6237 or email naephelp@westat.com Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. ET.

Science News

Science Assessments

Did you know Montana is a member state of the U.S. Department of Education's Enhanced Assessment Grant (EAG)?

The Strengthening Claims-based Interpretations and Uses of Local and Large-scale Science Assessment Scores (SCILLSS) was developed with funding from the U.S. Department of Education under Enhanced Assessment Grants Program CFDA 84.368A. The [SCILLSS website](#) has resources to support school districts with assessing our 2016 adopted science standards including the [Montana State Science Assessment System: Theory of Action](#). To start off the school year assessment savvy, check out the SCILLSS's Chapter 1 digital workbook:

Chapter 1: [Purposes and Uses of Assessment Scores, Validity, Validity Questions](#)

- Chapter 1.1 Assessment Purposes and Uses
- Chapter 1.2 Validity as the Key Principle of Assessment Quality
- Chapter 1.3 Four Validity Questions to Guide Assessment Development and Evaluation
- Chapter 1.4 Summary and Next Steps

Throughout the upcoming school year, the OPI will release resources and materials from the EAG that are relevant to local education agencies as the OPI transitions away from the legacy statewide science assessment to a newly envisioned system of assessments aligned to the three-dimensional science standards. The OPI will continue to use the CRT-Science general assessment and alternate in Grades 4, 8, and 10 in the spring of 2019. The new science general assessment and alternate assessment is slated for spring 2020.

If you have questions about the transition or the OPI Science Partner Task Force, contact Ashley McGrath at amcgrath@mt.gov or 406-444-3656.

Smarter Balanced

ELA and Math

Things to do this month

- Access score reports in the [Online Reporting System \(ORS\)](#).** District and school level reports and ISRs are available.
- Watch for printed copies of student reports.** Student reports and cumulative labels are scheduled to arrive in system offices the first week of September.
- Distribute score reports to parents.** Districts should plan to distribute score reports to parents by early October. A [parent letter template](#) is available from the OPI for school/district use. A copy of the [Smarter Balanced Interpretive Guide](#) should be included. A [grayscale version](#) of the interpretive guide is also available.
- Watch for state aggregate reports.** State aggregate reports will be available on the OPI [GEMS page](#). The GEMS reports are expected to be available in mid-September.
- Add users to the Test Information and Distribution Engine (TIDE).** Users in TIDE were cleared in August. STCs were uploaded to the system by the OPI, and STCs need to add users for their districts and schools. STCs can refer to the [User Roles and Access Document](#) 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](#) (see below for more information).

Smarter Balanced Results Resources

Resources are available to assist STCs, school coordinators, and teachers with reading and understanding Smarter Balanced score reporting.

- [Online Reporting System \(ORS\) User Guide](#): The guide provides an overview of the ORS. After reviewing this manual, you should be familiar with navigating the system and viewing score reports.
- [ORS Training Module](#): Recorded webinar provides information on the ORS and its functions.
- [Smarter Balanced Interpretive Guide](#): Guide provides additional information on how to read the Smarter Balanced ISR and information on each claim level.

AIR Portal Maintenance and Updates

The ORS, AIR Ways Reporting, and the Assessment Viewing Application on the American Institutes for Research (AIR) portal will be down from August 28 through September 4 for maintenance in preparation for the 2018-2019 school year.

Also in preparation for 2019 testing and to comply with the highest student data and privacy industry standards, users in TIDE were cleared and STCs were uploaded to TIDE. Minor changes to accounts and application access are underway in an effort to address some Title I and peer review test security concerns. The list of STCs was obtained from past STC records unless authorized representatives have provided new contact information to the OPI for this role. Authorized Representatives will be asked to confirm the contact information for 2018-2019 STCs this fall. STCs on file with the OPI have received verification emails from AIR and need to add users to TIDE for their districts.

All users administering Smarter Balanced assessments are required to complete the [Test Administrator's Certification Course](#). Course completion is required each year. If taking the course as a group, ensure that each user is logged into TIDE so the system will auto-update course completion for each user.

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 Online Prep](#)

MSAA

- [Assessment Management System](#)
- [OPI MSAA](#)

Smarter Balanced

- [Assessment system](#)
- [OPI Smarter Balanced](#)

My NAEP

- [My NAEP Login](#)

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

ACT Online Prep Questions

- Phone: 319-337-1429
- Email: [Contact Form](#)

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

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