

Montana Statewide Assessment Results

TALKING POINTS FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT LEADERS



For discussions with School Boards, Parents, Community Members, and Other Stakeholders

Introduction

Purpose of Assessments:

- Montana's statewide assessments, including MAST, MSA, AMSA, MSAA, and ACT, measure student proficiency in alignment with Montana's content standards.

New Baseline Established:

- The 2024–2025 school year establishes a new baseline for student proficiency in grades 3–8. Proficiency standards were set for each grade level by Montana educators.

Other Assessments Continue as Usual:

- Alternate math and ELA, Grade 5 and 8 MSA science, Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA), and grade 11 ACT remained consistent in administration and reporting from prior years.

Key Messages

- **New Baseline for 3–8 math and ELA:** With the 2024–2025 statewide implementation of MAST, results establish a baseline. Comparisons to prior years proficiency rates are not valid.
 - Each grade level's proficiency was set by Montana educators based on the 2024-2025 administration data.
 - This year's data provide the foundation for tracking trends in student proficiency over time.
- **Other Assessments Remain Consistent:** Science (MSA/AMSA), MSAA, and ACT administration and reporting continue unchanged

Talking Points by Stakeholder Group

School Boards

- Emphasize new 3-8 math and ELA baseline proficiency.
- Discuss differences between district and statewide assessment uses.
- Discuss implications for strategic planning, resource allocation, and interventions.

Parents & Families

- Explain that MAST assesses learning multiple times and gives a complete picture of achievement.
- Highlight achievement levels and available resources to support learning.
- Provide historical state and local context for science and ACT results.

Teachers

- Focus on using MAST Through-Year and Testlet Reports to inform instruction and differentiate support.

Principals / Building Leaders

- Discuss school-level trends, professional development needs, and monitoring student progress over time.

District Leaders / Superintendents

- Focus on longitudinal trends where appropriate, overall district performance, and alignment with strategic goals.
- Use data to plan interventions and allocate resources.

Community Members / Local Media

- Emphasize transparency and baseline year for 3–8 MAST.
- Highlight trends, not year-to-year comparisons, and community-wide educational efforts.
- Provide historical state and local context for science and ACT results.

TALKING POINTS



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is this the same data that was released with the MAST Through-Year Score Reports?

A: No. The MAST Through-Year Score Reports show all students who participated in MAST throughout any point in the 2024-2025 school year. Additional data reconciliation occurs between Through-Year Reporting and statewide data release to identify which students were eligible for reporting.

Q: How is participation calculated for statewide results?

A: Participation is calculated by dividing the number of students receiving a summative score by the number of students eligible, expected to participate, and receive a summative score. Participation exemptions include English Learners in the US for under 12 months (only for ELA) and approved medical exemptions. In MAST, some window-by-window exemptions still allow for students to receive a summative score and be included as a participant.

Q: How are these data used?

A: Data should be used to monitor student proficiency and longitudinal trends, guide instructional planning and resource allocation, and identify student groups in need of additional support.

Note: Summative results should not be used for grading students, evaluating teachers, or making high-stakes decisions independently.

Q: What student groups are reported?

A: Groups include grade, subject, and demographics (race/ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, English Learners).

Q: How small are reporting groups?

A: Small groups are suppressed for privacy. Any cell in GEMS representing 5 or fewer students must be suppressed.

Q: Can these results be compared to prior years?

A: Only for science and high school results. Grades 3–8 MAST results establish a new baseline for 3-8 grade math and ELA proficiency rates.

Q: What support is available to access interpret the data?

A: OPI provides interpretive guides and overview flyers for students, teachers, building leaders, district leaders, and parents found on the [MAST Portal](#).

Additional Resources

- [GEMS Student Data](#)
- [Statewide Assessment Cut Scores](#)
- [MAST Score Report Release Resources](#)
- [MAST Portal](#)
- [OPI Assessment Webpage](#)