Special Issue

As Montana schools end classes for the 2019–2020 school year, this issue shares updates with state assessments including plans for the 2020–2021 school year. In this issue, information on the testing, accountability, and reporting waivers and assessment-related summer opportunities for educators are included.

Table of Contents

In this issue, you will find four sections tailored to these state assessment updates:

- Assessment Updates
- State Assessment & Accountability Activities
- Webinars & Educator Resources
- Contact and Support Information
Assessment News

This section is tailored to System Test Coordinators (STC) with a lens for providing the current news, testing alerts, and changes slated for each of these areas. Use these hyperlinks to navigate to each section of the Bulletin:

- OPI News
- MontCAS News
- Smarter News
- ACT News
- MSAA News
- MSA News
- AMSA News
- ACCESS for ELLs / WIDA Screener
- NAEP and International

OPI News

The OPI is working diligently with its test delivery contractors to ensure early access to instructional tools and to reduce administrative requirements where possible. The following list of 9 enhancements details what you can expect for next school year:

2. Early access to Smarter Balanced interims scheduled August 24, 2020.
3. Reduced test setup for interims with an OPI student rollover file from spring 2020. This rollover file will include student demographics and test setting details (e.g., accommodations, supports, and tools); therefore, it is imperative schools verify the accuracy of these data before assigning or administering any interims. The OPI will issue more guidance on this topic closer to the start of the 2020–2021 school year.
4. Fewer user management steps for district staff. The OPI requires strict user management policies at the local level to protect student information; however, this year districts can manage this locally through user export and import steps without deactivating all users. Annually, designated users must update passwords and accounts with school e-mail accounts. Only schools with non-verified educational e-mail domains will be asked to re-activate users. The OPI will issue more guidance on this topic closer to the start of the 2020–2021 school year.
5. Practice and Training tests are scheduled for release in early September.
6. Science interims at Grades 5, 8, and 11 are scheduled for September 14, 2020. For more information, see the MSA News section.
7. The OPI has launched two Task Forces (Montana Flex and Montana Learn) to help with adapting to the new normal in Montana's K–12 public schools following COVID-19.
8. The OPI continues to explore remote proctoring and other options to alleviate logistical pressures, provide relief to schools, and plan for the future. Progress on these fronts will be updated on 2020 Montana Waiver Website and shared during the bi-weekly webinar series.
9. The OPI plans to release a website designed and dedicated for STCs only – STC Corner.
MontCAS News

This section pertains to any updates or news under the umbrella of the MontCAS program not specific to any one state assessment.

Portal Link: MontCAS Application

The OPI thanks the dedicated staff for the hard work, training, and overall efforts in preparing students for the state assessments and to meet the statutory and regulatory requirements under state and federal law. We look forward to our continued partnership as we strive to improve student outcomes across the state.

STCs can complete the 2020 STC MontCAS Debrief Form between now and Friday, June 26th to receive recognition for the professional learning required to administer the state tests. The purpose of this form is to provide renewal units for STCs and collect feedback to help improve the MontCAS program and future test administrations by learning what went well, what could have gone better, and how the OPI can provide resources to support school system needs moving forward.

Q: HOW DO I GET MY OPI RENEWAL UNITS? A: STCs receive a certificate of renewal units upon the completion of the 2020 STC MontCAS Debrief Form. Please direct any questions about this event to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.

NEW for 2020–2021 School Year – Electronic Test Security Agreements

The Assessment Division continues to use educator feedback to improve assessment related sites, responsibilities, and tools. Beginning the 2020–
2021 school year, the collection of the Test Security Agreements (TSAs) started its migration to an online electronic format. STC agreements will again be accessible through the MontCAS Application, Authorized Representative (AR) TSAs will be electronically submitted via the TEAMS Report, and Test Administrator (TA) TSAs will be electronically signed in online portals. Watch for more information about submitting TSAs in upcoming assessment bulletins.

**Assessment Roadshow**

The Assessment Division is hosting nine Assessment Roadshow professional learning events across the MASS regions this fall. This professional learning is in addition to the annual ASSIST Conference to ensure our MontCAS program provides training to schools across the state of Montana. The primary mission of this training will be on building coherence throughout the MontCAS program to support schools with improving the overall quality and processes of assessment and to prepare schools and students for success. Visit the Assessment Roadshow Website if you would like to learn more about these fall trainings.

Please direct any questions about this event to the OPI Assessment Help Desk at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.

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**Smarter News**

**ELA and Math**

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades 3–8 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

**Portal Link:** AIR Portal

The Digital Library was retired on May 28 and replaced by Tools For Teachers which will go-live on June 16 for all current user roles in the TIDE portal. Guidance for the remote use of interim assessments can be found in the new Interims: Remote Teaching and Learning website, alongside the state guidance document for administering interims remotely.

**Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs)**

The Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment Blocks (IABs) show individual student attainment of the math and ELA standards for specific learning targets and connect to online instructional resources.

**Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs)**

Districts are encouraged to administer the Smarter Balanced Interim Comprehensive Assessments (ICAs) this fall to establish a benchmark and show growth over the school year on the same scale as the summative assessment.

**Tools for Teachers**

The Tools for Teachers resource is brand new! It contains high-quality tools and supports carefully crafted to save teachers time, streamline lesson planning, and help students learn. Educators will have preview access to Tools for Teachers on June 16, and by Fall 2020 after the first batch of
content has been added, the website will be fully released for use by educators. A PowerPoint walkthrough of the site is available for review.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Duane Schlabach at 406-444-0748 or Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov

ACT News
ELA, Mathematics, and Science

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grade 11 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Link: Pearson Access Next (PA Next)

ACT Date Flexibility
This year’s juniors, for whom spring 2020 ACT testing was cancelled, will have free, voluntary opportunities to take the ACT on October 6 and October 20, 2020 with accommodated testing windows also opening on those dates. Rosters from spring 2020 will roll over, so schools will need to “Manage Participation” and “Confirm Enrollments” in August via Pearson Access Next. Previous approvals of accommodations will stand, and additional requests can be submitted over the summer.

STCs should keep contact information up to date in Pearson Access Next, as ACT sends email communications directly to the school and district coordinators listed in that system. Note that communications over the summer and early fall will focus on the voluntary administration occurring on October 6 and October 20.

For those schools participating in the special ACT administration in October, be aware that set-up deadlines are likely to occur in August before your school is in session. It will be particularly important to look for the Fall Schedule of Events on the Montana ACT site to facilitate early planning.

Spring 2021 ACT with Writing testing dates have been set.
Test Window 1
Standard Paper Testing: March 23
Accommodated Paper Testing: March 23–April 2
Online Testing: March 23–April 1 (Tues.–Thurs. ONLY)

Test Window 2
Standard Paper Testing: April 6
Accommodated Paper Testing: April 6–16
Online Testing: April 6–15 (Tues.–Thurs. ONLY)

Test Window 3
Standard Paper Testing: April 20
Accommodated Paper Testing: April 20–30
Online Testing: April 20–29 (Tues.–Thurs. ONLY)
Accommodations webinars
ACT will be hosting Open Office hours on Mondays from 12:00–1:00 MT beginning June 1, 2020 and through May 31, 2021. This will be a question-and-answer format, with attendees typing in questions for an ACT accommodations analyst to answer. (Remember not to include any student names, IDs, or other identifiable information in your questions.) Topics include:

- Qualification guidelines for specific accommodations and supports
- Documentation that is required
- How to appeal decisions

The sessions are not state-specific and are open to all states participating in state testing.

Montana PreACT
Due to the events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, many high school sophomores were not afforded the opportunity to take the statewide PreACT test in spring 2020. Montana GEAR UP partner schools will be the only schools conducting fall make ups of the PreACT.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education and the Office of Public Instruction are pleased to announce that the PreACT test will be made available to all high school sophomores in the spring of 2021. Details will be posted on the Montana PreACT site as the testing window approaches.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

MSAA News
Alternate Assessment, ELA and Math

This assessment must be annually administered to only students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3–8 and 11 using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Link: MSAA System

Students eligible to participate in alternate assessments make up approximately 1% of the total student population. The decision to move a special education student to an alternate assessment has significant implications for the path that a student will take in their K–12 school career. It means the student is not able to participate in the general education curriculum even when provided with accommodations. A student who participates in alternate assessment requires a modified curriculum. See Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments document.

For more guidance to serve these students during the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit the OPI’s Special Education COVID-19 information page.
This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades 5 and 8 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Links: AIR Portal

Development of Montana’s comprehensive assessment system for science continues! In spring 2021, the MSA and AMSA will be delivered as operational field tests, integrating items developed for Montana with items previously field tested in our partner states. Results will be available after the testing window, and accountability determinations can be made after the test validation activities are completed. Educators interested in participating in development activities can complete the 2021 Science Content Development Team application.

Science Interims
The OPI is working with our science assessment vendor to make available interim assessments for Grades 5, 8, and 11. Each of these resources will present a cluster of items focused on a particular three-dimensional standard. The science interims will be available through the same portal that houses the Smarter IACs, IABs, and FIABs, and will generate automatic score reports in the same reporting system. We look forward to sharing more about the Science Interims as information becomes available!

Formative Activities
Our recent webinar on OPI’s science assessment program was a great success, thanks to the educators that participated. One theme that emerged during discussion was the sharing of classroom activities to support formative assessment. You can access the webinar recording the list of resources shared here under the “MontCAS Updates Webinars 2019-2020 School Year” accordion.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

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Portal Links: AIR Portal

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For more information or resources on this program, please contact Rawnie Crasco at 406-444-5899 or Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov.

ACCESS for ELLs News

English Language Proficiency Assessment

This assessment must be annually administered to all students in Grades K–12 who are indicated to take the assessment based on the results of the WIDA Screener (unless the child is eligible for the alternate) using the OPI’s published guidance for test administration and test security.

Portal Links: Training and Online Resources
 Assessment Management System (AMS)

Online Score Reports
The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs electronic Score Reports were available on WIDA AMS on Friday, April 24, 2020.

To view score reports, Select Test Results from the Report Delivery menu to display the Test Results page. You can use the Administration, District, School and Report drop down menus to filter the display.

Individual Student Reports are also available in various languages in WIDA AMS Report Delivery > On Demand Reports. Select the Administration, District, School, and language to generate reports. Click Find Students to populate a list of the students tested at that school.

WIDA offers several online resources for using and understanding ACCESS for ELLs score reports. These resources can be accessed in the WIDA Resource Library.

Printed Score Reports
The printed WIDA score reports were scheduled to be delivered May 12, 2020. Some reports may be delayed due to “shelter in place” orders across the country. For more information on the 2019–2020 score reports refer the ACCESS for ELLs News section.

WIDA AMS updates and changes
The WIDA AMS site will be undergoing updates during the month of June 2020. On June 26, users will see an updated WIDA AMS login page and primary navigation features, a new interface for Central Office Services, and enhancements to Site Selection. A recording of a Q&A Webinar on these changes can be found in the Secure Portal Download Library [lists.wisc.edu].

If you currently have access to the 2019–2020 WIDA Screener Administration, your permission and certifications will be moved to the new 2020–2021 WIDA Screener Administration between June 8 and June 23, 2020. Other changes to watch for:

All Speaking and Writing responses from 2019–2020 must be scored prior to June 25, 2020. Once the 2020–2021 WIDA Screener Administration opens, the 19–20 WIDA Screener Administration will change to read only.

WIDA Exit Criteria
The exit criteria for Montana’s EL students takes into account three main criteria including 1) English Language Proficiency, 2) academic achievement, and 3) language skills that support full participation in society. The details for the exit criteria, along with the monitoring plan requirement for two years, can be found in the Montana OPI English Learner Guidance for School Districts document.

The OPI intends to implement new exit criteria pending final approval from the U.S. Department of Education during the 2020–2021 school year. Below are the abbreviated identification steps for English Learners under the remote-learning realm:

- Districts administer the Home Language Survey. District screens potential ELs within 14 days of enrollment using an approved WIDA screener (see remote-learning guidance document).
- Newly identified students AND transfer students are marked correctly in AIM.
- Parents of newly identified ELs receive an EL designation and placement letter within the first 30 days of enrollment.
- ALL EL students are marked in AIM with the primary home language and language of impact coded.

This Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure remote-learning guidance document provides a means of provisionally identifying ELs in times of extended school closures where remote-learning plans have been approved by the Governor and school districts are providing a continuity of educational services online and face-to-face screening is not possible.

NAEP News

National and International Assessment Studies

This assessment is administered to ONLY selected schools and students. This year NAEP will be given in mathematics and reading for ages 9, 13 and 17 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate).

Portal Links: My NAEP

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is a congressionally mandated program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) within the U.S. Department of Education. The National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB) oversees and sets policy for NAEP.

NAEP is not administered in all schools. The schools and students selected to participate in NAEP represent the demographic and geographic composition of the nation as a whole. The participation of selected schools and students
is critical to ensuring accurate performance estimates for different groups of
students in states and districts across the country. NAEP is the only
nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America’s
students know and can do in various subject areas.

NAGB was created by Congress in 1988 as an independent, nonpartisan
board to set policy for NAEP, also known as The Nation’s Report Card. In
overseeing The Nation’s Report Card, NAGB identifies subjects to be tested,
determines the content and achievement levels for each assessment,
approves all test questions, and takes steps to improve the reporting of
results.

For more information or resources on this program, please contact Shantel
Niederstadt at 406-444-3450 or SNiederstadt@mt.gov.

2020 Montana Waivers

Testing, Accountability and Reporting Waivers

Public participation matters! The OPI is conducting an extensive public comment between now and July 17,
2020 on the assessment, accountability, reporting, and fiscal flexibility waivers. The purpose of public comment is to
ensure all stakeholder voices are heard to provide “real-world” concerns. The 2020 state and federal waivers are
important as they provide school districts with some relief and the ability to focus locally on the basic educational
services and needs of students, but the OPI needs public comment to gauge the climate and realities these significant
waivers pose at the local level. The OPI intends to use the comments to strengthen the quality and relevancy of
resources and address these five questions:

- What is impacted?
- What do we know today?
- What don’t we know?
- What questions do we have?
- What needs do we have?

Please visit the 2020 Montana Waiver Website to obtain information on these waivers and participate in the public
comment process by completing the Public Comment Survey. For questions on the waivers or to submit public
comment, please direct these to essainput@mt.gov.

All Content is Posted on the 2020 Montana Waiver Website

Zoom Webinar Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
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| Thursday June 18 | Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #5  
[https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/254699718](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/254699718)
Meeting ID: 254 699 718 |
| Thursday July 2 | Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #6  
[https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/517311509](https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/517311509)
Meeting ID: 517 311 509 |
Educator Opportunities

June Webinar – STC Focus Group
The OPI Assessment Division will be hosting a focus group specifically for STCs. STCs are invited to provide feedback on a newly designed STC website. The focus group will meet via webinar on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 from 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Information for joining the focus group is found below.

- Join the webinar from your computer, tablet or smartphone.
  https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/511102621

- You can also dial in using your phone.
  United States: +1 (571) 317-3122
  Access Code: 511-102-621

The Assessment Division will be providing educators with opportunities to get involved in the program design, development, and validation activities for the state assessments throughout the summer.

If you are interested in any of these events, please contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk. All questions can be directed to OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 1-844-867-2569.
Contact Information

Assessment Team

Assessment Division
844-867-2569
OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov

Marcy Fortner
Data Control Specialist
mfortner@mt.gov

Duane Schlabach
Assessment Specialist
Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov

Ashley McGrath
State Assessment Director
amcgrath@mt.gov

Rawnie Crasco
Assessment Specialist
Rawnie.Crasco@mt.gov

VACANT
EL Assessment Specialist

Shantel Niederstadt
NAEP State Coordinator
sniederstadt@mt.gov

Additional Contacts

VACANT
Digital Library State Lead

Marisa Graybill
Digital Library State Lead
Marisa.Graybill@mt.gov

Paula Schultz
Smarter Balanced Accommodations
pschultz2@mt.gov

Yvonne Field
Assessment & Accountability Specialist
YField@mt.gov