



February 2026

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:

[MontCAS General Timely Tasks](#)

[WIDA ACCESS Timely Tasks](#)

[MAST Timely Tasks](#)

[DLM ELA/math Timely Tasks](#)

[Montana Science Timely Tasks](#)

[DLM Science Timely Tasks](#)

[ACT with Writing Timely Tasks](#)

[NAEP Timely Tasks](#)

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.

- ✓ 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.

Window 2 is open and runs through March 6, 2026.

- ✓ **Window 2 ELA Performance Task:** The ELA Performance Task will be assigned after students complete the Middle-of-Year ELA Informational Testlet. Allow 30–60 minutes for the Kite system to make the Performance Task testlet available. Resources, including rubrics, student-friendly rubrics, and exemplars, are available on the [MAST Portal](#) under *Resources for Teachers*. Additional details about the ELA Performance Task can be found in the [ELA Specifications document](#).
- ✓ **NEW! Progress Reports:** New Student Progress Reports became available in Kite on January 15, 2026. These reports provide cumulative performance information based on a student's testlet results to date during the academic year. Unlike through-year reports, which summarize end-of-year performance, Student Progress Reports show how a student's learning progresses as additional testlets are completed. The reports also include an estimated cumulative achievement range on the summative scale, based on all testlets completed to date. Please refer to available resources to support accurate interpretation of Progress Reports:
 - [MAST Progress Levels Explained](#)
 - [Student Progress Report Interpretive Guide](#)
 - Understanding MAST Progress Reports [VIDEO](#) and [SLIDES](#)
 - MAST Progress Report Overview for [Educators](#) and [Families](#)These reports can be found by navigating to:
 1. Interim > View Results
 2. Click on the Progress Report tab. Select the desired report.
 3. Fill out the organizational dropdowns.
 4. Select *Search*.
- ✓ Maintain user accounts within the Kite Platform. Districts are responsible for managing users within the Kite Educator Portal. Users who are no longer with the district should be deactivated, and new users should be added as needed. It's important to deactivate former users so that districts can use the *Claim Users* feature to assign appropriate roles to new staff members. Resources available: [Montana's unique Kite Educator Portal Login URL](#)
- ✓ 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.**
- ✓ Monitor Completion of testlets. Monitoring testlet completion is essential to ensure students complete all available testlets. A Monitoring Testlet Completion data extract is available in Kite, which can be used to filter for specific students and identify any remaining testlets that need to be administered. Monitoring MAST Testlet Completion Focused Support [VIDEO](#) and [Presentation Slides](#) can be found on the [MontCAS Stay Informed webpage](#)
- ✓ 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 (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.

The Montana Science Assessment testing window opens on March 2, 2026

*If your school is participating in the MAST Science Pilot for Grades 6-8, see the [MAST Science Pilot section](#) of the bulletin.

Grade 8 students will take the MSA as well as the pilot testlets.

*If your school is not participating in the MAST Science Pilot, **do not roster students** in Science in the Kite Educator Portal.

- ✓ Eligible Grade 5 and 8 students will be uploaded to the Montana Testing Portal the week of February 2, 2026. After the initial upload, weekly uploads will be completed during the testing window. Ensure enrollment records are accurate and up to date throughout the window.
- ✓ STCs create and maintain user accounts in the Montana Testing Portal.

- ✓ Review the [TIDE Changes Cheat Sheet](#) to become familiar with the new look on the testing portal.
- ✓ Install the new browser on testing devices. Instructions can be found in the [Technology Guide](#).
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Send the [Parent Notification letter](#) to parents/guardians about 2 weeks before testing.
- ✓ Ensure test settings are entered correctly in TIDE. Supports and accommodations must reflect those listed in IEP/504 Plans.

MSA Timely Task Resources

TIDE Maintenance Quick Guide	This guide walks STCs through the tasks to ensure user accounts are updated appropriately.
Usability, Accessibility and Accommodations Guidelines	This guide describes the universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations available for the Smarter Balanced assessment.

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

MAST Science Pilot

The MAST Science Pilot for Grades 6-8 testing window is April 13-May 8, 2026

The MAST Science pilot will be administered in the Kite platform. One to two testlets per grade level will be assigned based on information provided by districts. The OPI has confirmed numbers with districts participating in the pilot.

MAST Science Pilot districts will receive more information via email addressed to the pilot's district contact and the district's superintendent.

- ✓ Add a Teacher role in the Kite Educator Portal for all educators who will be administering the Science Pilot so students can be rostered to them. Ensure all new users are trained to administer testlets.
- ✓ Rostering opens at the end of February. All students participating in the pilot will need to be rostered for testlets to be assigned. When rostering, select Science in the Subject dropdown menu.

For more information, or to apply to participate in the pilot, see the [MAST Science 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 student list in Pearson Access^{next} (PANext). The initial student upload has been completed. An additional upload will occur in early February 2026.
- ✓ Submit accommodations requests via the Test Accessibility and Accommodations (TAA) system. ACT has introduced rolling deadlines for accommodations requests based on the testing window the school is administering during. See the [Schedule of Events](#) for the deadline specific to the window your school is testing in.
- ✓ **NEW** ACT has announced the option of 2 Day Testing for state and district testing for the Spring 2026 administration. See the [Flexible Schedule Policy](#) for parameters around the allowed 2 Day Testing.
- ✓ Complete Site Readiness to ensure devices are up to date for spring testing. Resources to complete these Tasks are found under Step 2: Configuration on the [MT ACT State and District Testing website](#).

ACT Timely Task Resources

TAA User Guide	This guide includes the steps for submitting accommodations requests in the Test Accessibility and Accommodations site.
ACT Success	Individual Score Reports can be downloaded from this site.

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 is open and runs through March 6, 2026.

- ✓ Check the materials order before testing to ensure enough materials have been received to complete testing. If additional materials are needed, order them through the [WIDA AMS portal](#). The deadline to order additional materials is February 27, 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.
- ✓ Return materials as soon as testing is completed.

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

WIDA AMS	Access digital ISRs (individual score reports) via this site.
WIDA Screener/ACCESS Assessment Training Requirements	Required training modules are provided in the WIDA Secure Portal . Ensure training modules are completed in full prior to administration. Use the resource tabs at the top of the page upon login.
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.
Updated EL Student Identification Guide for Infinite Campus	New guidance is available on how to ensure ELs are appropriately entered and identified in Infinite Campus.

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 Spring Window opens February 2 and runs through May 15, 2026.

- ✓ Access the [Fall Performance Report](#) to review broad information about what students know and can do.
- ✓ Update IEPs with appropriate assessment names. As IEPs are amended during the 2025-2026 school year, ensure assessment names are updated.
- ✓ 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 (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.

The DLM Science Window opens February 2 and runs through May 15, 2026.

- ✓ **Update IEPs with appropriate assessment names.** As IEPs are amended during the 2025-2026 school year, ensure assessment names are updated.
- ✓ **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. Rostering should be completed at least one week before the opening of the 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. 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 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.
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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 U.S. history at grade 8 from **January 26 to March 20, 2026**. Each student will be assessed in only 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 School Coordinator: Task 8 – Notify Parents and Guardians
 - **Deadline: One Week Before Assessment**
- ✓ NAEP School Coordinator: Task 9 – Support Assessment Activities
 - **Deadline: One Day Before Assessment**
- ✓ NAEP 2026 Feedback for Improvement
 - **Deadline: March 27, 2026**

NAEP Timely Task Resources:

OPI Assessment Unit MontCAS Focused Support Video Series	The support videos are short, how-to videos with step-by-step instructions for completing tasks.
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.

Assessment Updates

Enhance Student Test Preparation with MTDA's EdReady Program at No-Cost This Spring



The spring MAST and ACT testing windows are a critical time for Montana students. EdReady Montana offers teaching resources and specialized middle school level MAST math goals and ACT prep math and English goals designed to help students improve their scores and college readiness. With EdReady, you also get the no cost assistance of a dedicated team of Montana educators at MTDA to help set your school, teachers and students up for success!

Don't wait! Reach out to support@mtda.org today to set up an informational meeting and get started!

MAST Update

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).

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.



MAST Support

Schedule a virtual 1:1 session with the OPI Assessment Unit to explore a variety of MAST Topics such as scheduling MAST testlets, accessing and interpreting MAST score reports, and more. Select a time – Calendly.

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](#).

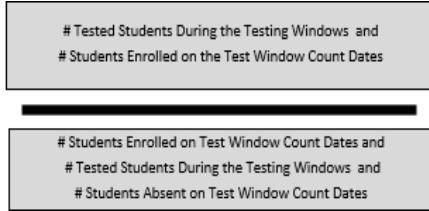
What does participation and non-participation mean for state assessments?

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](#)).

Participation Rate

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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 [S20-7-104, 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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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OPI Assessment Unit Mission Statement

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

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