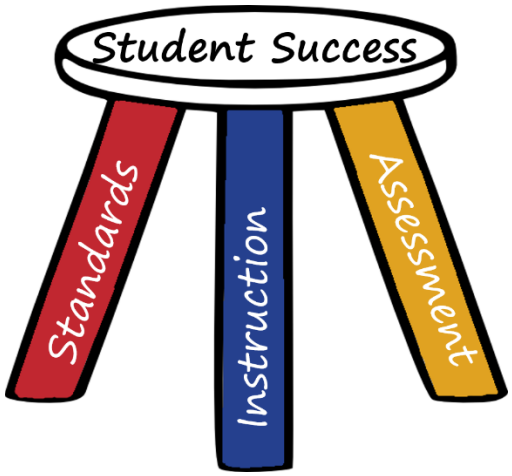
NOVEMBER 2021
ASSESSMENT BULLETIN

OPI Student Safety and Support Page



Assessment Quick Links

1-844-867-2569

- OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov
- October 2021 OPI Assessment Bulletin
- Test Window Calendar
- Test Security
- Student Participation & Eligibility
- Staying Informed with Testing Updates and Alerts
- Accessibility Resources
- Parent Corner

Testing Alerts and Updates: We thank the Assessment Bulletin readers for the planning, preparation, training, and overall effort to support state assessment at the local level and to the meet statutory and regulatory requirements. We recognize the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had, and continues to have, on elementary and secondary schools across Montana. The OPI will continue to listen to and seek flexibilities and options for school districts within the law. In this issue, we provide guidance for statewide assessments with the priority centered around schools safely reopening. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provisions are in place for this 2021-2022 school year including the annual testing requirement so all children can have fair and equitable opportunities to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging academic content standards. This guidance stems from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Restart and Recovery Considerations for Teaching and Learning.

Table of Contents

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

Assessment News

This section is tailored to System Test Coordinators (STC) with a lens for providing the current news, testing alerts, and changes planned for each of these program areas. The OPI Assessment Unit Mission Statement:

1. **Mentor** schools through the local roles and responsibilities related to administering state assessments in compliance with federal and state law.
2. **Foster** critical partnerships with stakeholders to build strong local assessment and data practices.
3. **Measure** student participation, proficiency, and progress on state content standards over time and help monitor and address educational needs for all learners.
4. **Provide** meaningful, timely, accurate, understandable, and transparent information to the public and families on achievement indicators and to support education information processes at the local and state level.
5. **Help** the public understand performance on achievement indicators and inequities across schools, so all students have equitable opportunities to access high-quality education.
6. **Advance** teaching and learning through the implementation of balanced systems and continuous improvement processes.
7. **Offer** high-quality technical assistance and professional learning to support test administration and implementation of equitable balanced assessment systems.
8. **Pursue** excellence using the highest professional and technical standards for evidence-based practices and data-driven decision-making.

OPI News

OPI
Office of
Public
Instruction

This section pertains to the policies, procedures, and updates from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) program.
Portal Link: OPI Website

Score Reports: State assessment results provide information to the public and families that supports the educational needs and processes at the local and state level. We commend Montana schools for their focus on putting students first and for the manner in which they prioritized the safety, health, and well-being of every child this past academic year. View the OPI Score Report and Timeline Memo for more details.

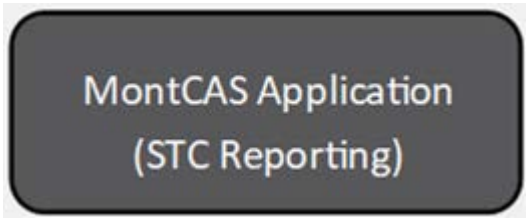
Note: Specific usernames and passwords allow access to confidential school and student data. All educators involved in the administration of state assessments are responsible for maintaining the privacy and security of all student records as specified in the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and by state law.

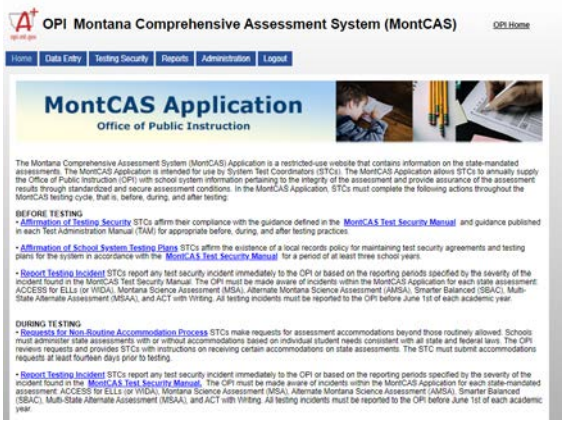
MontCAS News

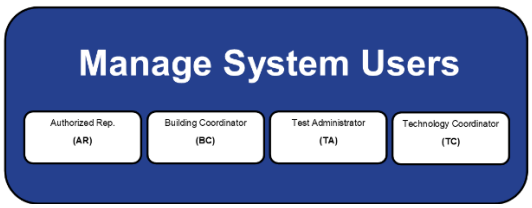
MontCAS
Montana
Comprehensive
Assessment
System

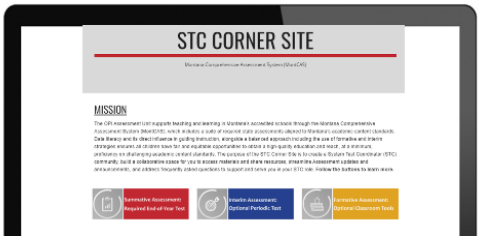
This section pertains to any updates or news under the umbrella of the MontCAS program not specific to any one state assessment.
Portal Link: MontCAS Application

The OPI Assessment Unit supports teaching and learning in Montana's accredited schools through the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS), which includes a suite of required state assessments aligned to Montana's academic content standards. Data literacy and its direct influence in guiding instruction, alongside a balanced approach including the use of formative and interim strategies ensures all children have fair and equitable opportunities to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging academic content standards.









System Test Coordinator (STC) Overview

Since the early 2000s, the STC is a role that has been used at the OPI. This person is assigned by the Authorized Representatives (e.g., Superintendents) and by OPI's definition is the sole person responsible for managing the administration of the suite of state assessments that meet federal requirements under the ESSA and state law (ARM 10.56).

This person is the OPI's single point of contact for all assessment-related communications. This role serves as the data steward for managing local users within the restricted web-based TDS portals used to deliver each test. This role also serves as the local liaison for all standardized testing procedures (i.e., proctoring, safeguarding, securing, and reporting state test information) and ensuring staff are trained and certified to administer state assessments.

Per OPI policy, the STC is the only user that the OPI registers at the beginning of the year within the various Test Delivery Systems (or TDS)**.** The Bulletin is designed to serve STCs in their unique roles and the STC Corner Site has been created to help connect STCs with the community as there are 315 individuals across the state of Montana who share this same school district role.

Authorized Representatives appoint STCs as the single point of contact for all assessment-related matters and testing alerts within the school system. **Note:** designation of this role must be completed by the TEAMS Collection deadline, but it is highly encouraged this is completed as soon as possible to support local planning and preparation needs. **Note:** If you do not have access and/or are a new STCs, contact the OPI Assessment Unit to ensure proper access to TDS portals**.** Contact the Assessment Unit at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or at 844-867-2569 for assistance.

STCs are registered in the MontCAS Application which is the centralized, restricted-use portal to annually report test security information, non-participation results, testing incidents, and other applicable assessment information [see the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule and the MontCAS Application User Guide].

Beginning October 1, 2021, STCs can verify that the four testing plans [Test Administration Plan, Test Security Plan, Test Accessibility Plan, and Test Training Plan**]** have been completed and electronically sign the STC Test Security Agreement [MontCAS Test Security Manual]. These tasks are due no later than **December 1, 2021.**

The purpose of the STC Corner Site is to create a community, build a collaborative space to access materials and share resources.

The STC Corner Site houses all the up-to-date and relevant information for each assessment program, including summative, interim, and formative resources.

STC Workshop Series

The OPI Assessment Team held a 12-session workshop October 5-7, 2021.

The purpose of the "STC Workshop Series" was to provide each Montana school district STC with the opportunity to learn the "how-to's" for each of the assessment related components and content to complete the four testing plans. From the questions posed at the trainings, we have prepared frequently asked questions around the four training plans for this issue. **Recorded sessions are available on the STC Workshop Google Site.**

Day 1

On the average for Sessions 1–4, there were 55 STCs registered and 44 STCs participated in four trainings over the course of the day.

Day 2

On the average for Sessions 5–8, there were 49 STCs registered and 32 STCs participated in four trainings over the course of the day.

Day 3

On the average for Sessions 9–12, there were 44 STCs registered and 32 STCs participated in four trainings over the course of the day.

Q: Must testing plans be submitted every year even though they don't have to be completely rewritten each year?
A: As part of the test security assurance in the MontCAS Application, STCs do not have to submit testing plans each year. Plans can be reviewed annually and edited as needed. The OPI may request them to be submitted if the school district is selected for monitoring. Monitoring requests may go back as far as three years, so testing plans need to be kept on file for at least three years.

Test Administration Plan The "Test Administration" plan is intended to give districts guidance to make sure that state assessments are given within each school consistently in a standardized fashion in order be valid, reliable, comparable, and fair for the purposes for which the assessments are used. Test Administration Plan Sample Test Administration Plan	**Q: Do districts have to remove students who are proficient from the WIDA site?** **A:** If a student has tested proficient on the screener or on a past WIDA assessment, then they are no longer eligible for the ELP [English Language Proficiency] assessment. Additionally, they should no longer be designated in AIM as "01" [current EL] and be coded "02" [formerly EL] instead to indicate that they have exited the ELP program. This will ensure those students are not uploaded into the WIDA AMS portal. **Q: Some of my ELs are not flagged in AIM/Infinite Campus. Is that going to matter for rostering them for testing?** **A:** The OPI cannot roster students on the school district's behalf to the WIDA Secure Portal system unless they are properly recorded in AIM. We encourage you to verify with your District Clerk that records are accurate for each student in K-12 before October 15th, 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year. **Q: What are the EL exit requirements?** **A:** Under Title III of the ESEA, as amended by ESSA [Section 3121(a)(5)], LEAs must report on the number and percentage of former ELs meeting state standards for four years. For more information, see section J of the NRG (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2016). In addition, the ESEA [Section 3113(b)(2)] requires standardized statewide entrance and exit procedures for ELs [Resource]. **Q: Can students be opted out of Smarter Balanced assessments (or other state assessments)?** **A:** Opting students out of the state assessments is defined in the MontCAS Policies and Procedures for Participation in State Assessments. In Montana, there is no "opt out" law, and state law requires all students in public and accredited nonpublic schools to participate in state testing. In accordance with ESEA-ESSA Section 1112(e)(1)(B)(ii), parents may refuse to have their child participate in state assessments; however, under Montana's compulsory

	school attendance laws this refusal reason does not exist (see §20-5-103, MCA) and parent refusals count against school participation rates. **Q: Are schools required to place Smarter Balanced score information in the student cumulative files?** **A:** The requirement for placing statewide achievement information in a student's permanent file stems from ARM 10.55.909. Please contact us with questions on the student record needs. **Q: What happens if the power goes out during testing?** **A:** The answer for this depends on the state assessment that is being delivered to students at the time of the incident. In general, schools should have contingency plans in place for each assessment if something unexpected like a power outage does occur. All technology-based assessments or timed assessments should not only have standardized procedures for test administration but also established contingency plans to address possible technology challenges or incidents during test administration. Below the OPI offers some contingency plans or summaries that outline strategies for managing possible disruptions during test administration. 1. In all state assessments, report the test incident to the OPI for technical assistance and resolution in the MontCAS Application. 2. For Smarter Balanced, MSA, and AMSA: stay calm and follow district policy. When power is restored in under 20 minutes, you may resume testing by generating a new test session for students. Students will be able to pick up at the exact item prior to the loss of power and will still be able to review/change all item responses to previous items made during the testing session prior to the loss of power. • If the loss of power goes over 20 minutes, you will follow the same steps, but students will not be able to edit any responses made in the test session prior to the loss of power. To ensure students can access and review/edit their previous responses the STC will need to submit a Grace Period Extension within TIDE. All appeals are reviewed and responded to weekly by the OPI. 3. For MSAA: A loss of power will result in the test becoming locked. The TA will need to call the OPI to have the test unlocked, which can be done immediately. **Q: Where do I get information on how to administer state assessments?** **A:** The STC Corner Site hosts all of the current year resources for STCs to plan, prepare, and deliver state assessments. Visit the Google Site for more information.

Test Accessibility Plan The "Test Accessibility" plan is intended to give districts guidance to maintain student inclusion to the fullest extent practicable and to ensure that every student has equal opportunity to participate in assessments and are NOT denied the opportunity. Test Accessibility Plan Sample Test Accessibility Plan	**Q: Is there a report that I can run to create spreadsheets for test settings in AIM/Infinite Campus rather than seeking by student?** **A:** AIM/Infinite Campus does have ad hoc reports to help you generate information. To seek support on "how to do this", please reach out to the AIM HELP DESK at 1-877-424-6681 OR 406-444-3800 OR submit an AIM Help Desk Ticket. The link to the Help Desk system is published on the collection schedule. **Q: Where did the OPI get the current test settings data from to upload into TIDE?** **A:** Last year the OPI rolled over test settings for TIDE. However, given the data integrity protocols we're unable to do this for schools this school year due to the annual review of test settings. There is no sync to translate what is in AIM to the Test Delivery Portals. We are in conversations with our vendors

	about this in future years; however, API connections are currently not possible to streamline what is in AIM to TIDE. **Q: Is entering test settings in AIM required?** **A:** AIM Test Settings is required. All required collections for AIM are published in the collection schedule.

Test Security Plan The "Test Security" plan is intended to protect the integrity and confidentiality of statewide assessments to yield valid and reliable results. Test Security Plan Sample Test Security Plan	**Q: Concerning Test Security Agreements (TSAs), do districts have support staff sign this agreement every year or every three years?** **A:** This is an annual requirement. All TSAs need to be signed every year for all roles. **Q: How do I know what instructional aides must be covered during summative administration?** **A:** Some instructional aides are not appropriate to provide during assessments as the intent of the assessment is to measure the student's comprehension of that concept. It depends on the instructional aide and what the "construct of interest/measurement" is for the test, or in other words, what the test is designed to measure. Review the assessment specific Test Administration Manual, Accessibility Guidelines, and/or contact the OPI Assessment Team with questions on acceptable use. **Q: If a general education student[s] uses an instructional aide in a classroom setting, can they use it on the state assessment?** **A:** In TIDE, only students with IEP and 504s plans are permitted to use accommodations on the state assessments pursuant to the UAAG.

Test Training Plan The "Test Training" is intended to ensure that all schools have a plan in place to make sure that all personnel involved in assessments know how to administer the assessments with fidelity. Test Training Plan Sample Test Training Plan	**Q: Should teachers who teach assigned grades for testing be entered in TIDE [i.e., Montana Testing Portal] at the "TE" user role?** **A:** This is a local decision, but if you wish for the classroom teachers to have access to student scores, then they will need to be given accounts at the Teacher (TE) role or higher. The Test Administrator (TA) role does not allow access to student results. **Q: Who can administer and assist with administering the state assessments?** **A:** See Table 2 on page 15 of the MontCAS Test Security Manual lists who can assist with administering assessments. **Q: How do I stay informed with the state testing alerts and critical updates?** **A:** The OPI Assessment Unit releases information on a monthly basis via the Assessment Bulletin Newsletter. You can also attend the monthly focused webinars or STC Open Forums from this "Training and Events" link. **Q: Is the MSAA training for TAs and TCs required every year?** **A:** For the MSAA, TA and TC Training is required annually. The TC Training does not require a quiz completion, but the TA Training must be completed with 80% proficiency. **Q: How often do Test Administrators need to recertify for ACCESS for ELLs and screener administration?** **A:** Only educators licensed in Montana may administer the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs assessments. Additionally, to be certified, educators must complete the relevant WIDA online training course, including passing the certification

	quiz. Certification is required every two years. The Montana ACCESS for ELLs Online Checklist has all before testing activities listed for each role. **Q: Are there template/sample testing plans available?** **A:** Yes, they can be edited and customized as needed. Sample plans are available under the "Resources" column on the Test Security page of the STC Corner website. **Q: Is there a resource I can use to Bookmark Assessment Sites?** The STC Resource Checklist has links to the state assessment portals and sites. You can watch the STC Open Forum recorded webinar to learn how to bookmark and group sites. **Q: Can STCs receive renewal units for recorded STC Workshop Sessions?** **A:** The OPI Assessment Unit will post the recordings by November 1; however, after this date, renewal units with completed "checks for understanding" may be offered up until the first content area assessment opens on March 8, 2022.

TAC News

Technical Advisory Committee

The Montana Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) serves as a consulting group to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to ensure the validity and reliability of the test scores and fairness in testing all students. The members are knowledgeable in educational measurement with rich experiences on psychometric and testing issues in the design, development, and implementation of large-scale assessments. Members of the TAC are highly regarded national, state, and local experts who have been widely published in their respective fields and have a good combination of various expertise to contribute to the OPI. TAC biographies are published on the OPI's Statewide Testing Page.

On October 25 – 26, 2021, the OPI will hold its Fall 2021 TAC meeting via Zoom. The takeaways from the meeting will be available in the next assessment bulletin.

Montana's Theory of Action

Balanced Assessment Systems

Per ARM 10.56.101, "A balanced assessment system including formative, interim, and summative assessments aligned to state content standards, will provide an integrated approach to meeting both classroom learning needs and school and state level information needs…" A balanced assessment system is needed because state assessment systems that focus on once-a-year summative do not provide sufficient information to improve student learning and school capacity. Balance occurs when we don't rely on one measure to tell the entire story of a student's growth as a learner. The idea is not to have an equal amount of each type of assessment, but rather, as many different data points from assessments to guide teaching that will, in turn, improve student outcomes. The Balanced Assessment Roadmap has resources to support implementation of Smarter Balanced interims.

Smarter Balanced News

Math and ELA

SBAC

Smarter
Balanced
Assessment
Consortium

This assessment opportunity is available 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.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: Montana Testing Portal

Website Link: Smarter Balanced Resources

Contact Cambium Help Desk at 1-877-365-7915 or e-mail at mthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com.

Program Overview

Grades(s):	3 – 8
Subject(s):	Mathematics English Language Arts (ELA)
Test Time:	3 – 4 hours
Testing Window:	March 7 – May 27, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

Interims Are LIVE for the New School Year

Interims are available in the Montana Testing Portal. If planning to administer interims, refer to the Smarter Balanced Google Calendar for a list of tasks in preparation to do so.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why are there no score reports in the Reporting System for my district?

A: The Reporting System default page is the current year [i.e., FY2021-2022]. To access FY2020-2021 summative score reports, change the reporting time period under "My Settings" in the top right-hand corner of the screen to 2020-2021 to see the spring 2021 summative reports.

Q: How do I print the individual Smarter Balanced student reports to be sent home to parents/families?

A: A: Review the resources in the Smarter Balanced Summative Assessment page on the STC Corner Site. The "Data & Reporting District Requirements" tab includes a Quick-Start Tutorial video on accessing score reports and where to find the parent letter template.

Q: Why are some students missing in TIDE?

A: The OPI conducts uploads from AIM into TIDE twice a week, per the 2021-2022 TIDE Upload Calendar. If a student's information is incorrect, make the appropriate edits in the district's Student Information System [i.e., Infinite Campus, PowerSchool, etc.] as this syncs to AIM where the OPI pulls all student information from to upload into TIDE.

Smarter Balanced November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕒	Prior to Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from the Reporting System [see District Data & Reporting Requirements] and prepare to provide to parents/families. ISRs can be either printed [color recommended], attached to an individual student tab in Infinite Campus where parents can access, or sent electronically via a secure file transfer system. **Note:** ISRs contain personally identifiable information (PII) and per FERPA and OPI policy may not be sent in an unsecure manner. Ensure that student data privacy is maintained at all times.
🕒	Prior to Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences	Access, download, and customize the Parent Letter template to be accompanied by the Individual Student Reports (ISRs).
🕒	Prior to Administering ELA/Math Interims	If planning to administer Interims, refer to the Smarter Balanced Google Calendar for a list of August tasks to complete prior to such. Tasks include: • Reviewing TIDE User Roles • Reviewing the student list in TIDE • Selecting Student Test Settings • Download an updated Secure Browser • Complete the 20-minute Test Administrator Certification Course • Sign the virtual Test Security Agreement (TSA)

Depending on the number of schools and students, we estimate this will take 60–100 minutes to complete this month.

Smarter Balanced Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Administer interims per local discretion	As part of a district-wide balanced assessment system, districts are encouraged to administer ELA and math interims as it aligns with their data-driven curriculum mapping plans. **Note:** All FY2021 score reports should be analyzed within a local context and caution used in any interpretation with said data given the challenges around the coronavirus.

Depending on the number of schools and students, we estimate this will take 60–100 minutes to complete this month.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
🗒	Smarter Balanced Score Reports Quick-Start Tutorial	This OPI created Quick Start Tutorial Video provides Montana administrators and educators with an overview of how to access and download individual student reports from the grades 3–8 ELA/math [i.e., Smarter Balanced] state assessments.
🗒	Reporting System	The new Reporting System is located in the Montana Testing Portal and houses current ELA/math grades 3–8 student state summative score reports, as well as historical data back to 2015-2016.
🗒	Balanced Assessment Roadmap	This document explains the principles of a balanced assessment and consolidates all Smarter Balanced (ELA/math) tools, via links, to support educators engaging with the Instructional Cycle.

ACT with Writing

American College Testing

This assessment opportunity is available 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.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: PearsonAccess Next

Website Link: State ACT Testing and District Testing

Contact ACT Customer Care at 800-553-6244 or 319-337-1270. You can use the Email Form to send questions or visit the State ACT Testing and District Testing.

Program Overview

Grades(s):	11
Subject(s):	Mathematics English Language Arts (ELA) Science
Test Time:	3.5 hours
Testing Window:	March 29, April 12, and April 26, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

The **Schedule of Events** has been posted on the Montana ACT State and District website. This schedule will assist schools in meeting the deadlines for the required tasks to administer the ACT with Writing successfully this coming spring. The OPI will upload students into the PearsonAccessnext (PANext) site on December 14, 2021. After that date, STCs and ACT Test Coordinators will be able to confirm student lists are correct and can select test dates for Spring 2022 testing. Requesting accommodations from ACT can begin at any time; students are not required to be in the portal for initial requests. Once students are uploaded to the system by the OPI, PINs from the Test Administration and Accommodations site can be applied to students within the PANext system.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where can I view student and school score data?
A: Score reports for Spring 2021 state testing can be found in both Pearson Accessnext under the 'Reports' tab, and in ACT Success under the "ACT Test Scores and Reports" tab. Score reports in the ACT Success site are interactive and can be filtered to view the data at many levels.

Q: What will the process for the ACT Test Accessibility and Accommodations (TAA) System look like this year?
A: The ACT has been working to increase equity and collaborate with school and industry partners to ensure students with disabilities and English learners (Els) are provided the appropriate resources and supports necessary to succeed. ACT's Policy for Requesting Accommodations has been updated to align with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the laws established to ensure our public schools meet the needs of our students with disabilities. This school year ACT has made enhancements to the TAA process to better support schools through providing accommodations to IEP and 504 students. Read the ACT's Policy for Requesting Accommodations for the ACT to learn more about these enhancements.

Q: What are allowable ACT accommodations for English learners (ELs)?
A: The Allowable ACT EL Supports Document outlines information to describe these supports and the process for ensuring these requests are made and approved on an individual basis. Read Katie Featherston's, Senior Director for Accessibility, blog here on "Ensuring Students with Disabilities and English Learners Receive Necessary Supports For Success" or watch the OnDemand webinar.

ACT with Writing November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
	Prior to Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	Provide Individual Score Reports [see District Data & Reporting Requirements] to parents/families. Score Reports received by the district from ACT can be shared during conferences, attached to an individual student tab in Infinite Campus where parents can access, or sent electronically via a secure file transfer system. **Note:** that Score Reports contain personally identifiable information (PII) and per FERPA and OPI policy may not be sent in an unsecure manner. Ensure that student data privacy is maintained at all times.
	Prior to Fall Parent/Teacher Conferences	Access, download, and customize the Parent Letter template to be accompanied by the student score report. **Note:** that score reports delivered to students directly from ACT do not meet the district's reporting requirement to provide student level data to parents/families.

We estimate this will take 60-100 minutes to complete this month.

ACT Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Ensure student data is correct in Infinite Campus	Districts should review and confirm correct enrollment data in the district's System Information System (Infinite Campus, PowerSchool, etc.) to ensure correct students are uploaded to the PearsonAccess^{next} system. The OPI will upload Grade 11 students to the system in mid-December 2021.
☑	Select test dates for Spring 2022 testing	Districts can select test dates for Spring 2022 testing beginning November 1, 2021.The OPI recommends selecting early dates to allow for make-up testing. The deadline to select test dates is January 13, 2022. The Spring 2022 test dates are listed on the State Assessment Test Windows document.
☑	Request ACT-approved accommodations and/or supports	Districts can begin the process to request accommodations and supports through the Test Accessibility & Accommodations website at any time. For assistance with requesting accommodations and supports, view the ACT TAA User Guide for State and District Testing.
☑	Attend the Accommodations and Supports Q&A Webinar	On November 18, 2021, ACT will present a Q&A session with information about accommodations and supports for the ACT with Writing assessment. Register for the 3:00 p.m. webinar.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
	ACT Online Testing Information for States and Districts.	Online administration provides multiple days and greater flexibilities for schools to deliver the assessments. Schools considering the online option over paper should review this information.
	ACT State and District Testing	This is the Montana specific site for the ACT with Writing. The site provides resources for each step of the testing process for before, during, and after testing.
	ACT Success	The Success site provides access to student, school, and district level score reports. It also provides access to the Test Accommodations and Accessibilities (TAA) site. Reporting will move from PANext to the Success site for this coming spring's reports.
	PearsonAccess^{next} (PANext)	This is the site to manage test administration, students, and users.
	Performance Levels	The established proficiency levels for the ACT math and reading/language arts sub-tests in 2017 for ESSA accountability and reporting purposes are noted below. New this year the OPI has established proficiency levels for the ACT science sub-test for ESSA accountability and reporting purposes.

Alternate Assessment for ELA and Math

MSAA

Multi
State
Alternate
Assessment

This assessment opportunity is available to only Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SwSCD) in Grades 3–8 and 11 using the OPI's published guidance for test administration and test security.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: MSAA System

Website Link: MSAA Consortia

Program Overview

Contact Cognia Help Desk Hotline: 1-866-834-8879
MSAAServiceCenter@MeasuredProgress.org.

Grades(s):	3 – 8 and 11
Subject(s):	Mathematics English Language Arts (ELA)
Test Time:	5–6 hours The test is not designed to be completed in one sitting as tests may be paused and resumed as often as necessary. A break may consist of a few minutes to a few days.
Testing Window:	March 14 – April 29, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

Students eligible to participate in alternate assessments make up approximately 1.0% 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.

The OPI is in the process of developing new guidelines to support districts, schools, and IEP teams with identification of students eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). The Alternate Assessment Guidelines will be published late this fall. Until these new guidelines are available, districts can access the Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments document for more information on how to determine student eligibility for alternate assessments.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where Do I Get the Score Reports?
A: The MSAA district-level, school-level, and Individual Student Reports (ISR) for all students who participated in the ELA/Math alternate test in Spring 2021 were available for downloading in the MSAA System from August 2 – September 24, 2021. Beyond September 24, the MSAA scores are no longer available on the MSAA System Portal and any district who has not downloaded the reports prior to the closing date, will need to contact the Assessment Unit at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or at 844-867-2569 for assistance.

Q: I can't access the MSAA Portal, can you help me?
A: All resources [i.e., sample items and technology requirements] can be accessed on the MSAA Portal without having to log into the system. On February 22, 2022, all district STCs will receive an email from MSAA that they have a new account in the MSAA Portal, at which time they can access the system and create additional district users. The MSAA Training Modules will become available in the MSAA Portal on February 28, 2022.

MSAA November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕒	Prior to Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences	Provide Individual Student Reports (ISR's) and grade-specific Family Guides to parents/families of any student who has participated in the MSAA in 2020-2021. **Note**: ISR's contain personally identifiable information (PII) and per FERPA and OPI policy may not be sent in an unsecure manner. Ensure that student data privacy is maintained at all times.

MSAA Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Implement formative strategies per local discretion	As part of a district-wide balanced alternate assessment system, districts are encouraged to analyze MSAA score reports, review their alignment to the Core Content Connectors as outlined on the MSAA Curriculum Resources site, and plan instruction utilizing the Sample Items Teacher Guides as a formative tool during instruction. **Note**: All FY2021 score reports should be analyzed within a local context and caution used in any interpretation with said data given the challenges around the coronavirus.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
📋	MSAA System Portal	This is the portal where the Training Manuals, student information, user accounts, and testing are located.
📋	Formative Resources	Sample items accompanied with comprehensive Teacher Guides are now available on the MSAA System website, which are designed as formative teaching resources for educators.
📋	MSAA Consortia Site	This new website designed by the MSAA consortia member-states offers guidance and resources for educators.
📋	TIES Center	The TIES Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies with resources on teaching during the novel coronavirus.

Science

MSA

Montana
Science
Assessment

This assessment opportunity is available 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.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Links: **Montana Testing Portal**

Website Link: **MontCAS Science**

Contact Cambium Help Desk at 1-877-365-7915 or e-mail at mthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com.

Program Overview and **Video**

Grades(s):	5 and 8
Subject(s):	Science
Test Time:	1.5 – 2 hours
Testing Window:	Mar 7 – May 27, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

New Science Interims in Development

Based on feedback from the field, the OPI is working with our testing contractor to create new Science Interim assessments that are structured to better accommodate district needs. These interims are scheduled to be released in December 2021. Last year's Science Interims are not currently available on the testing portal.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where and when can I access my MSA/AMSA scores from Spring 2021?

A: The Spring 2021 score reports for the MSA and AMSA are not available to download at the district, school, or student level. In Spring 2021, the MSA and AMSA were in field test status. A field test is a crucial part of the test development process, as it allows us to verify that the items are well aligned and produce valid data. Spring 2020 was scheduled to be the field test for the MSA and AMSA, however, due to the pandemic we were unable to administer the field test of the MSA and AMSA until Spring 2021. We will be receiving data as a state and assessing that data for validity, reliability, and alignment to our standards. This will help us determine which items meet our standards for inclusion on our operational MSA and AMSA in Spring 2022. After completion of the evaluation of the data, OPI will determine which data can be released to support instruction for the Spring 2022 MSA and AMSA.

MSA November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕒	Prior to the Spring 2022 Operational Test	Spring 2022 is the first year of the operational MSA. To prepare for the MSA, here are some steps you can take this school year: • Review available resources for the MSA • Allow students the opportunity to use the practice tests to gain familiarity with the testing procedure • Utilize interims (once available later this fall) to assess student knowledge
🕒	Prior to Administering Science Interims	If planning to administer interims once they are available later this fall, complete the following tasks prior to administration: • Review TIDE User Roles • Review the student list in TIDE • Select Student Test Settings • Download an updated Secure Browser • Complete the 20-minute Test Administrator Certification Course • Sign the virtual Test Security Agreement (TSA)

MSA Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Update Student Information in AIM	Ensure that student demographic information is up to date for the 2021-2022 school year. All 504 plans, IEPs, and EL designations need to be up to date in AIM.
☑	Review Curriculum/Plan Instruction	Ensure alignment of local curriculum to the Montana Content Standards and plan instruction using data-driven practices.

Depending on the number of schools and students, we estimate this will take 60–100 minutes to complete this month.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
📋	Montana Testing Portal	This portal includes access to TIDE, TA Certification, Reporting, and Practice and Training Tests. Materials are available to utilize before, during, and after testing.
📋	2021 Educator Conference	This year's sessions at the MFPE Educator Conference will include information about the new Science Interims, what we learned from our 2021 MSA Field Test, and instructional support for educators about administering and interpreting the MSA.
📋	Teacher Learning Hub	Use the courses on the Teacher Learning Hub to understand the Montana Science Standards, teach students how to utilize real-world data, and more!
📋	Science Assessment in Montana	This website is intended to share information on the new Montana Science Assessments.
📋	Practice Tests	The practice test allows students to practice taking tests online and using test tools.

Alternate Assessment: Science

AMSA

Alternate
Montana
Science
Assessment

This assessment opportunity is available to only students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8, and 11 using the OPI's published guidance for test administration and test security.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: **Montana Testing Portal**

Website Link: **MontCAS Science**

Contact Cambium Help Desk at 1-877-365-7915 or e-mail at mthelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com.

Program Overview

Grades(s):	5, 8 and 11
Subject(s):	Science
Test Time:	1.5 – 2 hours To accommodate for diverse student needs, the test can be paused for a break and resumed as often as necessary. A break in the test can be anywhere from a few minutes to a few days, depending on student needs.
Testing Window:	Mar 14 – Apr 29, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

The OPI is in the process of developing new guidelines to support districts, schools, and IEP teams with identification of students eligible to participate in the Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards (AA-AAAS). The Alternate Assessment Guidelines will be published late this fall. Until these new guidelines are available, districts can access the Eligibility Guidelines for MontCAS Alternate Assessments document for more information on how to determine student eligibility for alternate assessments.

Fixed Form and Alternate Response Options

Questions received from the field last year have resulted in some modifications to our fixed form. Only students who are eligible for the fixed form will have this accommodation available to be selected. Please note that districts who require fixed form for their students need to select "fixed form option" during set-up to print the test for their students. Alternate Response Kits need to be requested by the STC via the "Order Test Materials" option under the "Data Entry" tab of the MontCAS Application.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where and when can I access my MSA/AMSA scores from Spring 2021?

A: The Spring 2021 score reports for the MSA and AMSA are not available to download at the district, school, or student level. In Spring 2021, the MSA and AMSA were in field test status. A field test is a crucial part of the test development process, as it allows us to verify that the items are well aligned and produce valid data. Spring 2020 was scheduled to be the field test for the MSA and AMSA, however, due to the pandemic we were unable to administer the field test of the MSA and AMSA until Spring 2021. We will be receiving data as a state and assessing that data for validity, reliability, and alignment to our standards. This will help us determine which items meet our standards for inclusion on our operational MSA and AMSA in Spring 2022. After completion of the evaluation of the data, OPI will determine which data can be released to support instruction for the Spring 2022 MSA and AMSA.

AMSA November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕐	Prior to the Spring 2022 Operational Test	Spring 2022 is the first year of the operational AMSA. To prepare for the AMSA, here are some steps you can take this school year: • Review available resources for the AMSA • Identify students who will be taking the AMSA Allow students the opportunity to use the practice tests to gain familiarity with the testing procedure (once available).

AMSA Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Identify Students who will take the AMSA	Ensure that students who are eligible to take the AMSA participate in spring testing. Review the OPI's Participation Policies and Accessibility and Inclusion links to ensure that equitable opportunities are given to all students.
☑	Update Student Information in AIM	Ensure that student demographic information is up to date for the 2021-2022 school year. All 504 plans, IEPs, and EL designations need to be up to date in AIM.
☑	Review Curriculum/Plan Instruction	Ensure alignment of local curriculum to the Montana Content Standards and plan instruction using data-driven practices.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
📋	Montana Testing Portal	This portal includes access to TIDE, TA Certification, Reporting, and Practice and Training Tests. Materials are available to utilize before, during, and after testing.
📋	Science Assessment in Montana	This website is intended to share information on the new Montana Science Assessments.
📋	Practice Tests	The practice test allows students to practice taking tests online and using test tools.

ACCESS for ELLs News

English Language Proficiency Assessment

ACCESS for **ELLs**

English
Language
Learners

This assessment opportunity was available 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.

Assessment Profile	Consortium Map	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: Assessment Management System (AMS)

Contact WIDA Training and Resources at 1.866.876.7735 or e-mail help@wida.us.

Website Link: Training and Resources

Contact WIDA Assessment Management Site at 1.855.787.9615 or email at WIDA@datarecognitioncorp.com.

Program Overview

Grades(s):	K–12
Subject(s):	English Proficiency Assessment (ELP)
Test Time:	4 – 4.5 hours
Testing Window:	Dec. 1, 2021 – Feb. 25, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

WIDA Assessment Training

The OPI requires that test administrators complete training courses and be certified to administer the ACCESS for ELLs assessments every two years. STCs are responsible for checking the certification status of their TAs in the WIDA Secure Portal and ensuring that their certification status is current prior to the opening of the test window on December 2, 2021.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Where can I find students' ACCESS scores from 2020-2021?
A: Printed score reports were shipped to district offices in June 2020. Online reports are accessed through WIDA AMS via **Report Delivery → Test Results** and selecting the administration and school information for the desired reports.

Q: How do I know if a transfer student was previously identified as an EL?
A: District clerks must request EL records for transfer students, as these are not automatically carried over with student profiles. The AIM EL Tool Guide contains instructions for requesting records. Past ACCESS scores should be available in WIDA AMS, but if you have difficulty finding them, please reach out to the Assessment Help Desk for assistance.

Q: I'm new to EL education and assessment. Where do I start?
A: Check out the OPI English Learners Page for resources related to general guidance, professional resources, classroom resources, and family and community engagement resources. The English Learner Guidance for School Districts is the OPI's primary document explaining state policies for identifying, serving, and assessing ELs.

WIDA November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕒	November 24, 2021	Ensure that EL students who tested proficient on ACCESS in 2020-2021 are exited from the EL program in AIM and ensure that students who are newly identified are enrolled in the EL program in AIM.
🕒	November 24, 2021	Ensure that EL records are requested in AIM for any newly transferred students. Instructions can be found in the AIM EL Tool Guide.
🕒	December 2, 2021	STCs and Tas should complete appropriate ACCESS for ELLs (Online, Kindergarten, Alternate) test administrator training courses before the beginning of the testing window.

ACCESS for ELLs Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Administer Home Language Survey	As students enroll, districts must administer the Home Language Survey. Read the 2021-2022 English Learner Guidance for School Districts and EL Tool Guide for more information.
☑	Screen Potential ELs	Districts screen potential ELs within 14 days of enrollment using an approved WIDA screener. For schools or districts with students learning remotely, check the Provisional EL Identification Procedure During Periods of Remote Learning. Mark newly identified students and transfer students correctly in AIM. AIM Data includes: (1) Home Primary Language (HPL), (2) Language of Impact (LOI), (3) EL identification (within 30 days), (4) Date identified as EL, (5) Date identified as proficient, and (6) 2 years of monitoring after exiting EL status.
☑	Place ELs and Notify Families	EL identification: Newly identified ELs receive an EL designation in AIM and parents/guardians receive a placement letter within the first 30 days of enrollment.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
📋	2021-2022 English Learner Guidance for School Districts	The guidance document describes the OPI's policies and procedures required to serve EL students in the state of Montana. These requirements fall under the authority of both state and federal laws and regulations.
📋	EL Tool Guide for AIM	This document guides AIM users through the EL program features in AIM, including how to request records transfers, enroll newly identified EL students, and exit proficient students from the program designation.
📋	ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	This document is designed to help educators interpret ACCESS for ELLs score reports for communications with families and for their own instructional purposes.
📋	Alternate ACCESS Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	This document is designed to help educators interpret Alternate ACCESS for ELLs score reports for communications with families and for their own instructional purposes.
📋	Provisional English Learner Identification Procedure	This remote-learning guidance document provides a means of provisionally identifying ELs in remote learning situations where face-to-face screening is not possible.
📋	Remote WIDA Screener	This flyer provides guidance and instruction for administering the remote WIDA Screener, which can be found in the WIDA Secure Portal.
📋	WIDA Micro-Offerings	Five 30-minute mini-PD courses available to the public to help teachers support multilingual students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
📋	WIDA Educator Exchange (Open Facebook Group)	This group allows EL educators from around the world to share their ideas and ask questions about EL teaching and assessment. It's especially helpful during times of remote learning and/or social distancing.
📋	WIDA Secure Portal	Access the WIDA Secure Portal for professional learning, training courses, test administrator certification quizzes, and screener test materials. Check out the Download Library for test administrator manuals, webinar recordings, and other helpful documents.
📋	WIDA AMS Site	The WIDA AMS site serves as the test administration site.

National and International Assessment Studies

NAEP

National Assessment of Educational Progress

This assessment is administered to ONLY selected schools and students in mathematics and reading at Grades 4 and 8 (unless the child is eligible for the alternate).

Assessment Profile	Nationwide Trends	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: MyNAEP Testing Portal

Website Link: NAEP

Contact Shantel Niederstadt at SNiederstadt@mt.gov or 406-444-3450.

NAEP Help Desk at 1-800-283-6237 or naephelp@westat.com.

Program Overview

Grades(s):	4 and 8
Subject(s):	Math Reading Civics US History
Test Time:	2 hours
Testing Window:	January 24 – March 4, 2022

Testing Alerts and Updates:

For selected schools, he 2022 NAEP program will include digitally based assessments, administered on tablets, in mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4 and 8 and civics and U.S. history at grade 8 from January 24 to March 4, 2022. The 2022 program will also include paper-based assessments in mathematics and reading for 9-year olds, administered between January 10 to March 18, 2022 as part of NAEP's long-term trend assessment. Each student will be only assessed in one subject. NAEP representatives will bring all necessary materials and equipment to schools. Schools will not need to provide internet access.

NAEP School Coordinators (SCs) should plan on completing Task 5 "Plan for Assessment Day" and Task 6 "Notify Parents" in November. There will be limited time to complete these pre-assessment activities due to the upcoming holidays; therefore, SCs should plan early to ensure adequate time to complete all pre-assessment tasks.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Is Participation in NAEP Mandatory?

A: Participation in mathematics and reading in Grades 4 and 8 is required under the re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly referred to as the "Every Students Succeeds Act" (or ESSA), for any district receiving Title I funding. As of 2003, participation became a requirement in all states/territories and school districts receiving Title I funding.

NAEP November 2021 Tasks

Due This Month

Due Date		Complete
🕒	December 17, 2021	Task 5 – Plan for Assessment Day: NAEP School Coordinator answers school specific questions about logistics and details the NAEP Assessment Team needs to follow in order to ensure the assessment runs smoothly.
🕒	December 17, 2021	Task 6 – Notify Parents/Guardians of Selected Students: NAEP School Coordinator reviews the parent/guardian letter for their school mailing and in early December verifies on MyNAEP the date the letter was sent home to parents/guardians.

Depending on the number of schools and students, we estimate this will take 60–120 minutes to complete this month.

NAEP Timely Tasks

Task		Responsibility
☑	Review and Verify List of Students Selected	Task 3 – Review and Verify List of Students Selected for NAEP: NAEP School Coordinator confirms, reviews, and fills in any missing demographic information and identifies students who have withdrawn or are virtual/remote learners (due date: December 17, 2021).
☑	Complete SD/EL Student Information	Task 4 – Complete SD/EL Student Information: NAEP School Coordinator reviews and assesses the participation of SD and/or EL students by providing relevant testing needs and accommodations for each SD/EL student (due date: December 17, 2021).
☑	Manage Questionnaires	Task 7 – Manage Questionnaires: NAEP School Coordinator distributes School and Teacher Questionnaires and manages the questionnaire completion (due date: December 17, 2021).
☑	Encourage Participation	Task 8 – Encourage Participation: NAEP School Coordinator informs and prepares teachers and students for the NAEP Assessment (due date: December 17, 2021).

Depending on the number of schools and students, we estimate this will take 5 to 6 hours to complete this month.

Resources and Supports

Resource		Support with…
📋	Task 5: Plan for Assessment Day	NAEP School Coordinator records assessment details to set the time(s) and location(s) for testing and provides instructions for the NAEP Assessment Team to ensure that assessment day runs smoothly.
📋	Task 6: Notify Parents	NAEP School Coordinator ensures all parents/guardians of NAEP selected students are notified about the assessment at least one week before your school's assessment day.
📋	Parent Notification Checklist	The checklist will guide the NAEP School Coordinator to preparing the parent letter for NAEP selected students.
📋	School Coordinator Checklist and Timeline	A complete list of all NAEP School Coordinator tasks and expected time commitment for the school year.

Webinars and Educator Resources

MontCAS Monthly Webinar Series

	OPI Assessment Monthly Webinar During the 2021-2022 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer a Monthly Focused Webinar for 1-hour on Wednesdays. The focused webinar is designed to support educational practitioners such as district and school-level personnel involved in local assessment and local data-driven decision-making actions and/or continuous improvement processes. These 1-hour sessions are designed for educational practitioners to learn more about balanced assessments systems and strategies for implementing high-quality local assessment/data literacy practices including creating local systems around data-driven decision-making. A total of 11 webinars will be offered from August 2021 to June 2022 as published in the FY2022 Monthly Focused Webinar Plan [or Google Calendar]. **Attendees are eligible for 1-hour of renewal.**
	STC Open Forum Webinar Series During the 2021-2022 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer a STC Open Forum for System Test Coordinators (STCs) who are confirmed through the annual designation by Authorized Representatives in the TEAMS Collection. These half-hour sessions are scheduled the first week of every month on Mondays. This open forum series is in addition to the monthly focused webinar that the Assessment Team hosts. These monthly webinars are intended to provide the opportunity for STCs to connect with peers, ask questions, and discuss more deeply any OPI updates, or testing announcements. A total of 10 webinars will be offered from August 2021 to June 2022 as published in the FY2022 STC Open Forum [or Google Calendar]. This time is designed to bring questions and tips for the OPI Assessment Team and fellow STCs.

Assessment Team

Assessment Unit

Teaching and Learning Department
Phone: 844-867-2569

Email:
OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov

State Testing General Sites:
OPI Statewide Testing Website
STC Corner Site

Ashley McGrath

State Assessment Director
AMcGrath@mt.gov

Marcy Fortner

Assessment Specialist
MFortner@mt.gov

Duane Schlabach

Assessment Specialist
Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov

Jacob Barto

EL Assessment Specialist
Jacob.Barto@mt.gov

Katie Murnion

Assessment Specialist
Katie.Murnion@mt.gov

Shantel Niederstadt

NAEP State Coordinator
SNiederstadt@mt.gov

Additional Contacts

Tools for Teachers State Leads

Duane Schlabach
Duane.Schlabach@mt.gov

Stephanie Swigart
Stephanie.Swigart@mt.gov

Accessibility Support Specialists

Evelyn Paz
EL/ML Instructional Specialist
Evelyn.Paz@mt.gov

Paula Schultz
Smarter Balanced Accommodations
pschultz2@mt.gov

Accommodation statement for publications

The OPI is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to people with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation, require an alternate format, or have questions concerning accessibility, contact the OPI ADA Coordinator, 406-444-3161, opiada@mt.gov, or call 711 for assistance.

Nondiscrimination statement

The Office of Public Instruction does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, marital status, religion, creed, pregnancy, childbirth, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, political beliefs, genetic information, military service or veteran's status, culture, social origin or condition, ancestry, or age in its programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding nondiscrimination policies:

Human Resource Manager
406-444-2673
OPIpersonnel@mt.gov

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, call 1-800-421-3481 or visit http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm for the address and phone number of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that serves your area.