



THE MONTANA OPI
SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT

JP Williams
OPI Director of Special Education

EDUCATION CAUCUS APRIL 4, 2023

Putting Montana Students First **A+**



OPI.MT.GOV

MEET THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Special Education Unit Managers

- JP Williams Director of Special Education jp.Williams@mt.gov
- John Gorton School Improvement
Unit Manager john.gorton@mt.gov
- Danni McCarthy Fiscal & Reporting Manager DMcCarthy@mt.gov
- Tammy Lysons Continuing Ed Unit Manager Tamara.Lysons@mt.gov
- Mandi Gibbs Early Assistance Program MGibbs@mt.gov

The OPI Special Education Unit is committed to providing support and customer service to all Montana students, families, and schools in the state.

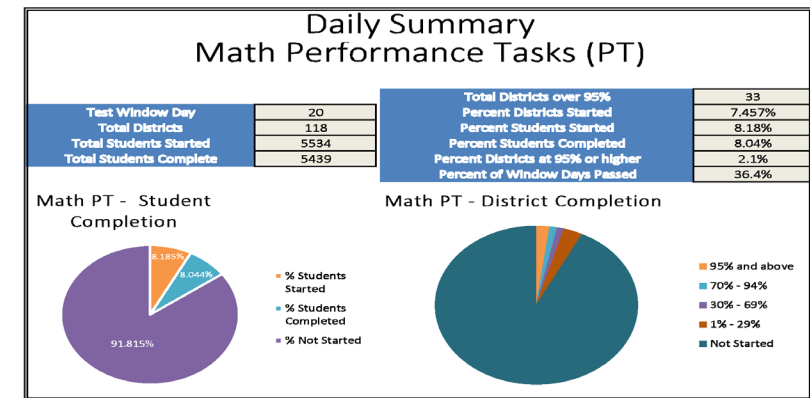
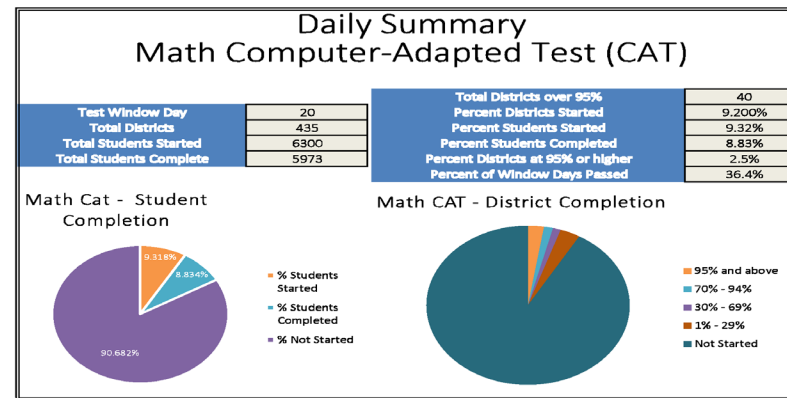
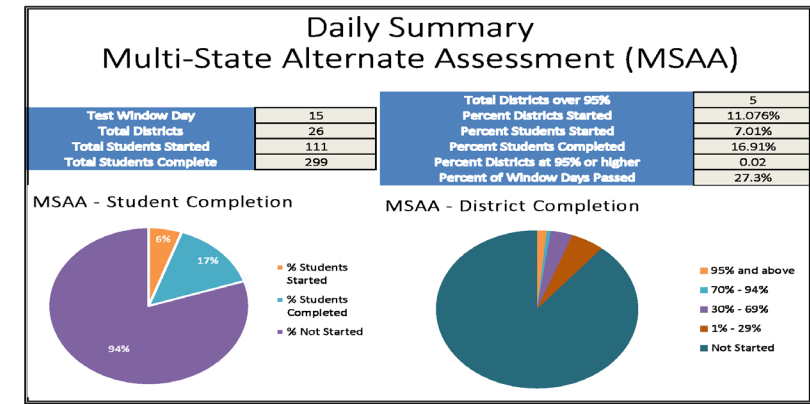
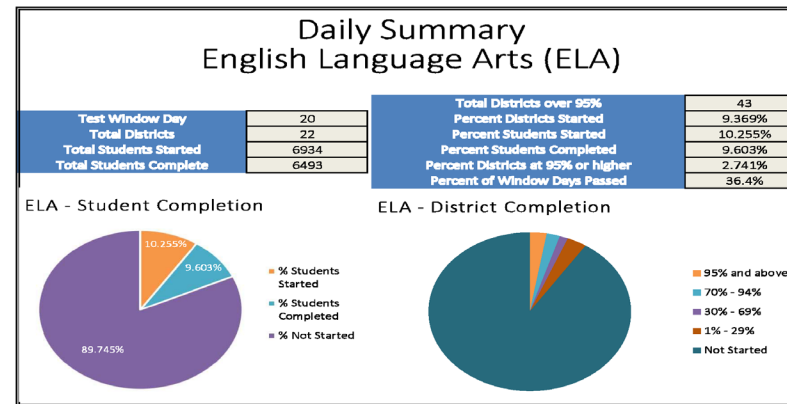
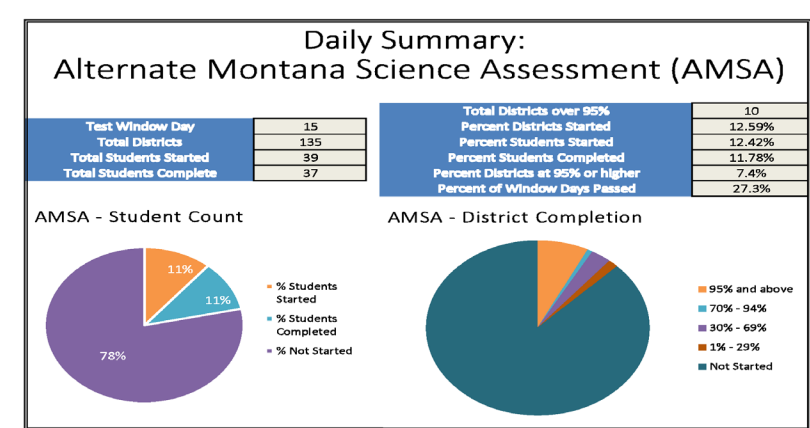
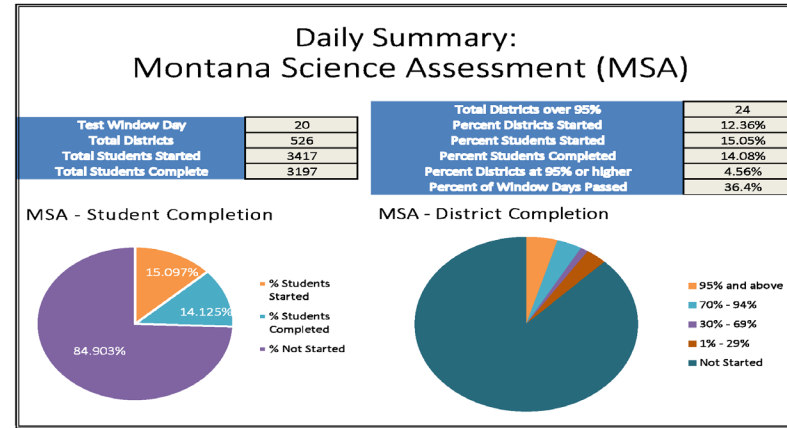


CURRENT ASSESSMENT DATA

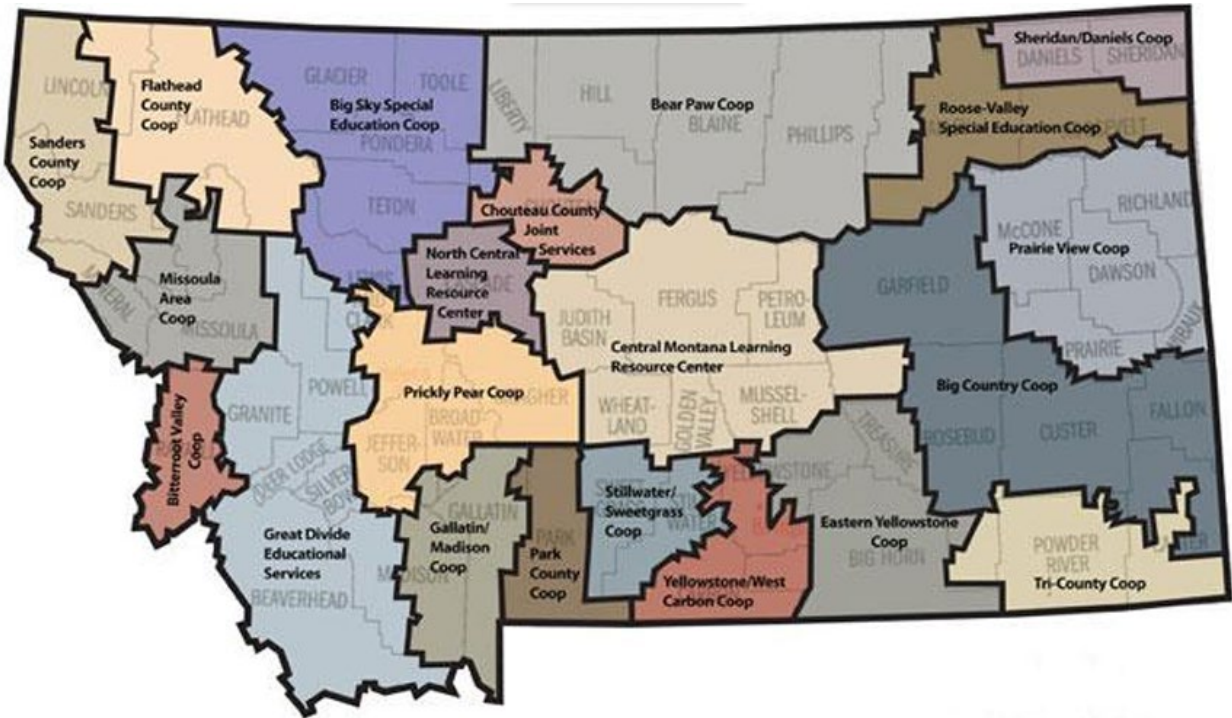
SOURCE:
OPI ASSESSMENT UNIT
3/31/2023

CURRENT MSAA TESTING WINDOW
MARCH 13 - APRIL 28

2022-2023 GOAL:
95% OF ALL SPED STUDENTS WILL BE TESTED



MONTANA COOPERATIVES



- Montana has many small, rural school districts.
- The special education cooperatives are designed to address staffing and cost issues in rural areas of the state.
- There are currently twenty-one (21) special education cooperatives operating in Montana.
- A cooperative is made up of the school districts within the cooperative boundaries that choose to participate.
- Participation in the cooperative is voluntary for most school districts.
- Districts receiving less than \$7500 in IDEA funds must join the cooperative per discretion of the local school board.
- The cooperative structure allows the school districts to pool the limited resources.
- Special education staff that provide services to children on an itinerant basis.
- Cooperatives employ special education directors, school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational physical therapist.

OPI SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

Upcoming OPI Events:

OPI MTSS Youth

April 16 & 17

@ Missoula – Holiday Inn

Annual Stakeholders/SEAP

May 10 & 11

@ Helena – Delta Hotel

Summer Institute

June 19-23

@ MSU Bozeman

OSEP Verification Visit

June 26-30

@ Helena – OPI #1300

OSEP Leadership Conference

July 24-26

@ Washington DC

VALUED PARTNERSHIPS & STAKEHOLDERS

All Montana Schools and Educators

MCASE

Every Montana Family

All Montana State Level Agencies

The Montana University System (MUS)

Montana School For Deaf & Blind

Montana Public School Board

Montana Legislature

OSEP

NASDSE

TAESE

Carroll College

Montana Empowerment Center

Montana Tribal Nations

The UM Rural Institute

Disability Rights of Montana

NCSI

Department of Education

OPI SEAP

The Special Education Unit at OPI actively seeks to build and maintain positive, and collaborative partnerships at the local, state, and federal levels. For partnership development please contact JP Williams @ jp.williams@mt.gov.



OPI MTSS INCLUSIVE YOUTH DAYS APRIL 16-17, 2023 IN MISSOULA

The Special Education, Coordinated School Health, and Tribal Student Achievement, Relations and Resiliency Units have teamed up to bring back OPI MTSS Youth Days April 16-17, 2023, in Missoula with additional dates and regional Youth Days in the works for the fall. OPI MTSS Youth Days is an inclusive event focused on youth voice and leadership development, community service and engagement, school safety, and mental health.

With our partner Special Olympics Montana (SOMT), the OPI is excited to host this opportunity once again for Middle School and High School students of all abilities to develop their leadership potential. [Check out this invitation letter](#) and apply for your school team to attend. Note: We will give priority registration for this spring's event to districts closest to Missoula to save on travel expenses, but those not accepted this spring will have priority registration for the fall Youth Days planned for additional locations around the state.

Questions, contact Joe Moriarty, joe.moriarty@mt.gov, Michele Henson, michele.henson@mt.gov or Tammy Lysons, tamara.lysons@mt.gov, 406-431-2309.



SAVE THE DATE!

OPI SUMMER INSTITUTE June 19-23, 2023

Montana State University- Bozeman

Registration Opens
April- May 2023

130 + Sessions Featuring

Dyslexia & Science of Reading Experts:
Dr. Tim Odegard & Dr. Danielle “Nell” Thompson
Susan Barrett, PBIS Center
Dr. Valerie Williams, US Dept of Education, OSEP
Jani Koslowski “Every Child Can Fly”
Dr. Summer Prather-Smith— Family Engagement
Dr. Lori Newcomer
Carrie Cole & Literacy Sessions
Thinking Classrooms
Tribal Elders, Youth Voice
MTSS, Interventions, and Data Sessions for all Tiers
Youth Mental Health First Aid Training
Content Area Sessions in ELA, Math & Science
Whole Child, Mental Health, Positive Behavioral Supports
Restorative Practices & Strategies for Resilience
Gifted & Talented, Arts & Creativity

Conference Details

No registration costs for MT Educators

K-12 Educators—attend as a school team:
Keynotes, Team Time, Early Bird, Lunch & Learn
Best Practices Expo— Tuesday evening

Early Childhood & Secondary Specific Tracks

Lodging: MSU Residence Halls, \$50/room per night

Continuing Education & Credit: OPI Renewal Units,
UM or MSU— 2 Graduate Credits for \$250

Contact:

Tammy Lysons, Tamara.Lysons@mt.gov 406-431-2309
Anne Carpenter, Anne.Carpenter2@mt.gov 406-465-0922

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ANNUAL 2023 APPLICATION PROCESS

The OPI Special Education 2023 Application Process started on March 19, 2023.

Public Notice must be posted 60 days in advance of the May 24, 2023, application due date.

Public comment is open from March 19 - April 21 in Montana. All public comments are directed to the Special Education Director JP Williams @ jp.Williams@mt.gov. The OPI will review and take into consideration all public comments received during the public comment period.

Public Comment notice was posted in the Legals/Government newspaper sections on

March 19 for the following cities:

Missoula

Kalispell

Great Falls

Billings

Bozeman

Notice for the following cities posted on March 22:

Helena

Butte



QUESTIONS ~ FEEDBACK ~COMMENTS

All questions, feedback, and
comments

JP Williams – State Director of
Special Education
Montana Office of Public Instruction
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Cell: (406) 410-1140
Email: jp.Williams@mt.gov



Montana Special Education

Every Student, Every Classroom, Every Opportunity

- *The OPI Special Education Unit is a unified team with clear leadership that is highly responsive to school improvement, knowledge, positive attitude that benefit students*
- *Advocating through a partnership with the Special Education Advisory Panel*
- *Serving 403 School Districts, 22 Rural Cooperatives, 4 consortiums, and 12 % of Montana students*



Putting Montana Students First

Office of Public Instruction
Helena, MT
opi.mt.gov

