



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

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### Math Anchor Testlet

During the fifth and final testing window, the math anchor testlet will be administered. Please ensure this testlet is the last administered math testlet. The assessment consists of 20-22 questions in two sections. Students in grades 6-8 may not use a calculator for Section 1. Students in grades 6-8 may use the calculator tool provided in Kite for Section 2 only. The calculator is accessible in the Student Portal Toolbox. Students may not use any other calculator for this assessment unless approved by your school. On the Review/End page of Section 1, students will select CONTINUE to launch Section 2. Be sure students check their work in Section 1 before moving to Section 2. Once the second session is launched, students will be unable to go back to Session 1.

Grade	Total items	Calculator-permitted items
Grade 3	22	0
Grade 4	21	0
Grade 5	20	0
Grade 6	22	19
Grade 7	22	18
Grade 8	22	18

### Live Listening/Feedback for Testing Window 4 & 5

We have designed user feedback cycles throughout the school year to ensure continuous improvement of the MAST. As a way to gather feedback from the *fourth testing window* please consider providing feedback in this [Window 4 MAST Feedback Survey](#).

Live listening/feedback sessions will continue to be scheduled following each testing window. 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 the 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.

**Session 5:** MAST Through-Year Live Listening/Feedback from Testing Window 5

**Date:** May 14, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 - 4:30 PM

[Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 880 6071 1228 | Password: 352059



### **MAST & the Montana Science Assessment**

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.

### **April Focused Monthly Webinar: Gearing Up for SY24-25 MAST**

The OPI Assessment Unit offers a 1-hour webinar once a month from September to June annually for a total of 10 webinars during the school year. These focused webinars are designed to support educational practitioners involved in managing district assessments, accountability, and reporting requirements under state and federal law. April's focused webinar features information regarding 2024-2025 MAST implementation. The recording will be available soon on the [MT OPI Assessment YouTube channel](#).

### **Montana OPI Summer Institute**

You're invited to the OPI Summer Institute scheduled for **June 17-20, 2024!** Join us for dedicated sessions spotlighting educational innovation with the Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) Assessment—a transformative approach to assessment that aligns with our commitment to enhancing learning and teaching experiences across Montana. As the MAST progresses through its second year of pilot (SY23-24), it represents a significant step towards using assessment to support student learning and achievement. This innovative assessment, structured as a through-year model, is designed to assess content standards aligned closely with the timing of content learning in the classroom. Its primary goals include providing instructional utility and generating a summative score for federal accountability purposes. MAST is on track to operationalize as the statewide assessment for Montana's general populations in grades 3-8 for ELA and Math, scheduled to replace Smarter Balanced in 2024-2025. Registration coming soon on the [OPI Summer Institute webpage](#).

### **Individual MAST Testlet Timing Estimates**

A comprehensive list of math testlets, along with their estimated completion times, is available to assist educators in managing their testing schedules. For testlets with sufficient data, the completion time represents the duration it takes for 80% of students to finish (80th percentile timing). For testlets with insufficient data, an expected range for the timing is provided. The provided timing data can be found in the [Individual MAST Testlet Timing Estimate document](#).

### **Kite Parent Portal**

As part of the Federal Waiver granted to Montana, it is a requirement to disseminate student score reports to parents. We acknowledge that this poses a significant effort for some of our districts and we have been diligently working to solve this while in extended field testing. We are excited to announce that a Parent Portal will be available with the release of the Testing Window 3 Student Score Reports.

An [updated Educator Portal Manual](#) now includes an *Appendix E* with directions for setting up the parent-student connection in the Educator Portal. A [Parent Portal Manual](#) is also available as a resource for parents when trying to access their child(ren)'s score reports within the Parent Portal. A [Parent Portal video](#) is a great resource to share with parents as to how to log in to view their child(ren)'s score reports.

A reminder to understand and share out with your district's stakeholders the important considerations of interpreting MAST Student Score Reports while in Pilot this year. Please refer to the [School Score Report Dissemination Guidance document](#). In this document, you can find guidance on how to interpret the student score reports along with a Parent Template letter to share this important information to parents/guardians.

For the 2023-2024 school year, it is important to note that score reports include data on field test items. It is imperative for schools and families to understand while score reports can provide insight to how participating students performed on items aligned to topics taught in class, each question is still in the field testing phase and will undergo further analysis to ensure validity and reliability. Therefore, score reports should NOT be disseminated or saved in the following manners:

- Included in student cumulative files.
- Digitally included in district Student Information Systems (InfiniteCampus/ Power school)
- Used/included in IEP/504 determination, evaluation, or documentation
- Used to determine or influence student grades

### **Full MAST Participation**

Please refer to the following participation guidance. During the extended field testing of MAST, it is crucial to closely monitor testlet completion. Per the Federal Testing Waiver granted to Montana for the 2023-2024 MAST administration, districts that fully participate in MAST are exempt from taking the Smarter Balanced Assessment. As we enter the last two MAST testing windows, it is imperative to the success of the pilot that full participation is continued.

#### Through-Year (Form A) Participants:

- Each school participating in the MAST Through-Year Pilot is expected to assess all eligible students at a participation rate of at least 95% in accordance with section 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii) within each administration window.
- Full participation includes completion of all assigned ELA and math testlets assigned according to the submitted school curriculum alignment survey.
- Schools who do not complete assigned testlets with fidelity in at least four out of five windows may be required to take the Statewide Summative Assessment.
  - If individual students are not able to complete assigned testlets in any window due to a medical reason, schools are to report non-participation through the MontCAS Application in accordance with [state assessment policy](#).

If you have students that have transferred out of your district but are still showing in Kite, please reach out to the OPI Assessment Help Desk to get them manually exited 1-844-867-2569 or [opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov](mailto:opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov). *A reminder not to share any student Personally Identifiable Information (PII) in emails or voicemails.*

### **Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities**

The development of an innovative assessment necessitates ongoing user feedback throughout the development cycle. In our endeavor to create MAST, our testing partner, New Meridian, has devised a comprehensive user feedback schedule. This framework will guide the collection,

analysis, and integration of user input. By fostering a dynamic feedback loop, we aim to continuously refine the assessment, drawing upon your invaluable insights.

The Montana OPI and New Meridian cordially invite school districts to participate in shaping the future of state assessment. We urge you to lend your voice to this transformative initiative, helping to enhance assessment practices and better serve all students. Here are some ways you can get involved:

**1. Educator Item Review & Range-finding Cadres:** Teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and other specialists can directly participate in the test development process through select committees. These committees meet at a specified date and time to review test content and help determine scoring parameters for performance tasks.

**2. User Interviews:** Share your insights and feedback on various aspects of testlet configuration, reporting, and testlet design through individual interviews.

**3. Focus Groups:** Join focus groups aimed at discussing specific components of the assessment and providing input for improvement.

To sign up for any of these opportunities, please visit the [MAST Engagement Opportunities website](#). Your participation is invaluable in shaping the future of state assessment.

### **Dreambox Learning Opportunity for MAST Participants**

This year MAST Pilot Districts have access to DreamBox Math and Reading programs for students in grades 3-8. NEXT year all public school districts will have access to DreamBox in grades K-12. If you want to learn more about how to get started with DreamBox attend one of our live webinars and earn 1 PDU per session: register [here \[info.discoveryeducation.com\]](http://info.discoveryeducation.com). If you want to chat with Montana's PD Specialist, Natalee Hawks, click [here \[calendly.com\]](#) to find a time. Please email [Nhawks@discoveryed.com](mailto:Nhawks@discoveryed.com) with any questions.

### **Testing Windows and Testlet Information**

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 testlets delivered; ELA Performance Task optional*)

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

Sincerely,  
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