[Insert Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

[Insert School] is preparing for the annual administration of the state required Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) for grades 3-8 and 11 in English Language Arts and mathematics. As listed on our school calendar, students eligible for alternate statewide assessments in Grades 3–8 and 11 will take the alternate assessment on [Insert Dates/Date Range]. State and federal law require all students to participate in grade-level assessments for academic achievement reporting.

Participation in this test is important. The Multi-State Alternate Assessment is designed to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities and measures academic content that is aligned to and derived from the Montana Content Standards. This test contains many built-in supports that allow students to take the test using materials they are most familiar with and to communicate what they can know and do. Teachers use these state assessments as one of the many tools to understand individual student achievement (how much a child knows at the end of the year) and individual progress (how much a child has improved over the previous year). Teachers also use these results to identify student academic strengths and areas of support and adjust instruction accordingly.

Our school uses state assessments to determine if we have reached the state educational goals, to identify areas for improvement, and to address any equity issues. Once we identify areas for improvement, we use the data to set goals in our annual Comprehensive School Improvement Plan addressing student achievement needs.

Results from state assessments provide the state, our district, our school, teachers, you, and your child with information about the knowledge gained over the past school year. Individual student reports give results from the test and will be sent home to parents [Insert TIME and Method; e.g., in the fall via Parent-Teacher Conferences]. It is important to remember that the Multi-State Alternate Assessment provides only one measure of student learning, but when combined with grades, classroom activities, unit quizzes and tests, and district-level assessments, these end-of-year tests can complete the picture of a child’s abilities and help him/her down a path toward academic success.

You can explore our school’s state assessment results by going to the Office of Public Instruction’s [Student Achievement Dashboard](https://gems.opi.mt.gov/) or visit [Montana’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Report Card Information for Families website](http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Academic-Success/Every-Student-Succeeds-Act-ESSA/Report-Card/Report-Card-Information-for-Families) to see how our school compares to other schools across Montana in a variety of different measures.

**Here are some things to note about the state assessments:**

* Your child’s grades will not be impacted by their scores on the state tests.
* Your child’s privacy will be protected. State and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ensure these data remain confidential.
* Students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or English Learner plans will be assessed based on individual student needs, consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations.

**Here are some things you can do to help:**

* Encourage your child to do their very best on everything they do in school, including this end-of-year state test.
* Make sure he or she gets plenty of sleep the night before each test and has a healthy breakfast.
* Support your child by explaining the purpose of the tests and helping with homework and test reviews.

We appreciate your partnership in helping [Insert School] fulfill the state requirement for end-of-year assessments and supporting your child to do his/her best.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about state testing this year. Questions can be directed to [School Contact] at [Contact Information].

Sincerely,

[Principal’s Name]