



September 2023 Superintendent Update

1. OPI Communication and Support for District and County Superintendents

Starting on September 6, 2023, the OPI will:

- Host weekly office hours for Superintendents every Wednesday from 10:00-11:00am. The office hours will be held in Zoom at:
 - Join Zoom Meeting <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/85381842220?pwd=cXpNTjlxenlYTytWNzJLTXFVSGVyUT09>
 - Meeting ID: 853 8184 2220 Password: 001745
 - Dial by Telephone +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 853 8184 2220 Password: 001745 Find your local number: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/u/kvr6OdGGz>
- Publish a summary and a frequently asked questions document on the OPI webpage after the weekly office hours. The summary and FAQ will be located on the main OPI webpage at opi.mt.gov. This will be located under a tab titled, “School Leadership Support.”
- Open an email box for District and County Superintendents to send questions or requests for additional information to be addressed during the weekly office hours to: OPIschoolleadersupport@mt.gov.
- Send via email to the Montana Association of School Superintendents (MASS) region and Montana Association of County School Superintendents (MACSS) presidents, a monthly update that correlates with the OPI Compass. This email update will contain links to key information in the monthly Compass edition that are relevant to District and County Superintendents.

2. Seeking Additional Districts Interested in Participating in the MAST Pilot

We are seeking districts that will help pilot a Form B MAST assessment that will be structured like a traditional summative assessment. Below is important information to help determine your district's participation and involvement in MAST.

Your district would benefit from the opportunity to familiarize with the MAST testlets and the Kite platform prior to statewide implementation of MAST in SY 2024-2025.

What is MAST?

The Montana Alternative Student Testing (MAST) Pilot Program seeks to improve Montana's current assessment model. Rather than a single end-of-year assessment, the test will be broken up over the course of the academic year. The “Through-Year Assessment” design benefits students, teachers, parents, and administrators by providing actionable data at the beginning of and throughout the school year by providing a meaningful model of student growth over the academic school year (i.e., within year so teachers can act as opposed to between years). The ultimate goal with the “through year” model is to support the formative instructional process that is closer to the local decisions required to support teaching and learning needs.

The benefits of participating in the MAST pilot:

Your district, in partnership with the Montana OPI and our testing vendor, New Meridian©, will help to develop an improved assessment system that will accurately reflect the needs of our students, teachers, and administrators while providing useful flexibility in terms of test administration. Your students and educators get an opportunity to familiarize with the MAST testlets and the Kite platform prior to statewide implementation of MAST in SY 2024-2025.

What is Form B and why is it needed?

In order to establish a fair, valid, and reliable assessment, foundational data and analysis is needed to support the MAST as it moves towards being fully operational SY 2024-2025. Our testing partner, New Meridian, has developed two forms (a form is defined as the composite set of items across all testlets) for pilot study administrations—Form A and Form B. The forms are identical in the number of testlets, and range of standards assessed. Form A will be administered to students in grades 3-8 in Mathematics and ELA from previously recruited Montana districts.

To establish summative claims that can be generalized to the population, an additional version of the testlets are to be administered—Form B. This additional version of the testlets would be more like an end-of-year summative test. Form B serves as the base form for the operational field test. Form B will be used to establish the item and summative scale.

Your district's participation would help develop and establish the item and summative scale of the MAST assessment. The summative scores derived from Form B must demonstrate the comparability of summative scores derived from Form A in a process called equating. The process of equating allows for the adjustment of scores for students who take different versions of the form (e.g., forms that were developed using the same content and statistical specifications). The accurate adjustment of scores allows for the comparability of scores derived from different versions of the form. Comparability enables policymakers, educators, and parents to make comparisons across districts, schools, and student groups.

Requirements:

At least 95% of all eligible students must complete all MAST Math and ELA testlets during the 5th testing window (April 15 - May 10, 2024).

3. 2023 Accreditation Process

- **On October 2, 2023** OPI will publish guidance documents and information outlining the expectations for the 2023-2024 SY accreditation process and the Integrated Strategic Action Plan (ISAP) template questions.
- **The ISAP will be due to be entered into an accreditation platform due on March 29, 2024.**
- The accreditation portal where the ISAP will be entered is being built inside the Teach Montana platform. The platform will open for entering information and uploading documents in January 2024.
- In November 2023, OPI will have available a new and improved Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) tool. Districts can choose to use the OPI CNA or an alternative.

Year 1 requirements:

[2023-2024SY Accreditation Process Checklist](#)

What process will be used to accredit schools for the school year 2023-2024?

Year 1- "Coach and Guide"

Focus on **Support, Mechanisms and Methodology**

ISAP Components	Assurance Standards	Student Performance Standards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CNA with Gap Analysis to set goals and academic programming • Family and Community Engagement Plan • Graduate Profile- a plan to show progress (2-3 action steps to meet graduate profile) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ no set template - districts have flexibility to individualize 	<p>General Assurances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Leadership • Academic Requirements 	<p>Proficiency and Growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SBAC • MAPS • I-Ready • STAR • Dibels <p><i>*A valid and reliable assessment the district is already using.</i></p>

Putting Montana Students First 

Year 1 “Coach and Guide” Checklist

- September 1- November 1: Annual Data Collection Window
 - No longer in TEAMS—utilize [AIM](#) (Infinite Campus)
 - [Updates Presentation](#)
 - Contact: [Nicole Thuotte](#)
- September 28- 29: Professional Development Opportunity
 - [Registration Link](#)
- October 2: Criterion Reference Guide to Districts
 - Guidance for the Accreditation Process for Year 1 will be available to the public.
- October 18- 20: Professional Development Opportunity
 - MCEL, Billings
- November 1: Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) Available
- November 13: Professional Development Opportunity
 - Helena/Hybrid
- January 2024 (*tentative*): New Accreditation Tool Available
- January 25-26: Professional Development Opportunity
 - Great Falls/Hybrid
- February 20-22: Work Sessions
 - Virtual
- March 1: Work Session
 - Helena
- March 5-7: Work Sessions
 - Virtual
- March 29 (*tentative date*): Accreditation Plan due to the OPI
 - Due at the end of March; date to still be approved.

Year 1 Tasks to Accomplish

- Enter AIM Data by November 1.
- Complete a CNA with a Gap Analysis utilizing stakeholder engagement.
- Set 2-3 Action Steps that will be taken from the CNA/Gap Analysis aligned to the Graduate Profile
- Develop a stakeholder team for the Graduate Profile
- Hold several meetings with the stakeholder team for the Graduate Profile to begin the development process.

- Provide documentation on what was accomplished in Year 1 for the Graduate Profile for the Accreditation Plan due in March ([10.55.601](#))
- Establish a Professional Development Plan ([10.55.714](#))
- Establish a Family and Community Engagement Plan that aligns with the ISAP ([10.55.722](#))
- Establish Academic Programming Plan (10.55.901, 10.55.902, and 10.55.904) including how the education program enables students to recognize the district and unique cultural heritages of American Indians.

What revisions in Chapter 55 emphasize a shift to a proficiency-based learning model?

- The accreditation process plays a major role in ensuring a personalized, proficiency and quality, **learner-centered system** aligned to a district **graduate profile**. [Portrait of a Graduate Examples](#)
- **Student performance outcomes** are a result of how well all parts of the education system meet the needs of students.
- The proposed student performance standards outcomes or outputs are **growth, proficiency, learning environment, college and career readiness, and opportunity gaps**.
- The **assurance standards** are the inputs, which include School Leadership, Education Opportunity, Academic Requirements, and Program Areas.
- The **Integrated Strategic Action Plan** must clarify what specific steps must be taken to achieve the district graduate profile and reflect a continuous improvement process.
- The grade bands **provide support for teachers in planning for, teaching, and assessing student learning at various points along the continuum**. Grade bands recognize that learning develops over time and across multiple contexts. Grade levels provide a way to look at learning in shorter periods of time.

Separation of Accreditation and Annual Data Collection

Annual Data Collection will still take place in the fall.

- Moving from TEAMS to Infinite Campus (TOE, Teacher-Class, etc.)
 - Compensation Expenditure TOE for FY2023 (Due in December) will still take place in TEAMS
 - Please contact Nicole Thuotte and the AIM Team for questions on that process.

4. Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Funds - ESSER

National and state comparison, views of allocated, spending, demographics and other categories are updated regularly. (Select Spent on left, then ESSER on right and Select MT from the map of squares to see specific district level data.)

Going forward OPI is continuing to ensure compliance through a broad and in-depth system of support which includes monitoring through Self-Assessment survey beginning in September and due in November along with ESSER II Final Expenditure Reporting. The ESSER Team is also conducting Annual Reviews with districts to help them update documentation as closing dates of September 2023 (ESSER II) and September 2024 (ESSER III) approach.

OPI ESSER Review/Monitoring Process: As part of federal ESSER compliance OPI is performing several monitoring activities. OPI has been assisting LEAs in mitigating risks to avoid audit findings by **reviewing requests for funding** and providing **assistance with compliance**. From June through December, we will be contacting schools to conduct monitoring assessments and helping to strengthen ESSER documentation. Part of this process will include a Self-Monitoring Assessment Survey. This survey was developed through feedback from the ESSER Review Committee (LEA and OPI staff), review of other state monitoring processes, and direction provided by the Department of Education ESSER Monitoring. The **Self-Monitoring survey made available in September 2023** is required to be completed by the Final Expenditure Report process for ESSER II in November 2023.

ESSER Information by district, individual request, and planned uses

Application	Use Of Funds	Allocated	Expended	Balance
ESSER I Consolidated	(blank)	\$ 23,027.00	\$ 23,027.00	\$ -
ESSER I Consolidated Total		\$ 23,027.00	\$ 23,027.00	\$ -
ESSER II Consolidated	Address Learning Loss	\$ 10,737.00	\$ 6,253.00	\$ 4,484.00
	Indirect Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Minimize Spread of Infection	\$ 15,429.00	\$ 14,916.00	\$ 513.00
	Supplemental Learning	\$ 50,134.00	\$ 50,044.00	\$ 90.00
	Supplemental Services	\$ 10,392.00	\$ 10,392.00	\$ -
ESSER II Consolidated Total		\$ 86,692.00	\$ 81,605.00	\$ 5,087.00
ESSER III Consolidated	Address Learning Loss	\$ 155,184.00	\$ 95,069.00	\$ 60,115.00
	Indirect Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
	Minimize Spread of Infection	\$ 15,937.00	\$ -	\$ 15,937.00
	Supplemental Learning	\$ 1,324.00	\$ -	\$ 1,324.00
	Technology	\$ 4,800.00	\$ -	\$ 4,800.00
ESSER III Consolidated Total		\$ 177,245.00	\$ 95,069.00	\$ 82,176.00
		\$ 286,964.00	\$ 199,701.00	\$ 87,263.00

For more information on ESSER please click [here](#) or contact Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

5. FY2024 Budget Reporting

To access the **Budget Instructions**, go to:

School Finance> [Budgets](#)> Budget Spreadsheet & Guidance> Budget Instructions

A checklist is provided on Page 5 of the instructions.

Once you have successfully completed the TFS, follow the steps below to access the Budget:

1. Click on the Data Entry tab.
2. Hover your cursor down to the Budget. Another menu box will slide open. Choose Step 1: Taxable Valuation.
3. Highlight your district or click on the Select All Districts button.

Once you complete each step, you may move on to the other Budget steps.

FY2024 Budget reports are due to the county superintendent within 3 days after the budget adoption meeting [20-9-131 MCA](#).

School districts must submit both the TFS and Budget reports electronically to the Office of Public Instruction no later than **September 15, 2023**.

School Finance Open Office Hours

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will be holding virtual [open office hours](#), to work with Clerks and Superintendents with any questions they may have on the TFS or Budget. These meetings will cover a variety of pre-arranged topics and any questions that come up during the meeting. The meetings will be hosted by Amanda Zigan, Computer Support Specialist at the OPI.

The training will be held via Zoom two times per week. The Office Hours will occur through September as long as there is interest.

Meetings will be every Tuesday and Thursday. Please bring your questions. Audience participation is encouraged!

Tuesday afternoons: 1:00pm-3:00pm

Join Zoom Meeting <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/85926241052?pwd=bUVVNfRd1o2WC9QMkF1dGhNa0hJZz09>

Meeting ID: 859 2624 1052 Password: 12345

Thursday mornings: 9:00am-11:00am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/81581528874?pwd=WkhCUnYzaENpbDBSc0xiY1JBS09GZz09>

Meeting ID: 815 8152 8874

Password: 12345

Other helpful links include:

[Budget Timeline](#)

[Historical TFS](#) - Reference for past years TFS reports

[TRS Employee Reports](#) - Teachers Retirement Net Pension Liability

[PERS Employee Reports](#) - Public Employees Retirement Net Pension Liability

[ESSER Consolidated Guidance](#) – Accounting Guidance for ESSER TFS reporting

[ESSER Expense and Revenue Comparison](#) - ESSER Revenue and Expenditure Report by year

[Preliminary Budget Data Reports](#) - Preliminary Budget Data Sheets (PBDS)

For questions please contact:

Email School Finance at OPISchoolFinance@mt.gov

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