MAST Pilot Program
Frequently Asked Questions

What is MAST??
For years educators, parents and district administrators have called for a renewed testing and accountability system. In the winter of 2021-2022, the OPI submitted a proposal and received funding from a federal competitive state assessment project to pilot new approaches to state assessment. Montana’s proposal has been chosen for their innovation in proficiency, multiple measurements, and assessment of student growth.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has launched its Montana Alternative Student Testing (MAST) Pilot Program initiative to seek “through year” assessments as federally allowed by the U.S. Department of Education (USED) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015.

Why should my district participate?
Your district should participate because it will put you right on the cutting edge of educational assessment. You will have a real voice in the future of Montana’s assessment system. This is an opportunity to be a part of the future.

When do districts need to sign up?
Districts should sign up as soon as possible. Professional development will occur during the month of October to make sure participating districts and their involved staff have ample time to learn the platform and what is necessary to administer the testlets and learn about what data teachers and districts can access.

District leaders are encouraged to use this google form link to sign their district up to participate in the pilot: MAST Pilot Program Interest SY2022-2023 (google.com)

What grades are included in the pilot this year?
Grades 5 and 7.
Which subjects are included in the assessment pilot?
Math and English Language Arts (ELA)

This is a pilot, what kind of data will the State need in order to move forward with the new assessment system?
We will need to see 1,600 students taking each assessment, in each grade. Students may participate in the pilots for both the Math and ELA.

Is there a limit to how many districts can be involved?
No, we are seeking a minimum of 30 school districts to participate.

What kind of reports will be provided for the pilot?
Student level raw score reports will be available. The reports will include the Common Core State Standard associated with the item and show if the student got the question correct or incorrect.

Will there be training on the platform?
Yes, during the month of October OPI and New Meridian will provide training.

Who created the tests?
Montana teachers participated in an Item Writer Workshop during the week of July 11th, 2022. During this workshop, Montana teachers helped write the items for the testlets.

How long are each of the testlets?
Each testlet is anticipated to take 10-15 minutes to complete and can be given within a single class period or spread across multiple class periods if preferred.

Will there be a tutorial for students to become familiar with the tools prior to testing?
Yes, a tutorial will be available prior to testing.

How much time do we have to administer each testlet?
There are four administration windows. The administration windows are each open for four weeks. Each window will include three math testlets and the two ELA testlets. It is expected that all testlets for a subject could be administered individually throughout the administration window or they could be administered as a group in a single class setting.

When is the first administration window?
November 2022

Will there be help available during the administration windows?
Yes, there will be a customer support number provided to all participating schools and districts.

If I sign up, do I have to participate in all four administration windows throughout the year?
Yes, you are being asked to commit to testing your students once during each of the four administration windows. The first window will be in November 2022.

**Will we need to roster our students?**
Yes. Rostering will be similar to the TIDE interface.

**Is this a computer adaptive test?**
No, the current test is not computer adaptive format.

**Do we also have to deliver the SBAC this year?**
Yes. This is a pilot and the SBAC administration is still required for the 2022-23 school year.

**Do we have to pay for these testlets?**
No, this pilot is being funded by Education First, a non-profit organization for the 2022-2023 school year.

**Is there any financial support for districts to participate?**
Not at this time.

**Where can we find additional information?**
The OPI website provides substantial additional information on the MAST program located here.

Additionally, the following are useful contacts for questions:
Samantha Walsh, Project Manager, Samantha.Walsh@mt.gov
Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen, Sharyl.Allen@mt.gov
Julie Murgel, Chief Operating Officer, Julie.murgel@mt.gov
Chris Noel, Teaching and Learning Senior Manager, Chris.Noel@mt.gov

Additional information directly from the test vendor:
New Meridian, opipilot@newmeridianscorp.org