

December 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](#)

- [MontCAS](#)
- [MAST](#)
- [MSA](#)
- [ACT with Writing](#)
- [WIDA ACCESS](#)

- [DLM ELA/math](#)
- [DLM Science](#)
- [NAEP](#)
- [MSAA](#)
- [AMSA](#)

• [Assessment Updates](#)

- [OPI Assessment Unit Contact Information](#)
- [Training Opportunities](#)
- [Requirements – Federal and State](#)

2025-2026 OPI Statewide Assessment Test Windows

Anticipated SY2025-26 Test Windows		Required Subjects	Student Group	Grades Tested	Window Period
Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)	<u>Window 1</u> October 13-December 5	Math and ELA	General	Grades 3–8	3 windows: 8 weeks each
	<u>Window 2</u> January 12-March 6				
	<u>Window 3</u> March 30-May 22				
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Math and ELA	<u>Fall Window</u> September 8- December 19	Math and ELA	SwSCDs	Grades 3-8, 11	2 windows: 15 weeks each
	<u>Spring Window</u> February 2- May 15				
WIDA ACCESS	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	12 weeks
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Science	February 2- May 15	Science	SwSCDs	Grades 5, 8, 11	15 weeks
ACT with Writing	<u>Window 1</u> March 24-April 3	Math, ELA, and Science	General	Grade 11	3 windows: 2 weeks each
	<u>Window 2</u> April 7-17				
	<u>Window 3</u> April 21-May 1				
Updated by the Office of Public Instruction on June 25, 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 state 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.

The window to enter testing incidents and exemption requests for non-participation for MAST Window 1 opens on December 5 and closes on December 12, 2025.

- ✓ STCs review the [MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule](#) and plan accordingly for the district.
- ✓ STCs report testing incidents in the [MontCAS Application](#) throughout the school year.
- ✓ STCs request non-routine accommodations in the [MontCAS Application](#) for all statewide assessments at least 2 weeks prior to the planned administration.
- ✓ STCs submit valid non-participation requests in the [MontCAS Application](#) after each testing window closes.

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 completing tasks within the MontCAS Application.

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.

MAST Window 1 closed on December 5, 2025.

Window 2 opens on January 12, 2026 and runs through March 6, 2026.

- ✓ Prepare Student Testing Devices: Make the necessary [updates for Chrome and Windows devices](#) to ensure the Kite Student Portal functions properly. No changes are required for iPad or Mac devices for the 2025-2026 school year. **Install the correct application:** Make sure the **Testlet Kite Student Portal** application is downloaded on student testing devices and that it is **Version 21**. Detailed installation instructions and updates can be found on the [MAST Portal](#) under *Install Guides and Supported Systems*.
- ✓ Create and maintain user accounts within the Kite Platform. District Authorized Representatives and System Test Coordinators have been given the District Test Coordinator role within the Kite Educator Portal. Districts/schools are responsible for creating and maintaining user accounts.
- ✓ Roster Students: **All students should be rostered to a teacher for both math and ELA.** Rostering should be completed at least one week before the opening of each testing window. Rostering should be continually updated to reflect student mobility within the district.
- ✓ Enter Student PNPs (accommodations). PNPs should be entered at least one week before the opening of each testing window. Adding/modifying PNPs should be continually updated to reflect changes to student's IEPs, 504s, and/or educational plans throughout the year. **Requests for paper/Braille forms should be made by calling the OPI Assessment Unit (844-867-2569) at least three weeks prior to the opening of each testing window.**
- ✓ Train Educators. District STCs support and train Test Administrators (TAs) in preparing to administer MAST testlets. STCs help educators access the Kite Educator Portal and ensure the Test Security Agreement within the portal is signed, and train TAs in test administration best practices:
 - [Roles & Responsibilities for Test Security](#)
 - [OPI MontCAS Test Security Manual](#)
 - [MAST Test Administration Manual](#)
 - [MAST Accessibility Guide](#)

- ✓ Notify families of testing using the OPI's [MAST Parent Notification Letter Template](#). Districts are required to notify parents/guardians of upcoming testing.
- ✓ Share MAST Student Score Reports with Parents/Guardians in a timely manner. School districts are required to share individual student testlet reports throughout the year. Use these resources to ensure this task is completed.
 - Instructions for setting up the Kite Parent Portal ([Kite Educator Portal Manual](#) p.47)
 - [Making the Student-Parent Connection in the Kite Educator Portal tutorial](#).
 - [Sample OPI MAST Individual Student Score Report Parent Letter](#)
 - [Kite Parent Portal Focused Support Video](#) and [Parent Portal Set Up One-Pager](#)
 - [MAST for Parents One-Pager](#)
- ✓ Share Through-Year Summative Student Score Reports with parents/guardians. These summative reports must be placed in students' cumulative files and shared with parents/guardians. Parent Portal access is not sufficient notice of the Summative MAST score reports.
 - Interpretive Guides will be posted on the [MAST Portal](#) under *Score Reports*.
 - [Sample OPI MAST Summative Score Report Parent Letter](#)

MAST Timely Task Resources

Create and Maintain User Accounts	Refer to the MontCAS Stay Informed webpage for a MAST User Management Focused Support Video (about 8 minutes) and Presentation Slides . Refer to the User Management Quick Reference Guide to determine which role(s) to give educators. Presentation Slides
Roster Students	The MAST Rostering Focused Support Video (about 7 minutes) guides users through the rostering process. Presentation Slides
Entering PNPs	The Entering Student PNPs in the Kite Educator Portal v.(about 10 minutes) reviews the process for entering PNPs. 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.
Before Testing Tasks	This one-page document provides information on the tasks that must occur prior to administering MAST Assessments.

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.
- ✓ Install new ChromeOS Secure Browser: [detailed instructions for downloading and configuring the new ChromeOS Secure Test Progressive Web App](#). The legacy ChromeOS Secure Browser will continue to work with ChromeOS versions 138 and below. The Cambium Help Desk is available to assist Districts/Schools with this process as you start preparing testing devices for the new school year.
- ✓ The new iPadOS Mobile Secure Browser (v10.0) is now available to download from the Apple Store. The prior iPadOS Mobile Secure Browser (v9.0) will be supported through the end of October 2025. Schools will need to update to the new version on all iPad devices to test on those devices after October 31, 2025.
- ✓ STCs create and maintain user accounts in the Montana Testing Portal.

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.
TIDE Maintenance Quick Guide	This guide walks STCs through the tasks to ensure user accounts are updated appropriately.

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.
- ✓ Submit accommodations requests via the Test Accessibility and Accommodations (TAA) system.

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.
TAA User Guide	This guide includes the steps for submitting accommodations requests in the Test Accessibility and Accommodations 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.
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

WIDA ACCESS (ACCESS)

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

The WIDA ACCESS testing window opens on January 5, 2026, and runs through March 6, 2026.

- ✓ Eligible students have been loaded into the WIDA AMS. STCs should review student lists to ensure accuracy. Districts will receive materials automatically based on the student upload information.
- ✓ Districts will have to order 'additional materials' for students uploaded in future uploads (December 15, 2025, January 16, and February 13, 2026).
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with WIDA AMS updates and changes. Some pages have moved, been updated, or consolidated and many new features are available.
- ✓ STCs create and maintain user accounts in the [WIDA AMS](#) and the [WIDA Secure Portal](#).
- ✓ Ensure all staff in the district who will be administering WIDA ACCESS have completed the required training for the assessments they will be administering.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ 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.

Changes and Updates for 2025-2026 Administration Year

Assessments for the 2025-2026 school year have been revised to reflect updates and changes in WIDA ACCESS assessments.

- New assessment names: WIDA ACCESS, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS.
- The WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten assessment has been completely redesigned.
- WIDA ACCESS (Grades 1-12) changes occurred behind the scenes, so the test administration experience is the same as last year.

WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten Administration and Scoring training course

The new WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten: Administration and Scoring training course is now unavailable. More information on this is located on the landing page of your [WIDA Secure Portal](#) once logged in.

Required Training Updates: Training courses have been updated for WIDA ACCESS, Kindergarten ACCESS, and WIDA Screener to encompass changes in test administration. Training for the all-new WIDA Alternate Screener will also be required to be completed for districts with alternate ELs. Remember that training is required every two years, and when new assessments/training courses are made available.

WIDA ACCESS 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 Alternate ACCESS: Interpretive Guide for Score Reports	This document explains the types of scores reported by the WIDA ACCESS and the Alternate ACCESS for students in kindergarten through Grade 12.
Report Retrieval Guide	This guide walks through the process to retrieve and download WIDA ACCESS score reports.
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.

DLM Alternate ELA/math Assessment (DLM ELA/math)

The DLM ELA/math 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 DLM ELA/math Fall Window is open and runs through Friday, December 19, 2025. Ensure all primarily enrolled alternate students in Grades 3 through 8 and 11 complete testing within that window.

- ✓ **Update IEPs with appropriate assessment names.** As IEPs are amended during the 2025-2026 school year, ensure assessment names are updated.
- ✓ **Test Administrators must complete training** and certification before they can access and administer the assessments.
- ✓ **Check the Kite Student Portal** to ensure all alternate students are populating. If you're missing students, check EDUCATE (IC) to ensure the Alternate flag is marked, and check IEP/504 Plan(s) to ensure assessments populate correctly in the portal.
- ✓ **Roster Students:** After the OPI performs the initial student upload into the Kite Educator Portal (early September 2025), districts will be able to begin rostering students to teachers. **All students should be rostered to a teacher for both math and ELA.** Rostering should be completed at least one week before the opening of each testing window. Rostering should be continually updated to reflect student mobility within the district.
- ✓ **Enter Student PNPs (accommodations).** After the initial student upload to the Kite Educator Portal (early September 2025), districts will be able to begin entering/updating student PNPs. PNPs should be entered at least one week before the opening of each testing window. Adding/modifying PNPs should be continually updated to reflect changes to student's IEPs, 504s, and/or educational plans throughout the year. **Requests for paper/Braille forms should be made by calling the OPI Assessment Unit (844-867-2569) at least three weeks prior to the opening of each testing window.**
- ✓ **Complete the First Contact Survey with each student prior to testing.**
- ✓ **Review** the [DLM Before Testing Tasks](#) for an overview of the steps that must be completed prior to administration.

DLM ELA/math Timely Task Resources

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Information	Review the background of how this assessment was built and how it works.
Montana DLM State Page	Explore Montana's specific state page for information on the assessment and resources to assist Special Education Teachers, STCs, and Test Administrators.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the DLM Alternates tab, a series of focused support videos will be available to support tasks associated with preparing for and administering the DLM ELA/math Assessment.
Roster Students	The MAST Rostering Focused Support Video (about 7 minutes) guides users through the rostering process. Presentation Slides
Entering PNPs	The Entering Student PNPs in the Kite Educator Portal v(about 10 minutes) reviews the process for entering PNPs. Presentation Slides

For links to DLM ELA/math general and test security resources, visit the [DLM ELA/math page](#) of the OPI State Testing website.

DLM Alternate Science Assessment (DLM Science)

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

- ✓ Update IEPs with appropriate assessment names. As IEPs are amended during the 2025-2026 school year, ensure assessment names are updated.
- ✓ Review the [DLM Before Testing Tasks](#) for an overview of the steps that must be completed prior to administration.

DLM Science Timely Task Resources

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Information	Review the background of how this assessment was built and how it works.
Montana DLM State Page	Explore Montana's specific state page for information on the assessment and resources to assist Special Education Teachers, STCs, and Test Administrators.
MontCAS Stay Informed & Find Support	On the DLM Alternates tab, a series of focused support videos will be available to support tasks associated with preparing for and administering the DLM ELA/math Assessment.

For links to DLM Science general and test security resources, visit the [DLM Science page](#) of the OPI State Testing

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 is 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 were notified. Assessment dates were available in early November.

The NAEP 2026 program will include digitally based assessments in mathematics and reading assessments at grades 4, 8, and 12 and civics and US history at grade 8 from **January 26 to March 20, 2026**. Each student will be only assessed in one subject. As conducted in previous years, NAEP Representatives provide significant support to schools by administering the assessment. We've collaborated with district's technology staff to determine which mode of administration works best for each school. Schools have been assigned school or NAEP devices.

- ✓ NAEP App Installer/Technology Coordinator – NAEP Application Installation Due
 - **Deadline: December 31, 2025**
- ✓ NAEP School Coordinator: Task 3: Schedule Assessment Planning (APM), Task 4: Provide Student Information, Task 5: Assessment Logistics, and Task 7 (Part 2): Add Students – Review Student List.
 - **Deadline: Before Assessment Planning Meeting (APM)**

NAEP Timely Task Resources:

NAEP 2026: School Device Checklist and Timeline	All the tasks to prepare for NAEP 2026: <u>School</u> Devices are included in the checklist and timeline.
NAEP 2026 in Your School	The document provides an overview of NAEP 2026 using <u>school</u> devices.
NAEP 2026: NAEP Device Checklist and Timeline	All the tasks to prepare for NAEP 2026: <u>NAEP</u> Devices are included in the checklist and timeline.
NAEP 2026 in Your School	The document provides an overview of NAEP 2026 using <u>NAEP</u> devices.
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.

Multi State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

The MSAA was 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 for its final year in 2024-2025.

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 DLM ELA/math section of this bulletin (below).

- ✓ Ensure Individual Student Reports (ISRs) 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

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 was the alternate science assessment for academic achievement reporting in Grades 5, 8, and 11 for students with significant cognitive disabilities for its final year in 2024-2025.

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 DLM information in the next 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.

Assessment Updates

****MAST Updates****

Apply necessary Kite Student Portal updates: Follow the instructions outlined in the [SY25–26 Kite Student Portal Updates](#) document to ensure all required updates are applied for student testing devices. Updates required for Chrome (see page 2) and Windows (see page 3).

****WIDA ACCESS Updates****

• **Schools Needed for Kindergarten ACCESS Observations and Audio Recording**

WIDA is seeking school sites to observe and record WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten test administrations this December and January. These audio recordings will supplement recordings gathered during the Kindergarten ACCESS Field Test and will be used by educator panelists at the ACCESS Standard Setting event in July 2026.

Due to internal timelines, observations must take place between December 1, 2025-January 21, 2026. Sites that participate will receive \$100 per participating student. Refer to the [WIDA Announcement](#) for more information and to apply.

Training Opportunities

Training Opportunities for the 2025-2026 school year are included below. System Test Coordinators can place these on calendars to save the date and bookmark support webpages.



OPI Assessment Focused Support Videos Series

The OPI Assessment Unit maintains 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 and/or updated 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.

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 without accommodations.
 - Participate in the general education assessments with 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.

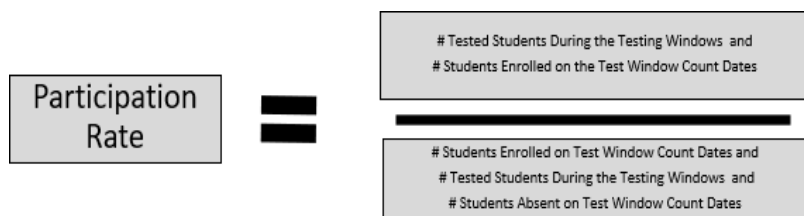
What are the requirements for reporting this year ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(h)?

- 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](#)).



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

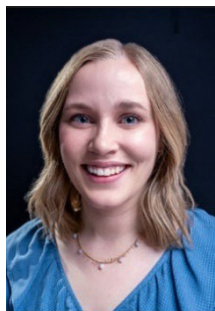
Teaching and Learning Department ● Phone: 844-867-2569 ● Email: OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov

Assessment Team

Cedar Rose

State Assessment Director

Cedar.Rose@mt.gov



Marcy Fortner

Assessment Specialist

MFortner@mt.gov



Tressa Graveley

Assessment Specialist

Tressa.Graveley@mt.gov



Dylan Conway

Assessment Specialist

Dylan.Conway2@mt.gov



Erin de Graw

Assessment Specialist

Erin.deGraw@mt.gov



Shantel Niederstadt

NAEP State Coordinator

SNiederstadt@mt.gov



Additional Contacts

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.

Nondiscrimination statement

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

Human Resource Manager
406-444-2673

OPIpersonnel@mt.gov

For further information on notice of nondiscrimination, call 1-800-421-3481 or visit

<http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/CFAPPS/OCR/contactus.cfm> for the address and phone number of the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) that serves your area.