June 2025
OPI 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**
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- **OPI Assessment Unit Contact Information**

2025-2026 OPI Statewide Assessment Test Windows
Additional test windows will be published as they become available.

	Anticipated SY2025-26 Test Windows	Required Subjects	Student Group	Grades Tested	Window Period
Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)	Window 1 October 13-December 5 / Window 2 January 12-March 6 / Window 3 March 30-May 22	Math and ELA	General	Grades 3–8	3 windows: 8 weeks each
Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) Alternate Math and ELA	TBA	Math and ELA	SwSCDs	Grades 3-8, 11	TBA
ACCESS for ELLs	January 5-March 6	English Language Proficiency	English Learners	Grades K–12	9 weeks
Montana Science Assessment (MSA)	March 2-May 22	Science	General	Grades 5, 8	8 weeks
Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) Alternate Science	TBA	Science	SwSCDs	Grades 5, 8, 11	TBA
ACT with Writing	Window 1 March 24-April 3 / Window 2 April 7-17 / Window 3 April 21-May 1	Math, ELA, and Science	General	Grade 11	3 windows: 2 weeks each
Updated by the Office of Public Instruction on May 21, 2025.				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.

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.

- ✓ STCs ensure all testing incidents in the district are entered into the MontCAS Application. **Deadline: June 10, 2025**
- ✓ STCs ensure instances of non-participation are submitted in the MontCAS Application. **Deadline: June 10, 2025.**
- ✓ STCs complete the 2024-2025 STC Debrief Form to share feedback with the OPI Assessment Unit and to received PDUs for time spent on statewide assessment planning, training, and administration. **Deadline: June 27, 2025.**

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 includes step-by-step instructions for entering testing incidents, requesting non-routine accommodations, and entering non-participation exemption requests.

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

Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) Assessment

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

- ✓ **Access Student Score Reports** School and District-Level reports are available in the Kite Educator Portal and can be found in the *Testlet Report* dropdown by navigating to INTERIM > VIEW RESULTS. Instructions for accessing and utilizing MAST Score Reports can be found in this focused support VIDEO. Interpretation guides and supporting resources can be found on the MAST Portal under the *Score Reports* section. Teachers now have the option to bundle student score reports under REPORTS > COMMON BUNDLED REPORTS.
- ✓ **Share Student Score Reports with Parents/Guardians** Individual student testlet results should be shared with parents/guardians in a timely manner. A Kite Parent Portal is available to use as part of the Kite Suite. Directions to set up can be found in this Kite Parent Portal One-Pager. A Parent Score Report Template letter and other resources are available on the MAST Portal under the *Resources for Parents* section.
- ✓ Submit Window #3 Testing Incidents & Non-Participation Requests into the MontCAS Application. **Deadline June 10, 2025.**

Student Summative Report

A final cumulative student report summarizing performance across all testlets administered throughout the year will be available in Fall 2025. As this is MAST's first operational year, a process known as Standard Setting will take place this summer. This process—conducted in collaboration with Montana educators and subject matter experts—will define and refine performance-level descriptors. The timing of this process means that the first round of cumulative reports will be released in Fall 2025. Similar to Smarter Balanced results, these summative reports should be saved in students' cumulative files and shared with parents/guardians in a familiar format. In future years, cumulative student reports will be available earlier in the year.

MAST Sessions Offered During OPI Summer Institute

Five sessions around MAST Assessments and score data will be offered during the 2025 OPI Summer Institute, June 16-19, 2025, in Bozeman, MT.

- Monday, June 16: MAST Score Reports and Next Steps
- Tuesday, June 17: MAST 101: Montana Aligned to Standards Through-year Assessment
- Tuesday, June 17: MAST Technical Support: New to MAST
- Tuesday, June 17: MAST Curriculum Alignment and Scheduler
- Wednesday, June 18: MAST Instruction: Proficiency-Based Learning Models

Learn more and register to attend on the Summer Institute page of the OPI website.

MAST Timely Task Resources

Share score reports with parents	Refer to the MontCAS Stay Informed webpage for a MAST Rostering Focused Support Video (about 7 minutes) and Presentation Slides.
MAST Portal	The landing page for all MAST resources, support, and professional learning opportunities.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the MAST Assessment tab, a series of focused support videos will be available to support tasks associated with preparing for and administering the MAST assessment.

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.

✓ Digital Individual Student Reports (ISRs) are available and printed reports were delivered to districts in early May. Access digital score reports in the WIDA AMS. Printed reports should arrive in districts by May 9, 2025. View the Focused Support Video for instructions to view and download the digital score reports.
✓ Review ISRs to exit eligible students. Students who have obtained an Overall Composite Score of 4.7 or higher should be 'exited' from EL status in AIM/Infinite Campus.
✓ Send ISRs home to parents. This OPI template letter can be used by districts to meet state and federal requirements for timely notification.
✓ Ensure ISRs are placed in student cumulative files.

Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs Administration and Scoring training course
The Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs: Administration and Scoring training course is currently unavailable. An updated training course, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring, will be available on September 29, 2025. More information on this is located on the landing page of your WIDA Secure Portal once logged in.

Technology and WIDA AMS Portal Changes Coming for the 2025-2026 School Year
Email communications will be delivered soon with instructions for updating Chrome devices. The updates must be made by June 27, 2025.

Seeking Educator Panelists: ACCESS Standard Setting 2026
WIDA is seeking no more than 130 educator panelists to participate in the ACCESS Standard Setting 2026 event. Panelists will work in 13 groups across six grade-level clusters to establish proficiency level standards for the four language domains.
The event takes place July 27-31, 2026, in Boston, MA. Each selected panelist will receive $1200.00 after participating in the event and WIDA will cover travel and lodging expenses and offer a per diem for meals outside those furnished during the event. Learn more and submit your application on the ACCESS Standard Setting page.

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 digital ISRs (individual score reports) via this site.
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.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the ACCESS for ELLs/WIDA Screener tab, a series of focused support videos are available to support tasks associated with the ACCESS for ELLs.

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.

The Multi State Alternate Assessment will no longer be administered to Montana students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 3-8 and 11 as of the 2025-2026 school year. The required Alternate ELA and math content areas will be assessed with the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM). See more information about this change in the Assessment Updates section of this bulletin.

✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from MSAA System **between July 14 and September 5, 2025.** 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 14 and September 5, 2025.
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.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the MSAA & AMSA (Alternates) tab, a series of focused support videos will be available to support tasks associated with preparing for and administering the MSAA.

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.

The Alternate Montana Science Assessment will no longer be administered to Montana students with significant cognitive disabilities in Grades 5, 8 and 11 as of the 2025-2026 school year. The required Alternate science content area will be assessed with the Dynamic Learning Map (DLM). See more information about this change in the Assessment Updates section of this bulletin.

✓ 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.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the MSAA & AMSA (Alternates) tab, a series of focused support videos will be available to support tasks associated with preparing for and administering the AMSA.

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

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The NAEP assessment is administered ONLY in selected schools to students in mathematics and reading in Grades 4, 8, and 12. 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.

The NCES has begun preparing for the 2026 assessment cycle and will conduct NAEP and various international assessments and studies during the 2025-2026 school year. The NAEP-selected school sample is available and districts will be notified in early June.

The NAEP 2026 program will include digitally based assessments in mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4, 8 and 12 and civics and U.S. history at grade 8 from **January 26 to March 20, 2026**. Each student will be only assessed in one subject. As in previous years, NAEP representatives provide significant support to schools. The NAEP program would like to use the school devices and Internet – when possible – to conduct the assessment. The program will work with districts and schools to determine if this is feasible for each school.

✓ Authorized Representative: Provide principal name and contact information for NAEP-selected school.
  o **Deadline: Friday, June 27th**
✓ Principal: Complete the NAEP 2026 Designate School Contacts
  o **Deadline: Thursday, July 18th**
✓ Tech Coordinator: Complete the NAEP 2026 School Technology Survey
  o **Deadline: Friday, August 8th**

NAEP Timely Task Resources:

NAEP State Assessment Sample Design FAQs	These are frequently asked questions about the NAEP state assessment sample design.
Selecting Schools for Participation in State-Level NAEP	This document provides steps used to select a sample of public schools and students.
An Overview of NAEP	Here is an overview of the NAEP program complete with definitions, descriptions, and examples of NAEP items.
OPI's NAEP Webpage	This site provides up-to-date information about NAEP News, communications, focused support videos, Montana results, responsibilities and resources, and FAQs.
eNAEP Download Center	The NAEP app and additional technical details about taking the NAEP assessment on school devices are available at this link.

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

Assessment Updates
New Alternate Assessments for the 2025-2026 School Year

Beginning in the 2025–2026 school year, the **Dynamic Learning Map (DLM)** will replace both the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) and the Alternate Montana Science Assessment (AMSA). All alternate assessments will now be administered on the Kite platform to align with the administration of MAST.

The DLM math and ELA assessments follow an *instructionally embedded model*, with multiple testlets administered during both fall and spring testing windows. Science assessments will also consist of multiple testlets but will be administered only during the spring window.

Stay up to date by visiting the OPI Assessment Stay Informed page for announcements, and the release of the 2025–2026 DLM testing windows.

Join us for a DLM Assessment Overview webinar on June 10, 2025 (see more information below). Additional training will be provided this fall, including sessions during the STC Workshop Series in September. For more information, visit the DLM Assessment Website and explore the Montana-specific DLM Informational Overview.

Note the updated home page of the Statewide Testing website
Based on feedback from the field, the OPI Assessment Unit is providing an STC Checklist on the homepage of the Statewide Testing website. The checklist is updated weekly to include all tasks districts and schools should be completing.

Training Opportunities

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

Introduction to DLM Alternate Assessments

Join us for an upcoming webinar on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) alternate assessment, which will become the statewide assessment for alternate science, math, and ELA beginning in fall 2025.This session will include an overview of the DLM model, provide key resources to help you prepare ahead of fall training, and allow time for questions and answers.
The webinar will take place on Tuesday, June 10, from 3:30 to 4:15 PM MST.

OPI Assessment Focused Support Videos Series

Beginning this 2024-2025 school year, the OPI Assessment Unit is introducing a series of Focused Support Videos. These short videos are posted on the Stay Informed & Find Support page of the Statewide Assessment webpages. Most of the videos are under 10 minutes and will provide support for all statewide assessments.
Watch for videos to be added throughout the school year as we progress through the before, during, and after testing phases.
If you are looking for support and don't see it in the assessment program accordions, reach out to the OPI Assessment Help Desk (or 844.867.2569) for further assistance.

NEW! System Test Coordinators Basics HUB Course Now Available!

This self-paced course is available in the Teacher's Learning Hub. Throughout the modules, you will gain the knowledge you need to fulfill your role as the System Test Coordinator for your district. You will be provided with 15 hours of Professional Development Units upon completion. Visit the Teacher's Learning Hub to register for the course.

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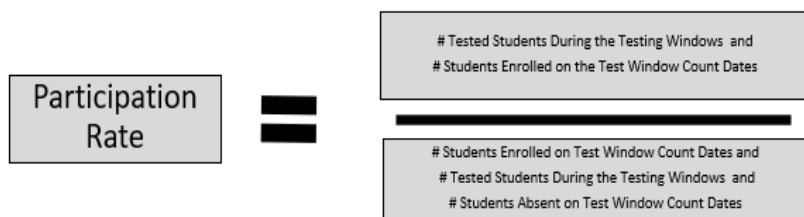
What are the requirements for reporting this year ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(h)?

- 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.
    - 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 test delivery portal accounts for statewide assessments will 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 test delivery portal accounts for statewide assessments will 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.

OPI Assessment Unit Contact Information

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Assessment Team

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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.