

---SPECIAL ISSUE---

ASSESSMENT BULLETIN MAY 2020

OPI COVID Page: opi.mt.gov/COVID-19-Information

CORONAVIRUS AND SCHOOLS

Coronavirus Information and Updates

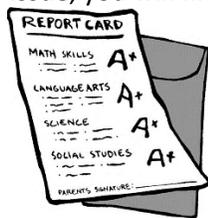
[+ Read more](#)

Special Issue

Most schools in Montana have decided to continue remote learning through the end of the 2019–2020 school year; therefore, this issue shares some updates and news related to this mode of learning and the future plans for next school year after receiving the approved 2020 testing, accountability, and reporting waivers.

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MontCAS
Montana Comprehensive Assessment System
Montana Office of Public Instruction

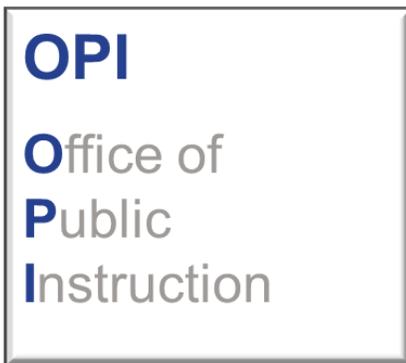
May 2020 Assessment Bulletin
Prepared by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, Elsie Arntzen Superintendent

Assessment News

This section is tailored to System Test Coordinators (STC) with a lens for providing the current news, testing alerts, and changes slated for each of these areas. Use these hyperlinks to navigate to each section of the Bulletin:

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OPI News



The Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) vision is to provide academic access and opportunities for success to prepare all students to be community, college, and career ready. Persons with a passion for education and working with schools should apply. Share this opportunity with friends and/or colleagues who may be interested in working at the OPI.

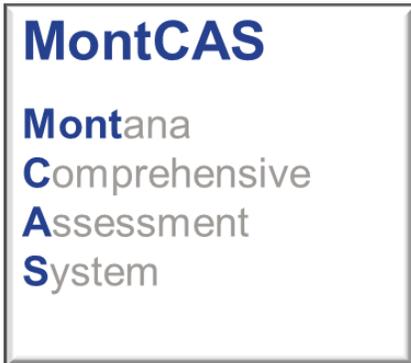
Don't miss out - this vacancy closes June 1, 2020. This position gives you the opportunity to work with schools, offers some rewarding travel, rich professional development/training, and competitive salary and benefits.

APPLY TODAY!

- **Salary:** \$55,960.27
- **Schedule:** Permanent, Full-Time
- **Location:** Helena, Montana
- **Benefits:** Full-time employees earn 15 vacation days, 12 sick days, paid state holidays, health and dental benefits, life insurance, and access to a defined benefit contribution retirement. More information can be found at <http://benefits.mt.gov/>.
- **Apply Now:** Follow this link to apply [Assessment Specialist PN#351-03306 \[mtstatejobs.taleo.net\]](#).

For more information or resources on this program, contact [OPI Assessment Help Desk](#), 1-844-867-2569.

MontCAS News



This section pertains to any updates or news under the umbrella of the MontCAS program not specific to any one state assessment.

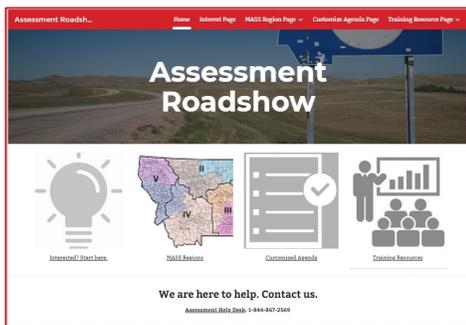
Portal Link: [MontCAS Application](#)

The OPI thanks the dedicated staff for the hard work, training, and overall efforts in preparing students for the state assessments and to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements under state and federal law. We look forward to our continued partnership as we strive to improve student outcomes across the state.

STCs can complete the [2020 STC MontCAS Debrief Form](#) between now and Friday, June 26th in order to receive recognition for the professional learning required to administer the state tests. The purpose of this form is to provide renewal units for STCs and to collect feedback to help improve the MontCAS program and future test administrations by learning what went well, what could have gone better, and how the OPI can provide resources to support school system needs moving forward.

Q: HOW DO I GET MY OPI RENEWAL UNITS? A: STCs receive a certificate of renewal units upon the completion of the [2020 STC MontCAS Debrief Form](#).

Please direct any questions about this event to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.



Assessment Roadshow

The Assessment Division is hosting nine Assessment Roadshow professional learning events across the MASS regions this fall. This professional learning is in addition to the [annual ASSIST Conference](#) to ensure our MontCAS program provides training to schools across the state of Montana. The primary mission of this training will be on building coherence throughout the MontCAS program to support schools with improving the overall quality and processes of assessment and to prepare schools and students for success. **Visit the [Assessment Roadshow Website](#) if you would like to learn more about these fall trainings.**

Please direct any questions about this event to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.

SBAC

Smarter
Balanced
Assessment
Consortium

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades 3–8 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Link: [AIR Portal](#)

The [Digital Library](#) will retire on May 28 and be replaced by [Tools For Teachers](#) which will go-live on June 16 for all current user roles in the TIDE portal. Guidance for the remote use of interim assessments can be found in the new [Interims: Remote Teaching and Learning](#) website, alongside the [state guidance](#) document for administering interims remotely.

Smarter Balanced Interim Assessments

Interim assessments for grades K–12 will remain available to schools until May 22. See [OPI Allowed Interim Use to Support Remote Learning](#) to view state-specific guidance for Montana educators using interims and the Digital Library in a remote-learning situation.

Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)

The [Smarter Balanced](#) Interim Assessment Blocks ([IABs](#)) to show individual student attainment of the math and ELA standards for specific learning targets and to connect to online instructional resources within the Digital Library.

Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)

The [Smarter Balanced](#) Interim Comprehensive Assessments ([ICAs](#)) are recommended to be given in the fall to show “prior knowledge” and growth over the school year on the same scale as the summative assessment.

Tools for Teachers Transition

The [Digital Library](#) will be retired from the [AIR portal](#) to be replaced by the new **Tools for Teachers** resource, a brand new, higher quality suite of tools and supports that were carefully crafted to save teachers time, streamline lesson planning and help students learn. While **Tools for Teachers** is an entirely new site, users will still log in the same way the **Digital Library** is accessed. On June 16, users will be provided access to preview **Tools for Teachers** to become familiar with how to use the new website. In September, after the first batch of content has been added, the website will be fully released for use by educators. A [PowerPoint walkthrough](#) of the site is available for review.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Duane Schlabach at 406-444-0748 or Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov.

ACT with Writing

American
College
Testing

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grade 11 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI's published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Link: [Pearson Access Next \(PA Next\)](#)

ACT Date Flexibility

This year's juniors, for whom spring 2020 ACT testing was cancelled, will have free, voluntary opportunities to take the ACT on October 6 and October 20, 2020 with accommodated testing windows also opening on those dates. Rosters from spring 2020 will roll over, so schools will need to "Manage Participation" and "Confirm Enrollments" in August via [Pearson Access Next](#). Previous approvals of accommodations will stand, and additional requests can be submitted over the summer; watch for an updated "Schedule of Events" on the [Montana ACT](#) site.

The fall Schedule of Events will be posted soon on the [Montana ACT](#) site. Important considerations about this voluntary opportunity include the following:

- **STCs: Remember to update school Test Coordinator (TC) information in PA Next in early August to reflect any staff changes.**
- No online testing will be available for fall.
- Accommodations windows are shorter than normal:
 - October 6–12, 2020,
 - October 20–26, 2020
- Accommodations approvals from the 2019–20 testing window will remain valid. Additional requests can be made in TAA starting mid-June.
- TCs will need to confirm test dates via the "Manage Participation" task in PA Next in late August or early September (specific deadline TBD).
- TCs will also need to "Confirm Enrollees" as early as possible after school begins in the fall.
- The Schedule of Events for statewide testing in Spring 2021 will begin immediately after fall testing is complete.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

MSAA News

Alternate Assessment, ELA and Math

MSAA

Multi
State
Alternate
Assessment

This assessment must be annually administered to only students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3–8 and 11 using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Link: [MSAA System](#)

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. See [Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments](#) document.

Much of the guidance available for these students is related to core fundamental components of the IDEA, Office of Civil Rights, the Federal Educational Rights to Privacy Act, as well as numerous other federal laws, agency regulations and guidance. We are directing districts serving students with disabilities to the OPI’s [Special Education COVID- 19](#) information page.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Duane Schlabach at 406-444-0748 or Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov.

MSA News

Science

MSA

Montana
Science
Assessment

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades 5 and 8 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Links: [AIR Portal](#)

Development of Montana’s comprehensive assessment system for science continues! Next spring, the MSA and AMSA will be delivered as operational field tests, integrating items developed for Montana with items previously field tested in our partner states. Results will be available after the testing window, and accountability determinations can be made after the test validation activities are completed. Educators interested in participating in development activities can complete the [2021 Science Content Development Team application](#).

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

AMSA News

Science

AMSA

Alternate
Montana
Science
Assessment

This assessment must be annually administered to only students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8, and 11 using the OPI's published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Links: [AIR Portal](#)

Educators interested in participating in development activities can complete the [2021 Science Content Development Team application](#). We are in particular need of Special Education teachers for the virtual AMSA content approval meeting on June 9.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

ACCESS for ELLs News

English Language Proficiency Assessment

ACCESS for ELLs

English
Language
Learners

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades K–12 who are indicated to take the assessment based on the results of the WIDA Screener (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI's published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Links: [Training and Online Resources](#)
[Assessment Management System \(AMS\)](#)

Online Score Reports

The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs electronic Score Reports were available on [WIDA AMS](#) on **Friday, April 24, 2020**.

To view score reports, 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.

Individual Student Reports are also available in various languages in WIDA AMS **Report Delivery > On Demand Reports**. Select the Administration, District, School, and language to generate reports. Click **Find Students** to populate the students tested at that school.

WIDA offers several online resources for using and understanding ACCESS for ELLs score reports. These resources can be accessed in the [WIDA Resource Library](#).



Printed Score Reports

The printed WIDA score reports were scheduled to be delivered **May 12, 2020**. Some reports may be delayed due to “shelter in place” orders across the country. For more information on the 2019-2020 score reports refer the [ACCESS for ELLs News](#) section.

EL Resources

Amidst the school closures across the nation, Montana is not alone in the challenges of online instruction for ELs. Here are some online instructional resources including the [Working with WIDA Global Educators: Teaching Multilingual Learners Online](#) which have been assembled by WIDA and WIDA member states. The [Working with WIDA Global Educators](#) document has been organized by Guiding Principles and what teachers and multilingual students can do. Here is a list of online free resources to support ELs and multilingual students (see [EL Online Resources](#)).

For more information on this program, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.

WIDA Exit Criteria

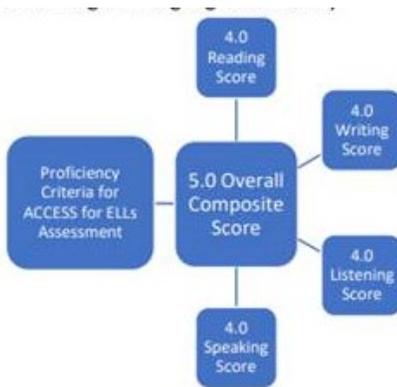
The exit criteria for Montana’s EL students takes into account three main criteria including 1) English Language Proficiency, 2) academic achievement, and 3) language skills that support full participation in society. The details for the exit criteria, along with the monitoring plan requirement for two years, can be found in the [Montana OPI English Learner Guidance for School Districts](#) document.

The OPI will implement new exit criteria during the 2020–2021 school year pending final approval from the U.S. Department of Education.

Below are the abbreviated identification steps for English Learners under the remote-learning realm:

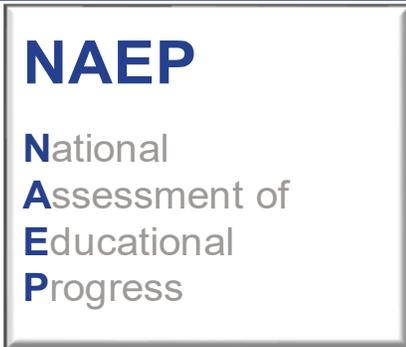
- Districts administers the [Home Language Survey](#). District **screens** potential ELs within 14 days of enrollment using an approved WIDA screener (see [remote-learning guidance document](#)).
- Newly identified students AND transfer students are marked correctly in AIM.
- Parents of newly identified ELs receive an EL designation and placement letter within the first 30 days of enrollment.
- ALL EL students are marked in AIM with the primary home language and language of impact coded.

This [Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure](#) remote-learning guidance document provides a means of provisionally identifying ELs in times of extended school closures where remote-learning plans have been approved by the Governor and school districts are providing a continuity of educational services online and face-to-face screening is not possible.



NAEP News

National and International Assessment Studies



This assessment is administered to ONLY selected schools and students. This year NAEP will be given in mathematics and reading for ages 9, 13 and 17 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate).

Portal Links: [My NAEP](#)

NAEP, often called The Nation's Report Card, is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the United States know and are able to do in various subjects. For more information, please review [An Overview of NAEP](#).

Montana will participate in the 2021 administration of NAEP from January 25 to March 5, 2021. The 2021 program will include digitally based assessments, administered on tablets, in [mathematics](#) and [reading](#) at grades 4 and 8 and [civics](#) and [U.S. history](#) at grade 8 only. The students will only be assessed in one subject. To learn more about assessments, visit [experience an assessment](#). You can watch tutorials, view sample questions, see scoring guides, explore interactive tasks and download survey questions.

In late spring/early summer, schools will be selected and will receive an email regarding school selection. To ensure that a representative sample of students is assessed, NAEP is given in a sample of schools whose students reflect the varying demographics of a specific jurisdiction, be it the nation, a state, or a district. For more information, please review [Selecting Schools for Participation in State-Level NAEP](#).

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Shantel Niederstadt at 406-444-3450 or Shantel.Nierdstandt@mt.gov.

2020 Montana Waivers

Testing, Accountability and Reporting Waivers

Public participation matters! The OPI is conducting an extensive public comment between now and July 17, 2020 on the [assessment](#), [accountability](#), [reporting](#), and [fiscal flexibility](#) waivers. The purpose of public comment is to ensure all stakeholder voices are heard to provide “real-world” concerns. The 2020 state and federal waivers are important as they provide school districts with some relief and the ability to focus locally on the basic educational services and needs of students, but the OPI needs public comment to gauge the climate and realities these significant waivers pose at the local level. **The OPI intends to use the comments to strengthen the quality and relevancy of resources and address these five questions:**

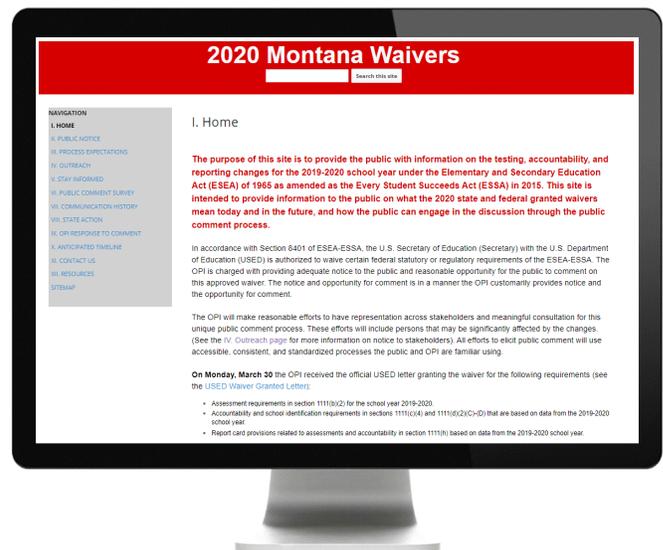
- What is impacted?
- What do we know today?
- What don't we know?
- What questions do we have?
- What needs do we have?

Please visit the [2020 Montana Waiver Website](#) to obtain information on these waivers and participate in the public comment process by completing the [Public Comment Survey](#). For questions on the waivers or to submit public comment, please direct these to essainput@mt.gov.

Waiving these testing requirements is likely to have vast implications under the Administrative Rules for Montana (ARM) Chapter 56 and 55 and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Concerns about the implementation of the new English Learner exit criteria during the 2020–2021 school year can also be submitted using this public comment process.

For these issues, the OPI is seeking public comment as these testing, accountability, and reporting waivers may have different impacts and implications at the local level.

The purpose of the [Montana 2020 Website](#) is to share information with stakeholders on what elements were waived, the impacts these waivers may have for the future, and to provide a platform for the public to express concerns, thoughts, questions and ideas.



Public Comment Zoom Meetings

[All Content is Posted on the 2020 Montana Waiver Website](#)

Zoom Webinar Schedule

Meeting Date	Zoom Meeting Invitation	YouTube Video Recording Links
Thursday, April 23	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #1	Video Recording Link: https://youtu.be/P0taduwwWhM
Thursday, May 7	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #2	Video Recording Link: https://youtu.be/AYGTiA-gkKQ
Thursday, May 21	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #3 https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/729302396 Meeting ID: 729 302 396	
Thursday, June 4	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #4 https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/443598579 Meeting ID: 443 598 579	
Thursday, June 18	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #5 https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/254699718 Meeting ID: 254 699 718	
Thursday, July 2	Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #6 https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/517311509 Meeting ID: 517 311 509	

Webinars and Educator Resources

Educator Opportunities

Science Next Steps and Opportunities

A webinar focused on science will be given on May 20, from 3:30–4:30 P.M. This webinar is intended for anyone involved in administering, reporting, or using the data from the state science assessment. Rawnie Crasco will hold a one-hour session to discuss the goals of the balanced science assessment, availability of interims, next steps for reporting, and future educator opportunities. This session will be a great way for participants to learn how to get involved and have a voice in the implementation of these three-dimensional science assessments. Despite this spring's setbacks, development of the state science assessment program will be moving forward in preparation for the 2020–21 school year:

- The MSA and AMSA Practice Tests will be updated over the summer to make them more useful in training students on how the tests work.
- In September 2020, science interims will be available for grades 5, 8, and 11.
- OPI will hold a variety of Standards Setting, Content Development, and Test Validation activities over the next 18 months as development of the balance assessment system for science continues. Educators interested in participating in these activities are encouraged to fill out this Educator Interests and Opportunities form.
- To learn more about any of these topics, attend the webinar. The link to attend the webinar is:



Join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/511102621>

You can also dial in using your phone.

- **United States:** +1 (571) 317-3122
- **Access Code:** 511-102-621

The Assessment Division will be providing educators with opportunities to get involved in the program design, development, and validation activities for the state assessments throughout the summer.

If you are interested in any of these events, please contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk. All questions can be directed to OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.



Educator Opportunities

May	• Public Comment Zoom Meeting May 21.
Jun.	• Public Comment Zoom Meeting May 21 • AMSA Content Review June 9 in Helena, MT. • MSA Item Writing June 10-11 in Helena, MT.
Jul.	• Public Comment Zoom Meeting May 21
Aug.	• Summer Science Institute Aug. 12-13 in Bozeman, MT. • Fall Assessment Roadshow starting in Aug. in 9 MASS Regions.
Sept.	• Science Operational Test Zoom Trainings
Oct.	• MSA Content Approval Committee Oct. 15-16 in Great Falls, MT (concurrent with MFPE Educators' Conference).



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