



Subject: Year 2 MAST Through-Year Pilot: Important Updates and Next Steps
11.10.23 Weekly MAST Newsletter

We have successfully completed our final week of the first MAST window. The OPI would like to express our gratitude for the collaborative efforts of all our stakeholders in achieving a 95.2% ELA testlet completion and a 94.3% Math testlet completion. We highly value the feedback received from participating districts and commend your flexibility as we continue to iterate and pioneer this innovative assessment. We look forward to building on this foundation of teamwork and cooperation as we work towards achieving our shared goals. Look for updates on testing progress on the last page of this newsletter.

Live Listening/Feedback Session

We have designed user feedback cycles throughout the school year to ensure continuous improvement of the MAST. These sessions will serve as an opportunity for users like you to share feedback, suggestions, and experiences to help us enhance the usability of the MAST. Teachers, administrators, test coordinators, IT personnel are all welcome to attend. Please forward this meeting link to all school stakeholders you feel appropriate to attend. We value your input and encourage you to participate in these live listening/feedback sessions. The first live listening/feedback session is scheduled for **November 14th from 3:30-4:30 pm**.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/86360956592?pwd=dJJOYmR3cU1BWUdFOGpPZlplGT0MrUT09>

Dial by Telephone

+1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 863 6095 6592

Password: 998612

Find your local number: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/86360956592?pwd=dJJOYmR3cU1BWUdFOGpPZlplGT0MrUT09>

English Language Learners and MAST

All ELs must participate in the MontCAS academic content assessments in grades 3–8 and 11 for reading/language arts and mathematics and in grades 5, 8 and 11 for science. ELs who have been enrolled in a US school for less than twelve months qualify for exemption from the state ELA assessments. The student must still take the math and science tests for their grade level but may do so with language supports and accommodations.

MCAA-eligible students and MAST

Currently, all students in grades 3-8 are automatically enrolled in the Kite Portal during state enrollment updates. However, the OPI is currently working on implementing data coding that will identify and exclude students who are eligible for the MCAA assessment prior to enrollment updates in Kite. Please note that this process will require some time to complete on our end.



As a result of this ongoing development, all students, including those who are eligible for the MSAA assessment, are currently included in MAST completion rates. It is important to understand that these MSAA-eligible students should not complete the MAST, and their data will be reconciled once the assessment window closes. The OPI will be cross-referencing students that didn't test in Kite against students eligible for MSAA, so it will not impact your participation rate in MAST. MSAA testing will occur March 11-26, 2024.

FAQ

Can students opt-out of statewide testing?

All students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, are required by state and federal law to take part in the state assessments with or without accommodations. Generally, if a student can receive instruction then they are also able to participate in state assessments. Students may only be exempted from testing under certain, limited conditions. In these rare and unique instances, a student may be unable to participate in any part of the assessment due to a significant and documented medical reason. In these cases, the school is not penalized for that student's absence due to the documented significant medical emergency. Medical exemptions are the types of non-participation that should be reported within the MontCAS application. Non-participation decisions must be determined in consultation with the student, family, medical provider (where appropriate), and the school district before they can be reported to the OPI in the [MontCAS Application](#). As such, the medical exemption process is considered a local decision. The OPI handles these non-participation reports on an individualized basis and will use the MontCAS Application exemption reason to determine whether the situation reported qualifies for an OPI-approved medical exemption.

Non-participation for any other reason will negatively impact the participation rate calculation ([OPI MontCAS Policies and Procedures for Participation in State Assessments](#), page 9).

In Montana, there is no "opt out" law. State law requires all students in public and accredited non-public schools to participate in state testing. In accordance with ESEA-ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii), parents may refuse to have their child participate in state assessments; however, parent refusal does count negatively towards the school's annual participation calculation in mathematics, reading/language arts, and science.

School districts determine what policies will be adopted to implement these parent notice and handling of parent refusal procedures under the assessment rules (see [Chapter 56](#)).

Student Survey

To develop an enhanced assessment system that caters to the needs of students, teachers, and administrators, while allowing for test administration flexibility, we will be implementing user feedback opportunities. One such opportunity is a student survey. As part of the pilot program, we would like to gather feedback directly from participating students by administering a brief survey after the second and fifth testing windows. The survey questions will focus on their assessment experience. To provide students' parent/guardian(s) with the option to opt-out of the survey, we have provided a [Survey Opt-Out Letter](#) for districts to share. This process ensures that we can gather valuable insights while respecting the wishes of our students and their families. Names of students that opt-out of the survey will need to be provided to the OPI

through the Secure File Transfer Portal **no later than November 17, 2023**. A reminder not to share any student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in emails or voicemails.

Accessing Student Reports

MAST Participating Districts have access to student reports through the Kite Platform. To login and access the student reports, please use the unique MT Kite login url [Kite - Educator Portal \(kiteaaai.org\)](https://kiteaaai.org) [educator-testlet.kiteaaai.org]. Once logged in, navigate to the "Interim" heading and select "View My Results". From there, you can generate student reports by navigating through the dropdown menus. Please note that *during MAST Extended Field Testing* for SY2023-2024, reports for machine-scored items may take approximately 10 business days to be available after the assessment window is closed. Students reports for the first testing window will be available 8 a.m. on November 28, 2023.

MAST Through-Year vs. MAST Form B Pilot Districts

The **MAST Form B Pilot** program offers districts the chance to experience an end-of-year assessment and get a preview of the through-year assessment in a more traditional summative format. Districts will test in the final testing window *only*—April 15 - May 10, 2024. As part of this program, districts will have access to the Kite testing platform, allowing them to interact with the testlet content and design. This opportunity allows districts to familiarize themselves with the assessment process before statewide implementation in the 2024-2025 school year. It's important to note that full participation in the MAST Form B Pilot will not require districts to take the Smarter Balanced Assessment, and there will be no impact on accountability measures. This opportunity aims to provide valuable insights and feedback to improve the assessment system for all stakeholders involved. ***The deadline for confirming school participation in the MAST Form B Summative Pilot is November 15, 2023.***

MAST Through-Year Pilot districts are fully committed to participating in the innovative through-year design. These districts have already submitted their curriculum, ensuring seamless alignment of the MAST testlets with the local scope and sequence. As part of the pilot program, districts will have the opportunity to administer the MAST assessments during all five test windows scheduled throughout the year. By participating in the MAST Through-Year Pilot, districts will no longer be obligated to administer the Smarter Balanced Assessment, and their accountability measures will remain unaffected. This pilot program revolutionizes the assessment experience for districts and provides valuable insights into student progress throughout the academic year.

Districts participating in both subgroups of the MAST Pilot are still required to administer the Montana Science Assessment (MSA) to students in grades 5 and 8. Any alternate students you may have enrolled this year will need to take the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) (Grades 3-8 and 11) and the Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA) for Grades 5, 8, and 11 as there is not an alternate version of MAST.

Testing Windows and Testlet Information

Each standard testlet is expected to be completed in under 30 minutes (*likely less time but no more than*) with most students being able to complete two testlets within a 45-minute window. The ELA PT (*exclusively administered in the 4th OPI window*) is expected to be completed in less than 45 minutes. The number of Math testlets scheduled throughout the five testing windows will vary for each school district based on your curriculum and pacing.

ELA Assessment Components:

- Six (6) Standard Testlets
- One (1) Performance Task (*administered exclusively in the 4th testing window*)

Math Assessment Components:

- Twelve (12) Standard Testlets
- One (1) Math Anchor (*referred to as T13 Anchor Testlet*)

Testing Window 1: 10/23 - 11/10 (*both Math and ELA testlets delivered*)

Testing Window 2: 11/27 - 12/15 (*only Math testlets delivered*)

Testing Window 3: 1/29 - 2/16 (*both Math and ELA testlets delivered*)

Testing Window 4: 3/11 - 4/5 (*Math and only ELA Performance Task delivered*)

Testing Window 5: 4/15 - 5/10 (*both Math and ELA testlets delivered*)

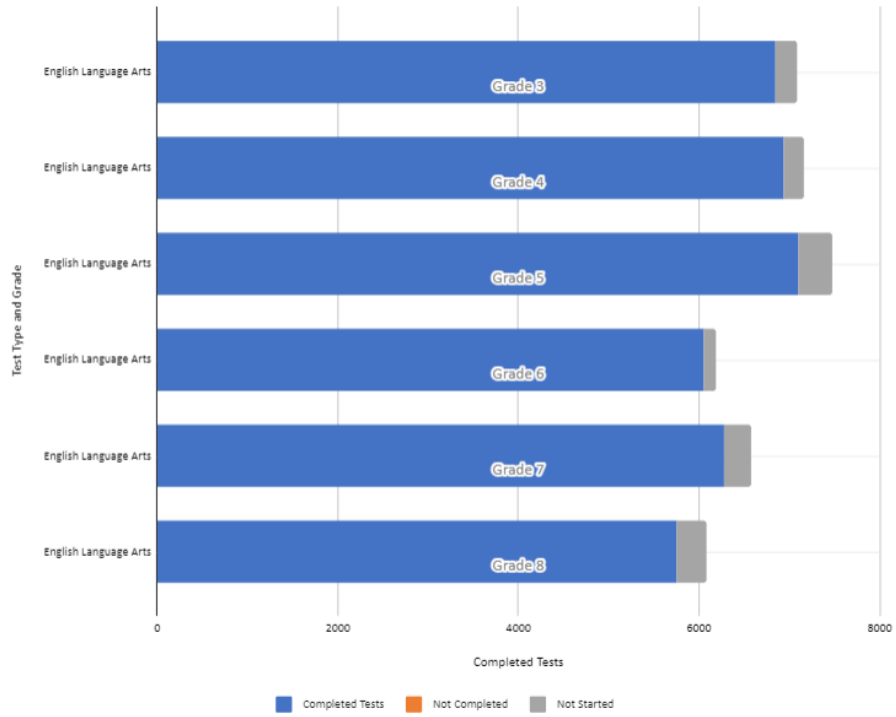
Sincerely,

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Montana Completed ELA Tests by Grade



Montana Completed Math Tests by Grade

