June 2024 Assessment Bulletin

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

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

- **Assessment Specific Timely Tasks**
- **Assessment Updates**
- **Training Opportunities**
- **Requirements – Federal and State**
- **OPI Assessment Unit Contact Information**

2024-2025 OPI Test Windows

	Anticipated SY2024-25 Test Windows	Required Subjects	Student Group	Grades Tested	Window Period
Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)	Window 1 October 14-November 22	Math and ELA	General	Grades 3–8	3 windows: 6 weeks each Final Anchor window: 3 weeks
	Window 2 January 13-February 21				
	Window 3 March 24-May 2				
	Window 4 (Anchor only) May 5-May 23				
ACCESS for ELLs	December 2-February 21	English Language Proficiency	English Learners	Grades K–12	12 weeks
Montana Science Assessment (MSA)	March 3-May 23	Science	General	Grades 5, 8	12 weeks
Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)	March 10-April 25	Math and ELA	SwSCDs	Grades 3–8, 11	7 weeks
Montana Alternate Science Assessment (AMSA)	March 10-April 25	Science	SwSCDs	Grades 5, 8, 11	7 weeks
ACT with Writing	Window 1 March 25-April 4	Math, ELA, and Science	General	Grade 11	3 windows: 3 weeks each
	Window 2 April 8-18				
	Window 3 April 22-May 2				

Updated by the Office of Public Instruction on May 9, 2024.

Putting Montana Students First
A+

Note: Dates and information listed in this schedule are subject to change at any time or without notice.

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.

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Timely Tasks for State Assessments

The checklists below help guide the System Test Coordinator (STC) in ensuring tasks related to sate assessments are completed in a timely manner.

MontCAS (Montana Comprehensive Assessment System)

This section pertains to general and test security tasks under the umbrella of the MontCAS program not specific to any one of the state assessments.

- ✓ During testing windows and after they have closed, STCs ensure all testing incidents in the district are entered into the MontCAS Application. **Deadline: June 17, 2024**
- ✓ After testing windows have closed, STCs ensure instances of non-participation are submitted in the MontCAS Application. **Deadline: June 17, 2024**
- ✓ STCs review the MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule and plan accordingly for the district.
- ✓ **STCs should be prepared to have statewide assessment preparations in place much earlier than normal for the 2024-2025 school year. The first statewide assessment window will open on October 14, 2024.**

Timely Task Resources

MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule	This schedule includes required and timely tasks and collections specific to state assessments.
MontCAS Application User Guide	This user guide walks STCs through the tasks within the MontCAS Application.

For links to MontCAS general and test security resources, visit the MontCAS page of the OPI State Testing website.

Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA)

The SBA is the general math and reading/language arts assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grades 3 through 8.

The Smarter Balanced Assessment will no longer be administered to Montana students in Grades 3-8 as of the 2024-2025 school year. The required ELA and math content areas will be assessed with the new Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year Assessment (MAST). See MAST information in this bulletin (next section).

- ✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from the Montana Testing Portal Reporting Tile and ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- ✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

Timely Task Resources

Reporting System	Individual Student Reports (ISRs) can be downloaded from the Reporting System, located in the Montana Testing Portal.
Reporting System User Guide	This user guide provides instructions and support for users viewing student assessment performance reports in the Reporting System.
Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.
Smarter Balanced Family Resources	This site has resources for families and students, including the OPI template for family notification letters.

For links to Smarter Balanced general resources, visit the Smarter Balanced page of the OPI State Testing website.

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Montana Alternative Student Testing (MAST) Pilot

The MAST Pilot is the general math and reading/language arts assessment for the through-year assessment pilot program. It is administered at Grades 3-8 for schools registered for the pilot.

✓ Comprehensive resources for the MAST assessment are all hosted on the [MAST Portal](#) and the [OPI MAST webpage](#)

MAST Timely Task Resources

2024-2025 MAST Professional Learning Opportunities	**Assessment Unit's April Focused Webinar Recording** provides a good overview of what next year will look like (i.e. testing window dates, prototype of the scheduling tool, student score reports, etc.). You can find information on the [Stay Informed (mt.gov)](#) Assessment webpage under the tab *MontCAS Monthly Webinar*. Listed for April, you will see links for the [recording](#), [slides](#), and [links document](#). Members of our MAST Team will be presenting at the **MT Summer Institute June 17-20, 2024.** Registration is available on the [OPI Summer Institute webpage](#). Our Assessment Unit's fall **STC Workshop Series** will provide details and support regarding the MAST. Once this information becomes available, it can be found on our Assessment Unit's [Stay Informed (mt.gov)](#) webpage under the STC Workshop Series tab. We are anticipating a **Fall Road Show, Fall MAST Summit,** and **asynchronous learning opportunities**. More details and information will be shared out and made available on the [OPI MAST webpage](#) and OPI MAST Monthly Compass once it becomes available.
[MAST Accommodations & Accessibility Crosswalk Document](#)	A MAST accommodation drop-down menu is available in Infinite Campus for new IEPs. The accommodation drop-down will be available soon to amend existing IEPs. Once this is available, districts have the option to start making changes to student IEPs if desired, or districts can choose to use the [MAST Accommodations Crosswalk Document](#) to translate current SBA accommodations into MAST PNPs at the beginning of next year's MAST administration. A [MAST Accessibility Guide](#) is now available to help provide guidance and support when making testing accommodations decisions for students.
Student Score Reports & Parent Portal	Please find a link to the [School Score Report Dissemination Guidance](#) document to help support your district in sharing MAST student score reports to parents/guardians while in extended field testing. ***A Parent Portal is now available to help districts share student score reports with parents/guardians.*** Appendix E in the [Kite Educator Portal Manual](#) will support districts in making the student-parent connection that should be completed prior to parents trying to log in to the Parent Portal. A [Parent Portal Manual](#) can be shared with parents/guardians to provide guidance in accessing student score reports.
MAST Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities	The Montana OPI and MAST testing vendor, New Meridian, cordially invite all educators to participate in shaping the future of Montana's MAST assessment. We urge you to lend your voice to this transformative initiative, helping to enhance assessment practices and better serve all students. Here are some ways you can get involved: **1. Educator Item Review & Range-finding Cadres:** Teachers, instructional coaches, administrators, and other specialists can directly participate in the test development process through select committees. These committees meet at a specified date and time to review test content and help determine scoring parameters for performance tasks. **2. User Interviews:** Share your insights and feedback on various aspects of testlet configuration, reporting, and testlet design through individual interviews. **3. Focus Groups:** Join focus groups aimed at discussing specific components of the assessment and providing input for improvement. To sign up for any of these opportunities, please visit the [MAST Engagement Opportunities website](#).
[Monthly OPI Compass](#)	This link provides access to all monthly OPI Compass publications. The MAST portion of the OPI Compass will provide updates, upcoming tasks, and alerts for MAST participating

For links to MAST general resources, visit the [MAST page](#) of the OPI State Testing website.

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Montana Science Assessment (MSA)

The MSA is the general science assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grades 5 and 8.

✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from the Montana Testing Portal Reporting Tile and ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

MSA Timely Task Resources

Reporting System	Individual Student Reports (ISRs) can be downloaded from the Reporting System, located in the Montana Testing Portal.
Reporting System User Guide	This user guide provides instructions and support for users viewing student assessment performance reports in the Reporting System.
Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.

For links to MSA general resources, visit the MSA page of the OPI State Testing website.

ACT with Writing

The ACT with Writing is the general math, reading/language arts, and science assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grade 11.

✓ Review the ACT Score Report Schedule for descriptions and delivery dates of ACT with Writing score reports.
✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from ACT Success and ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

ACT Timely Task Resources

ACT Score Report Schedule	This schedule describes the reports received by students, schools, and districts. It provides a description and timeline for receipt of the various reports.
Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.
ACT Success	Individual Score Reports can be downloaded from this site.
Understanding Your ACT Scores	This site provides resources for families and educators to understand and use ACT with Writing scores.

For links to ACT general and test security resources, visit the ACT page of the OPI State Testing website.

ACCESS for ELLs Assessment (ACCESS)

The ACCESS is the English Language Proficiency assessment for academic achievement reporting for English Learners (ELs) in Grades K through 12.

✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from WIDA AMS and ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.
✓ Alternate ACCESS for ELLs score reports will be available in WIDA AMS on September 12, 2024, and printed reports will arrive at districts by the end of September 2024.
✓ Exit students who attained a composite score of 4.7 or higher from AIM/Infinite Campus.

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ACCESS for ELLs Timely Task Resources

Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.
ACCESS for ELLs Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	This document explains the types of scores reported by the ACCESS for ELLs for students in kindergarten through Grade 12.
WIDA AMS	Access ISRs (individual score reports) via this site. STCs should receive an email with further information in the coming weeks.
ACCESS for ELLs: Understanding Your Child's Scores	This flyer, in multiple languages, can be sent home to families alongside the ISR to help parents understand what scores mean, and how they are used.

For links to ACCESS general and test security resources, visit the ACCESS page of the OPI State Testing website.

Multi State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

The MSAA is the alternate math and reading/language arts assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grades 3 through 8 and 11 for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from MSAA System **between July 15 and September 6, 2024.** Once downloaded, ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- ✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

MSAA Timely Task Resources

MSAA System Portal	ISRs are accessed via this portal. The ISRs must be downloaded between July 15 and September 6, 2024.
Parent Score Report Resources	Resources for parents to help them understand MSAA score reports can be found on this site.
Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.

For links to MSAA general and test security resources, visit the MSAA page of the OPI State Testing website.

Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA)

The AMSA is the alternate science assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grades 5, 8, and 11 for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- ✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from the Montana Testing Portal Reporting Tile and ensure they are provided to families alongside the Parent Score Report letter no later than Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences.
- ✓ Ensure that ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

AMSA Timely Task Resources

Reporting System	Individual Student Reports (ISRs) can be downloaded from the Reporting System, located in the Montana Testing Portal.
Reporting System User Guide	This user guide provides instructions and support for users viewing student assessment performance reports in the Reporting System.
Parent Score Report Letter	Schools/Districts are required to share with parents how to understand score reports. This letter template can be edited by schools/districts and delivered to families alongside the ISR to meet this requirement.

For links to AMSA general and test security resources, visit the AMSA page of the OPI State Testing website.

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National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The NAEP assessment is administered ONLY in selected schools and students in mathematics and reading in Grades 4 and 8. Participation is required under the Every Student Succeeds Act for any district receiving Title 1 funding.

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

✓ NAEP is always looking to recruit retired educators to conduct the assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the upcoming assessment cycles. No-one knows how schools work better than educators. They'll receive paid time and mileage for local driving from home to schools and back. NAEP is always collecting contact information of interested individuals at https://www.workNAEP.com. For NAEP 2026, NAEP will hire Assessment Administrators (AAs) in October 2025 to attend a 3- to 5-day virtual training in November 2025 and again in December. AAs will work school hours, when work is available, between January – March 2026. For more information, visit NAEP is hiring or contact Shantel Niederstadt, NAEP State Coordinator at sniederstadt@mt.gov or 444-3450.

NAEP Timely Task Resources:

No Timely Tasks This Month	

For links to NAEP general resources, visit the NAEP page of the OPI State Testing website.

Assessment Updates

STCs Prepare for Earlier Test Security Documentation for the 2024-2025 School Year

STCs are required to assure the district's adherence to proper test security protocols prior to the first statewide assessment being administered in their district. With the first statewide testing window opening in October 2024 for the 2024-2025 school year, <mark>STCs will need to plan to complete district Testing Plans and ensure test security via the MontCAS Application prior to October 14, 2024</mark>.

ELA and Mathematics Update

MAST will operationalize as the state general population math and ELA assessment for Grades 3-8 in School Year 2024-2025.

Montana Science Reminder

The Montana Science Assessment (MSA) is required for all students in Grades 5 and 8, unless participating in alternate assessments.

Training Opportunities

Training Opportunities for the 2023-2024 school year are included below. System Test Coordinators can place these on calendars and save the date.

OPI Assessment Monthly Webinar

During the 2023-2024 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer a Monthly Focused Webinar from August 2023 through May 2024. The focused webinar is designed to support educational practitioners such as district and school-level personnel involved in local state assessment and local data-driven decision-making actions and/or continuous improvement processes. New for the 2023-2024 school year, the monthly webinar will include a 15-minute "Learning Lab" in which presenters will walk attendees step-by-step through a key timely task.

A total of 10 webinars will be offered as published in the MontCAS Monthly Webinar Schedule. **Attendees are eligible for 1-hour of renewal.**
- **June 12, 2024: Wrapping Up and Looking Forward [Register]**
  - **Learning Lab: Submitting Non-Participation Requests**

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STC Workshop Series

The OPI Assessment Unit hosted the third annual STC Workshop Series in 12 sessions over three days in October 2023. The workshop was presented to provide each Montana school district System Test Coordinator (STC) with the opportunity to learn the "how-to's" for assessment related responsibilities.

If you missed the live sessions, recorded versions of each session are posted on the STC Workshop Series website. In addition to the recorded sessions, the presentation slides, resource lists, and frequently asked questions are also posted on the site.

STC Hub Course

During the 2023-2024 school year, the OPI Assessment Team will offer a STC Course on the Teacher Learning Hub. Watch for more information, including how to register, on the OPI State Assessment "Stay Informed" web page under the "Professional Development" tab.

Federal and State Requirements

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

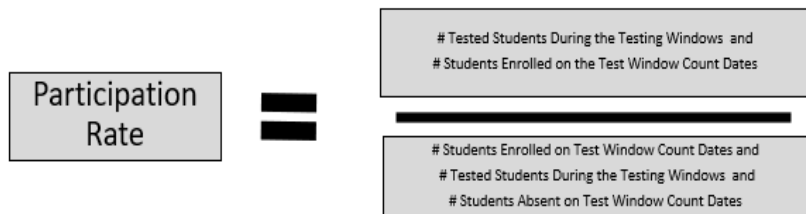**What are the requirements for reporting this year ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(h)?**
- Any instances where it was unsafe for a student to participate in the state assessment for medical reasons must be reported to the OPI using the "Medical Exemption" policy as defined within the MontCAS Policies and Procedures 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.

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- 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).

Reporting Requirement: Montana school districts are required to provide parents/guardians with individual student reports in a timely manner. To understand and address the specific academic needs of students, it is required under state and federal law to provide individual student interpretive, descriptive, and diagnostic reports regarding achievement. This allows families, teachers, and other school leaders to address individual student needs regarding student proficiency and progress as soon as is practicable after the assessment is given. Family resources and sample letters can be found on the Parent Corner page

Federal Requirement: provide timely individual student reports to parents, teachers, and principals and include the results on local report cards (ESSA Section 1111).

State Requirement: statewide assessment public results must include a clear statement of the purpose, subject areas assessed, description of proficiency levels, and the percentage of students who participated in the assessments (ARM 10.56.105(2) and §20-7-104, MCA). School districts must also place individual student reports in the student's cumulative file per ARM 10.55.909.

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 confirm STC designation within Infinite Campus each year. Check the OPI AIM Unit webpage 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".
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.

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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 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.

OPI Assessment Unit Contact Information

Teaching and Learning Department ⬤ Phone: 844-867-2569 ⬤ Email: OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov

Assessment Team

Cedar Rose	**Marcy Fortner**	**Tressa Graveley**
State Assessment Director	Assessment Specialist	Assessment Specialist
Cedar.Rose@mt.gov	MFortner@mt.gov	tressa.graveley@mt.gov

Dylan Conway	**Erin de Graw**	**Shantel Niederstadt**
Assessment Specialist	Assessment Specialist	NAEP State Coordinator
Dylan.Conway2@mt.gov	Erin.deGraw@mt.gov	SNiederstadt@mt.gov

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Tools for Teachers State Leads
Stephanie Swigart
Stephanie.Swigart@mt.gov

EL Support Specialist
Serena Wright
Serena.Wright@mt.gov

Accessibility Support Specialist
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.

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.

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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.

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