MARCH 2023
ASSESSMENT BULLETIN

Assessment Quick Links

- **OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov**
- **Test Window Calendar**
- **Test Security**
- **Student Participation & Eligibility**
- **Accessibility Resources**
- **Parent Corner**

This bulletin communication is tailored to System Test Coordinators (STC) with a lens for providing the current news, testing alerts, and changes to state assessments. 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.

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Use these hyperlinks to navigate to each section of the Bulletin:

OPI News

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

**Spring 2023 ACT with Writing Moves to Online Format**
The OPI will be supporting online testing this coming spring under the state contract for the Grade 11 ACT with Writing. Testing windows will each be two weeks and give schools Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday options for each testing window to deliver the test. Districts and schools can plan for this move to online test administration by reviewing the ACT Online Testing Information for States and Districts.

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2022-2023 OPI Test Windows

	ACCESS for ELLs	Multi-State Alternate	Alternate Science	Science	Smarter Balanced	ACT with Writing
Required Subjects	English Language Proficiency (ELP)	Math and ELA	Science	Science	Math and ELA	Math, ELA, and Science
Student Group	English learners	SwSCDs	SwSCDs	General	General	General
Grades Tested	Grades K–12	Grades 3–8, 11	Grades 5, 8, 11	Grades 5, 8	Grades 3–8	Grade 11
Test Window	Dec 5 Feb 24	Mar 13 – Apr 28	Mar 13 – Apr 28	Mar 6 – May 26	Mar 6 – May 26	Window 1: Mar 28 – Apr 5 Window 2: Apr 11 – Apr 20 Window 3: Apr 25 – May 4

Note: SwSCDs is an acronym for student with significant cognitive disabilities and 'SY' is the abbreviation for school year. The OPI will publish any changes to the test windows on the Published Test Windows. The asterisk (*) is used to signify these dates are subject to change based on new information or changed policies.

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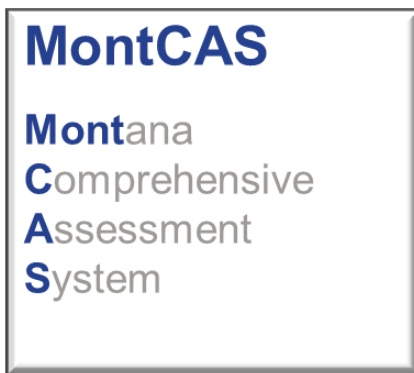
This section pertains to any updates or news under the umbrella of the MontCAS program not specific to any one state assessment.
Portal Link: MontCAS Application

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.
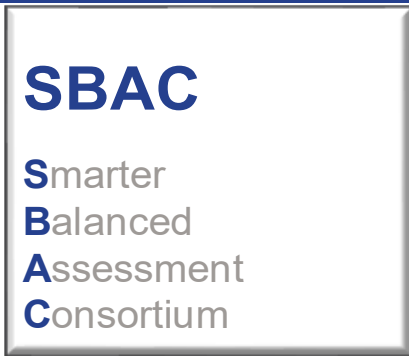
Per OPI policy, the STC is the only user that the OPI registers at the beginning of the year within the Test Delivery Systems (or TDS). This person is the OPI's single point of contact for all assessment-related communications, and the person in the district responsible for ensuring test security policies are followed by verifying the five test plans are completed and the Test Security Agreement has been signed in the MontCAS Application.

If you are an STC and have not completed the above noted test security tasks in the MontCAS Application, complete them as soon as possible to ensure your district does not have a testing incident filed on its behalf by the OPI Assessment Unit.

Ensure Test Security Agreements Have Been Signed

Prior to administering any state assessments, STCs must ensure that all Test Administrators (TAs) have signed the appropriate Test Security Agreements (TSAs). Those TAs with accounts in more than one testing portal will sign multiple TSAs.

Montana Testing Portal	Current and new users are required to sign the Online TIDE TSA. Users will be unable to access the interim or summative assessments without first agreeing to the online TIDE TSA.
Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)	Current and new users will be required to agree to the online TSA in order to access the secure materials and administer tests.
ACT with Writing	In addition to the student/teacher non-disclosure forms, STCs for the state required ACT must sign the ACT TC Student Privacy Assurances Form prior to administration. Test Coordinators (TC) and proctors are required to complete the ACT's test security assurances including the NDA before testing. The test security policies of the ACT are enforced by ACT and are in addition to those required by the OPI for the state contract option of ACT with Writing to Grade 11 students.

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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 and **Video**

Grades(s):	3 – 8
Subject(s):	Mathematics English Language Arts (ELA)
Test Time:	3 – 4 hours
Testing Window:	March 6 – May 26, 2023
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

Testing Alerts and Updates:

Testing Window is Open
The grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics (Smarter Balanced) summative testing window opened on March 6 and will remain open through Friday, May 26.

Secure Browser Updates
If your district utilizes Apple products for testing (I.E. Mac computers) that run MacOS13 (Ventura), you will need to download the latest secure browser for testing. Check the secure browser page to verify you have the latest version downloaded ahead of testing.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why are accommodations not displaying in TIDE?
A: If the accommodations for a student with a known IEP is not displaying correctly in TIDE, or you are unable to correctly set a student's test settings, make sure that the IEP of the student in question is locked. If an IEP or 504 is not locked in your SIS (Infinite Campus), we are unable to pull that data when we collect the information from AIM. If this has happened, lock your student's IEP or 504 plan and by the next upload to TIDE you will be able to correctly configure test settings.

Q: Why are some students missing in TIDE?
A: The OPI started conducting biweekly uploads to TIDE, per the 2022-2023 TIDE Upload Calendar, on December 1. 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 to upload into TIDE.

Q: How soon can I see student score reports?
A: Student score reports are available in the reporting system ten days after a student submits their ELA or mathematics summative assessment. Due to the active nature of the testing window, state averages will not be available until after the summative testing window ends.

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Smarter Balanced Tasks

Due This Month

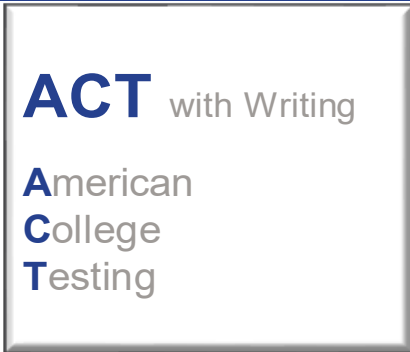|	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Prior to Testing	The Five Steps to Preparing for Smarter Balanced: Testing [Refer to the February Bulletin (pp. 7-8) for detailed steps and links] • Review and verify user roles in the Montana Testing Portal [i.e. TIDE], • Complete the TA Certification Course and sign the virtual Test Security Agreement, • Locally select the appropriate student test settings, • Update the Secure Browsers on all student computers, and • Send out the Parent Notification Letter.
🕐	Report Test Incidents as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation should not be entered until all test opportunities have been exhausted throughout the testing window. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

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.
☑	Provide Professional Development to district staff around Smarter Balanced test security protocols.	Adhere to your district Test Training Plan in providing professional development around preparing staff for the upcoming Smarter Balanced summative assessments.

Resources and Supports

	Resource	Support with…
📋	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.
📋	Tools for Teachers	This site offers teacher-created lesson plans, formative assessment resources, and individual interim assessment items.
📋	smART	The Smarter Annotated Response Tool can be used to better understand how student writing is scored on Smarter Balanced tests and support writing instruction in your classroom.
📋	TIDE Upload Schedule	Students are uploaded into the Montana Testing Portal [i.e. TIDE] twice a week until the summative testing window opens, when uploads occur daily.
📋	STC Workshop Site	This houses recordings to the webinars for our annual fall STC Workshop Series. The site provides assistance in developing your district testing plans.

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ELA, Mathematics, and Science

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 and **Videov**

Grades(s):	11
Subject(s):	Mathematics English Language Arts (ELA) Science
Test Time:	3.5 hours
Testing Window:	Window 1: March 28 – 30 & April 4 – 6; Window 2: April 11 – 13 & April 18 – 20; Window 3: April 25 – 27 & May 2 – 4
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

Testing Alerts and Updates:

Spring 2023 ACT with Writing Moves to Online Format

The OPI will be supporting online testing this spring under the state contract for the Grade 11 ACT with Writing. Testing windows are two weeks and allow Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday testing options. Districts/schools should plan early for this move to online test administration by reviewing the ACT Online Testing Information for States and Districts.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q. How can my school prepare for the move to online administration of the ACT with Writing?
A. Districts and schools can review the resources under the *Complete Site Readiness for Online Testing* under *Step 2: Configuration* of the ACT State and District Testing website. The resources include documents outlining technical requirements, a site readiness plan, and training videos to assist schools in preparing for online testing.

Q: Will the PreACT be available for Grade 10 students again this year?
A. Yes, the PreACT will be available at no cost to Grade 10 students in Montana schools. The PreACT is provided to Montana schools through funding from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education. Learn more about the PreACT for Grade 10 students on the PreACT page of the ACT State and District Testing website

Q. What if I am missing students, or have students no longer in my school still appearing on my student list, in the PearsonAccessnext site?
A: Add or remove students to the PearsonAccessnext (PANext) site using the Add or Remove Students section of the PANext User Guide. ACT also offers a self-guided PowerPoint presentation on how to enroll and unenroll students.

Q: How do I manage the non-test portion of the ACT with Writing this year?
A: The non-test portion of the ACT with Writing cannot be submitted via the paper supplement this year. The MyACT student account is the only platform for students to submit non-test information. The OPI recommends schools host an in-school session to create the account and complete the non-test portion of the ACT. The MyACT User Guide for Test Coordinators will guide schools in creating these accounts.

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ACT with Writing Tasks

Due This Month

	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Before Testing	If you missed ACT's Online Readiness Webinar and Q&A Session, watch the recorded version.
🕐	Before Testing	Complete Site Readiness, including mock administration and ProctorCache installation by February 15, 2023. Step 2 on the ACT MT ACT State and District website has resources for these tasks.
🕐	Before Testing	Validate configuration and freeze test environment for online testing to prepare your student devices for online testing byFebruary 15, 2023. Step 2 on the ACT MT ACT State and District website has resources for these tasks.
🕐	March 9	Attend a test administrator webinar Q&A Session hosted by ACT. Register for the webinar scheduled on March 9 at 3:00 p.m.
🕐	March 22	STCs read and sign the ACT Test Coordinator Student Privacy Assurances Form prior to administering the ACT with Writing.
🕐	Early March	Download and customize the OPI Parent Notice Letter Template to send to parents alongside Montana's List of 14 Critical Non-Test Questions in preparation for administering the ACT with Writing.
🕐	When Materials Arrive	Distribute MyACT non-test instructions and *Taking the ACT* to all students. Students MUST complete the non-test information in MyACT.
🕐	March 24	If new students needing accommodations have moved into your school since February 10, submit requests for accommodations via the Test Accessibility and Accommodations (TAA) site using the Qualified Exceptions Form. Access the TAA site via the ACT Success site. See the TAA User Guide for assistance in using the site.
🕐	Report Test Incidents as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation should not be entered until all test opportunities have been exhausted throughout the testing window. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

Timely Tasks

	Task	Responsibility
☑	Become familiar with online testing format and prepare your district early	Review the resources found under the Complete Site Readiness for Online Testing heading under Step 2: Configuration of the Montana ACT State and District Testing website.
☑	Attend the "Test Day and Beyond Webinar and Q&A Session"	This Q&A session provides Test Coordinators with an overview of how to administer a successful test day. The webinar is scheduled for March 9, 2023.

Resources and Supports

	Resource	Support with…
📋	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.
📋	TAA User Guide	The Test Accessibility and Accommodations User Guide assists users with the steps to request accommodations and/or supports for the ACT with Writing.
📋	Accommodations Office Hours	Have a question or need information or assistance in requesting an accommodation or support for a student? Join the ACT Accommodations Office Hours beginning November 9 and running through April 12, 2023. ACT representatives will be present to answer questions. See the Accommodations Office Hours schedule for specific dates.
📋	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.

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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

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

Website Link: MSAA Consortia

Program Overview and **Video**

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 13 – April 28, 2023
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

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.

Testing Window Opens
The Grades 3–8 and 11 alternate ELA and mathematics [MSAA] summative testing window opens on March 13 and remains open through Friday, April 28, 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Q: How long does it take to complete the MSAA test?
A: Every student is different and has varying degrees of stamina and levels of ability to stay on task. TAs may pause testing to take a break at any time. A test session for a student may consist of one or two items at a time, or 10 or more items. The Test is not timed and can be paused for a variety of reasons, including frustration, lack of engagement, refusal to participate, or sickness. The TA may pause and resume the administration of the Test as often as necessary during the test window. A break may consist of a few minutes to a few days, depending on the student's needs.

Q: I need to be added as a user in the MSAA system. Can you help me?
A: Per OPI policy to ensure student data privacy, all System Test Coordinators (STC) were provided a district-level account in the MSAA System on February 20, and it is the responsibility of STCs to create any additional users (Test administrators, proctors) within the MSAA System.

Q. I have one or more students missing from the MSAA portal. What should I do?

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A. If a student is not appearing in the MSAA System, ensure the alternate designation flag is checked in the local Student Information System (SIS) and the IEP is locked. Then call the Assessment Help Desk at 844.867.2569. <mark>Do NOT add students locally</mark> as this could result in the invalidation of a student's test.

MSAA Tasks

Due This Month

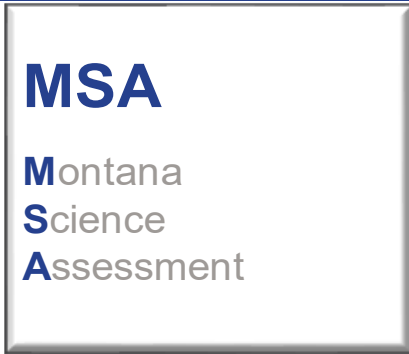|	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Maintain Throughout the School Year	Ensure that the alternate assessment checkbox on the IEP is marked within the local Student Information System (i.e., Infinite Campus). The checked alternate flag is the only way the OPI can identify alternate students to place them in the appropriate portals.
🕐	Before Testing	Administer ELA or math practice tests using the Sample Items available on the MSAA System Portal to ensure students and test administrators are familiar with the format and accessibility features of the alternate assessment prior to administering the summative assessment.
🕐	Early March	Per A.R.M. 10.56.102(6), customize the OPI Parent Notice Letter Template and send to parents in preparation for administering Grades 3-8 and 11 ELA and math (i.e., MSAA) alternate statewide assessments.
🕐	March 13	Required MSAA Training Modules become available on February 28. All Test Administrators must complete the training modules and pass the final quiz with an 80% proficiency prior to accessing testing materials. Test Coordinators must complete the training modules but are not required to complete the final quiz.
🕐	Report Test Incidents as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation should not be entered until all test opportunities have been exhausted throughout the testing window. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

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.
☑	Determine Alternate Assessment Eligibility	The Eligibility Criteria Worksheet for Alternate Students is a form to assist IEP teams in determining whether a student should participate in the alternate assessments. Review the Alternate Assessment Eligibility Guidelines for more specific guidance on identifying alternate students.

Resources and Supports

	Resource	Support with…
📋	Alternate Assessment Eligibility Guidelines	Effective this 2022-2023 school year, this document explains the OPI's policies and procedures for assessing students with significant cognitive disabilities (SwSCDs) using Montana's Alternate Assessments.
📋	MSAA System Portal	This is the MSAA System Portal where the test is administered and score reports are available for download.
📋	Formative Resources	Sample items accompanied with comprehensive Teacher Guides are available on the MSAA System Portal, which are designed as formative teaching resources for educators.
📋	MSAA Consortia Site	This website designed by the MSAA consortia member-states offers guidance and resources for educators.
📋	TIES Center- Resources	The TIES Center is the national technical assistance center on inclusive practices and policies with resources on teaching students with significant disabilities (SwSCD).

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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 6 – May 26, 2023
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

Testing Alerts and Updates:
Testing Window Open
The Montana Science Assessment summative testing window for grades 5 and 8 opened on March 6 and will remain open until May 26.

Test Administrator Certification Course
There are specific Test Administration (TA) certification courses for the Science assessments. Ensure that if you are administering the MSA in addition to the AMSA you take both TA Certification Courses.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Q: When will score reports for the MSA be available, and how do I access them?
A: Student score reports are available in the reporting system ten days after a student submits their summative science assessment. Due to the active nature of the testing window, state averages will not be available until after the summative testing window ends.

Q: Who takes the Montana Science Assessment?
A: The Montana Science Assessment (MSA) is administered to general education students in grades 5 and 8.

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MSA Tasks

Due This Month

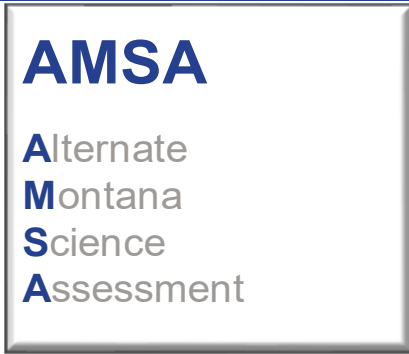|	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Before Testing	Prior to being able to access any testing material, all Montana Test Portal users must complete the 20-minute Test Administrator Certification Course and sign the virtual test security agreement (TSA) on the Montana Testing Portal.
🕐	Before Testing	Review and locally select the appropriate accessibility tools [i.e. universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations] as outlined in the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guide to ensure that all students can meaningfully participate in state assessments.
🕐	Before Testing	Contact your district IT and have them update the Secure Browsers on student computers per the technology guidance documents housed in the Montana Testing Portal. Note that annual updates are required.
🕐	Early March	Per A.R.M. 10.56.102(6), customize the OPI Parent Notice Letter Template and send to parents in preparation for administering Grades 5 and 8 state science assessments.
🕐	Report Test Incidents as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation should not be entered until all test opportunities have been exhausted throughout the testing window. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

MSA Timely Tasks

	Task	Responsibility
☑	Administer interims per local discretion	As part of a district-wide balanced assessment system, districts are encouraged to administer science interims as it aligns with their data-driven curriculum mapping plans.
☑	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…
📋	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!
📋	TIDE Upload Schedule	Students are uploaded into the Montana Testing Portal [i.e. TIDE] twice a week until the summative testing window opens, when uploads occur daily.

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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

Program Overview and **Video**

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

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 13 – Apr 28, 2023
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

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.

Testing Window Opens
The Alternate Montana Science Assessment summative testing window for grades 5, 8, and 11 opens on March 13, 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Q: When will score reports for the AMSA be available, and how do I access them?
A: Student score reports are available in the reporting system ten days after a student submits their AMSA summative assessment. Due to the active nature of the testing window, state averages will not be available until after the summative testing window ends.

Q: Who takes the Alternate Montana Science Assessment?
A: The Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA) is administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 5, 8, and 11.

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AMSA Tasks

Due This Month

	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Maintain Throughout the School Year	Ensure that the alternate assessment checkbox on the IEP is marked within the local Student Information System (i.e., Infinite Campus). The checked alternate flag is the only way the OPI can identify alternate students to place them in the appropriate portals.
🕐	Before Testing	Prior to being able to access any testing material, all Montana Test Portal users must complete the Alternate Montana Science Assessment Test Administrator Certification Course and sign the virtual test security agreement (TSA) on the Montana Testing Portal.
🕐	Before Testing	Review and locally select the appropriate accessibility tools [i.e. universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations] as outlined in the Usability, Accessibility, and Accommodations Guide to ensure that all students can meaningfully participate in state assessments.
🕐	Before Testing	Contact your district IT and have them update the Secure Browsers on student computers per the technology guidance documents housed in the Montana Testing Portal. Note that annual updates are required.
🕐	Early March	Per A.R.M. 10.56.102(6), customize the OPI Parent Notice Letter Template and send to parents in preparation for administering Grades 5, 8, and 11 state science assessments.
🕐	Report Test Incidents as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation should not be entered until all test opportunities have been exhausted throughout the testing window. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

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. The Eligibility Criteria Worksheet for Alternate Students is a form to assist IEP teams in determining whether a student should participate in the alternate assessments.
🕐	Administer Practice Tests	Administer practice tests using the Practice and Training Test Administration tile to ensure students and test administrators are familiar with the format and accessibility features of the alternate assessment prior to administering the summative assessment.
🕐	Update Student Information in AIM	Ensure that student demographic information is up to date for the 2022-2023 school year. All 504 plans, IEPs, and EL designations must be up to date in AIM to ensure districts are able to enter appropriate test settings in TIDE.

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.
📋	Eligibility Criteria Worksheet for Alternate Students	Effective for the 2021-2022 school year [see Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate Academic Achievement Standards [AA-AAAS]]. This form is designed to assist IEP teams in determining whether a student should participate in the alternate assessments.

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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 and **Video**

Grades(s):	K–12
Subject(s):	English Proficiency Assessment (ELP)
Test Time:	4 – 4.5 hours
Testing Window:	Dec. 5, 2022 – Feb. 24, 2023
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page

Testing Alerts and Updates:

The testing window for the 2022-2023 school year has now closed. All materials must be returned to WIDA.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test Window Open

Districts with alternate EL students will have received test materials for the required Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test. The testing window opened on February 14th and remains open through April 17th. For more information, and for guidance, review the information on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test website.

Frequently Asked Questions:

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.

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.

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WIDA Tasks

Due This Month

	Due Date	Complete
🕐	<mark>Return Materials</mark>	<mark>All materials must be shipped by **March 3, 2023**. If you have not already done so, send these in now!</mark>
🕐	Administer the Alternate Access for ELLs Field Test	If you have alternate ELs in your district, make sure your district has plans to administer the required Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test. For more information, navigate to the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test website
🕐	Report Test Incidents and Non-Participation as needed	STCs must report any test incidents that may occur before or during testing in the MontCAS Application. Reports of non-participation must be entered by June 1, 2023. Follow the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule deadlines for state reporting.

ACCESS for ELLs Timely Tasks

	Task	Responsibility
☑	Administer Home Language Survey	As students enroll, districts must administer the Home Language Survey. Read the 2022-2023 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. 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…
📋	2022-2023 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.
📋	Standardized Entrance-Service-Monitor-Exit Procedures for ELs	This checklist walks administrators through the standardized procedures for identifying, serving, monitoring, and exiting English learners.
📋	Alternate ACCESS for ELLs Field Test website	WIDA created this website to assist schools and districts in ensuring the required Alternate ACCESS for ELLs field test is administered correctly. The website will answer all of your questions about the new Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.

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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).
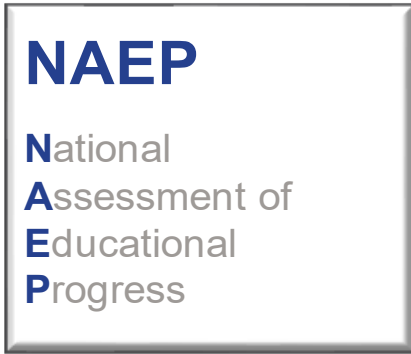
Assessment Profile	Nationwide Trends	Testing Calendar	Testing Time Facts

Portal Link: MyNAEP Testing Portal

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

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

Website Link: NAEP

Program Overview and **Video**

	LTT Age 13	**NAEP 2023 Field Test**
Grade(s)/Age:	Age 13	4, 8 & 12
Subject(s):	Mathematics & Reading	Mathematics, Reading & Science
Test Time:	90 minutes	120 minutes
Testing Window:	Oct. 10 - Dec. 16, 2022	Mar. 20 - Apr. 14, 2023
Mode:	Paper-Based Assessment	Digital-Based Assessment
Helpful Pages:	OPI Page and STC Corner Page	

Testing Alerts and Updates:
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.

The 2023 NAEP program will include digitally based assessments, administered on tablets, in mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4 and 12 and mathematics, reading and science at grade 8 from **March 20 to April 14, 2023**. Each student will be only assessed in one subject. NAEP representatives will bring all necessary materials and equipment to schools. Participation is required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (or ESSA) for any district receiving Title 1 funding.

This is a transitional year for NAEP. MyNAEP is no longer available. The NAEP Assessment Management System (AMS) is the new platform. The NAEP 2023 program will include a field test to explore an online assessment platform and transition to different devices, such as Chromebooks, that may be more familiar to students. Schools' participation will help ensure that upcoming digitally based NAEP assessments are valid and reliable measures of student achievement using authentic, meaningful, and efficient technologies based on practices used within the schooling environment. Results will not be publicly released but will be used to inform the future of NAEP and its pathway towards innovation.

Frequently Asked Questions:
Q: Is Participation in NAEP Mandatory?
A: Participation in mathematics and reading in Grades 4 and 8 is required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for any district receiving Title 1 funding. For more information, please refer to the Superintendent's Memorandum.

Q: When do I need to send the parent letter?
A: Parents must be notified at least one week before the school's assessment date.

Q: Is a make-up session required?
A: No, a make-up session will be "offered" by the NAEP Assessment Team. It is not required. ESSA requires participation, and if the school fully provided the opportunity on assessment day, then OPI's perception is "they fulfilled their obligation."

NAEP Tasks

Due This Month

	Due Date	Complete
🕐	Before Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)	Provide Student Information
🕐	**Past Due**	Schedule Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)
🕐	Before Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)	Provide Assessment Logistics
🕐	Before Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)	Technical Logistics
🕐	Before Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)	Parents/Guardians Notification

For detailed description of each task, read School Coordinator Communication #2 – NAEP 2023 Preassessment Tasks in the STC Corner.

Timely Tasks

	Due Date	Complete
☑	Support Assessment Activities	SC will download documents for teachers and students to distribute prior to the assessment: Teacher Notification Letter, List of Participating Students, and Student Appointment Cards.
☑	Assessment Day	During the assessment, we would appreciate the presence of a school staff member as an observer in each testing session.

Resources and Supports

	Resource	Support with…
📋	AMS Automated Email	This automated email will come from the AMS on February 6.
📋	Montana NAEP 2023 SD Inclusion Policy	This document provides inclusion policy for Students with Disabilities (SD).
📋	Montana NAEP 2023 EL Inclusion Policy	This document provides inclusion policy for English Learners (EL).
📋	MontCAS Test Security Manual	Policies and Procedures for Data Integrity and Test Security withing the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) Program
📋	Montana's Parent Letter Template	Parents/guardians must be notified at least one week prior to the assessment date. The red highlighted areas need to be updated but the remainder of the letter stays the same.
📋	NAEP 2023 Preassessment Activities Guide for Schools	This document provides an overview of the upcoming preassessment tasks due before the APM.

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Webinars and Educator Resources

The Technical Assistance and Training Opportunities for the 2022-2023 school year are included below. System Test Coordinators can place these on calendars and save the date (STC Workshop Series and MontCAS Focused Webinar Series).

OPI Assessment Monthly Webinar

During the 2022-2023 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 10 webinars will be offered from September 2022 to June 2023 as published in the FY2023 Monthly Focused Webinar Plan. **Attendees are eligible for 1-hour of renewal.**

- **March 15:** Five Things You Must Know About High School Assessment This Year [Register]
- **April 12:** Trends Happening in Assessment [Register]

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) News

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. 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.

STC Workshop Series

The purpose of the "STC Workshop Series" is to provide each Montana school district System Test Coordinator (STC) with the opportunity to learn the "how-to's" for each of the assessment related components they are responsible for. STC participants will leave this three-day series with content to complete the four required testing plans and be provided with step-by-step instructions on how to accomplish the various STC activities. The OPI Assessment Team will share some tips and tricks to accomplish said activities and invite veteran STCs to share their experience(s) as well.

The STC Workshop Series was held over three days in October, 2022 for a total of 12 sessions to support new and veteran STCs with the planning, preparation, and test management needs for the 2022-2023 school year. Recorded versions of the workshop sessions can be viewed on the STC Workshop Series website.

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What are the requirements for accountability this year ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(c)?

- Montana restarted its federal accountability systems in the 2021-2022 school year.
- All accountability and school identification requirements are in effect.
- Data from this year's state assessments will be used within the OPI's accountability process for annual meaningful differentiation of schools.
- **Participant** = must have **(1)** a valid score and be **(2)** assigned a proficiency level (see 34 CFR 200.2(a)(b)(1)(i)). All students, including students with disabilities, are required by state and federal law to take part in the OPI's state assessments with or without accommodations. All students are expected to take part in state assessments in one of three ways:
  - Participate in the general education assessments <u>without</u> accommodations.
  - Participate in the general education assessments <u>with</u> accommodations.
  - Participate in Alternate Assessments when the participation criteria are met.
- To see a list of schools who were previously identified for targeted and comprehensive status, visit the OPI's ESSA Information and Documents Page. The federal accountability process for school identification using the 2021-2022 state assessment data is planned to commence this Fall.
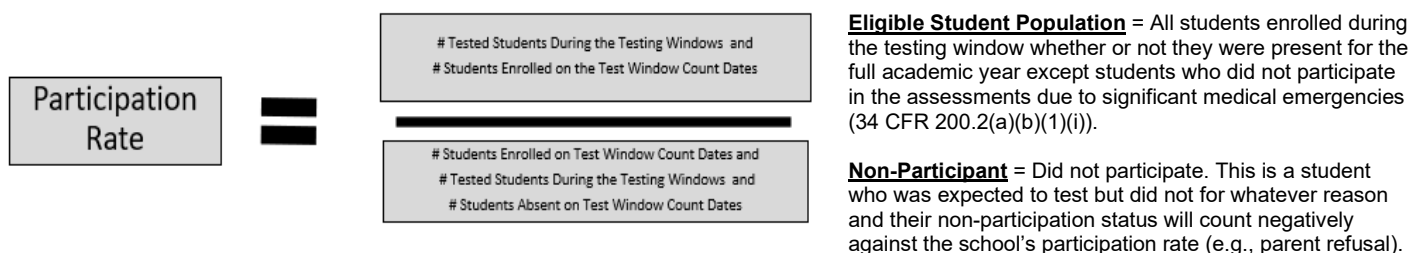
What are the requirements for reporting this year ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(h)?

- Any instances where it was unsafe for a student to participate in the state assessment due to COVID reasons or for medical reasons must be reported to the OPI using the "Medical Exemption" policy as defined within the MontCAS Policies and Procedures for Participation in State Assessments.

What does participation and non-participation mean for state assessments?

Participation is necessary to ensure the data are representative and reflective of the population. When participation rates fall below the state and federal requirements, bias can be introduced into the student knowledge, skill, and ability estimates, thus reducing the overall confidence we have in the data and ultimately interfering with the inferences that can be made about student achievement.

- In Montana, there is no "opt out" law, and both state law and accreditation rules require all students in public and accredited non-public schools to participate in state testing.
- The OPI recognizes there are circumstances beyond the control of the school that may result in non-participation. In those rare cases, the district must report the reason for non-participation to the OPI using the MontCAS Application.
- The figure on participation below is used to show how the calculation is made for participation rates for a school which is displayed on the Montana ESSA Report Card and within the accountability differentiation process.
  - Per the OPI's policies and federal reporting, only students with "medical exemptions" can be removed from the denominator, meaning all other instances of non-participation (or absence) impact the school's participation rate.
  - The state factors the requirement for 95 percent student participation in mathematics and reading/language arts assessments into the statewide accountability system. Students who meet participation requirements and who do not test are assigned a score of "Novice" and designated as a non-participant for accountability purposes (see ESSA State Plan, MontCAS Policies and Procedures for Participation in State Assessments, and Six Things Stakeholders Should Know about Participation and Testing in Montana).

$$\text{Participation Rate} = \frac{\text{\# Tested Students During the Testing Windows and \# Students Enrolled on the Test Window Count Dates}}{\text{\# Students Enrolled on Test Window Count Dates and \# Tested Students During the Testing Windows and \# Students Absent on Test Window Count Dates}}$$

Eligible Student Population = All students enrolled during the testing window whether or not they were present for the full academic year except students who did not participate in the assessments due to significant medical emergencies (34 CFR 200.2(a)(b)(1)(i)).

Non-Participant = Did not participate. This is a student who was expected to test but did not for whatever reason and their non-participation status will count negatively against the school's participation rate (e.g., parent refusal).

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OPI's Recommended Roles and Responsibilities

Authorized Representative Role:	The individual designated to comply and/or enforce activities in connection with federal legal requirements (see 34 CFR §99.3). Authorized Representatives appoint STCs as the single point of contact for all assessment-related matters and testing alerts within the school system. • Authorized Representatives must complete the electronic assurance for data privacy and STC designation within the TEAMS Application each year. Check the TEAMS page for data collection deadlines and guidance.
System Test Coordinator Role:	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. • STCs must sign the electronic test security agreement and the testing plan assurances in the MontCAS Application by the dates specified in the "MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule 2021-22".
Building Coordinator Role:	Assigned by the AR and/or STC and is typically a licensed non-instructional person such as principals, vice principals, counselors, or other staff members. This person coordinates state assessments in the school building. • All staff with TIDE Testing Portal accounts will be required to sign an electronic TSA. All staff with WIDA accounts, ACT accounts, and MSAA accounts will also be required to sign an electronic TSA or non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to gain access to the online test administration and reporting sites.
Test Administrator Role:	This person is assigned by the STC and/or BC and is a licensed educator such as a classroom teacher. The OPI further recommends that the Test Administrator is familiar to the students, so students feel more comfortable in the testing environment. TAs follow and administer the tests in accordance with the assessment-specific Test Administration Manuals. • All staff with TIDE Testing Portal accounts will be required to sign an electronic TSA. All staff with WIDA accounts, ACT accounts, and MSAA accounts will also be required to sign an electronic TSA or non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to gain access to the online test administration and reporting sites.
Technology Coordinator Role:	This person ensures the secure browser is installed properly to administer the online assessments via the test delivery systems and that all system requirement setup and requirements have been completed before testing. More information about these roles can be found in the MontCAS Test Security Manual.
Staff in Supporting Roles	All staff within the district who may assist with state assessments (e.g.:, storing ACT materials, sending score reports home, and scribes) will sign the MontCAS Test Security Agreement for Supporting Roles. The TSA should be electronically signed prior to the opening of the state assessment test windows.

More information about local roles and responsibilities can be found on the OPI's Test Security Page under the "Resources" column for "Roles and Responsibilities Letters". The STC is responsible for maintaining records of TSAs at each level for a period of up to three years as the OPI may request copies of them within that time period.

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Assessment Team

Assessment Unit	Cedar Rose	Marcy Fortner
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Tools for Teachers State Leads **Stephanie Swigart** Stephanie.Swigart@mt.gov **Sonja Whitford** Sonja.Whitford@mt.gov	EL Support Specialist **EL Specialist** Destin Markland Destin.Markland@mt.gov	Accessibility Support Specialist **Student Support Services** Mercee Cislo Mercee.Cislo@mt.gov

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.

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Accommodation statement for publications

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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.