



September 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.

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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 should be prepared to have statewide assessment preparations in place much earlier than normal for the 2025-2026 school year. The first statewide assessment window will open on September 8, 2025.**
- ✓ New STCs should contact the OPI Assessment Unit to ensure proper access to assessment portals. Confirmation from the district's Authorized Representative will be required prior to providing access to assessment portals. Contact the OPI Assessment Unit at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 844.867.2569 for assistance.
- ✓ STCs review the [MontCAS Test Security Collection Schedule](#) and plan accordingly for the district.
- ✓ STCs ensure the district's five testing plans are in place for the 2025-2026 school year. **New this year, testing plans are required to be uploaded to the OPI. Deadline: September 1, 2025**
- ✓ STCs complete BOTH test security screens in the [MontCAS Application](#). **Deadline: September 1, 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 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.

- ✓ Schedule MAST Math Testlets: Districts and schools will have the flexibility to align their MAST *math* testlets with the district's unique scope and sequence. The order of ELA testlets will remain consistent across all districts, as determined by the ELA testlet design, with complexity increasing throughout the school year.
 - MAST Scheduler Tool opens August 4, 2025. **District math testlet schedules must be submitted by September 15, 2025.**
 - Links to the Scheduler Tool and manuals will be available on the [MAST Portal](#).
- ✓ Prepare Student Testing Devices: Install guides will be available in early August and can be found on the [MAST Portal](#).
- ✓ 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: 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.**

- ✓ 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](#)

Educators should be involved in scheduling math testlets. Share these tools and resources to help with scheduling:

- MAST for Educators [Slide Deck](#) and [PDF](#)
- [MAST SY25-26 Math Scheduling Worksheet](#)
- [Math Assessment Specifications](#)
- [Math Standards Blueprints](#)
- [SY25-26 Testing Windows](#)
- [MAST Scheduling Guide & FAQs for Test Coordinators](#)

MAST Timely Task Resources *All standard and manual links will soon be updated to reflect 2025-2026.*

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 .
Create and Maintain User Accounts	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.

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

WIDA ACCESS (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.
- ✓ Familiarize yourself with WIDA AMS updates and changes. Some pages have moved, been updated, or consolidated and many new features are available.

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.

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.

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.

2025 WIDA Annual Conference

Registration is open for the 2025 WIDA Annual Conference! This in-person conference will take place October 28-30, 2025, in Seattle, Washington, under the theme Igniting Innovation for Multilingual Learners. A virtual track is also available. From a keynote speaker to 90+ concurrent sessions exploring strategies and instructional practices for educators of multilingual learners, this is a conference that is by teachers, for teachers. Learn more about this year's WIDA Annual Conference on WIDA's [website](#) at events.wida.us.

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.

- ✓ **Prepare for early testing windows.** Like MAST, the DLM ELA/math Assessment model uses a through-year, instructionally embedded model. The assessment has two testing windows; a Fall Window (September 8-December 19, 2025) and a Spring Window (February 2-May 15, 2026).
- ✓ **Update IEPs with appropriate assessment names.** As IEPs are amended during the 2025-2026 school year, ensure assessment names are updated.
- ✓ **Prepare to complete training** and certification required to be completed by TAs before they can access and administer the assessment. The OPI Assessment Unit is offering a facilitated training during the [STC Workshop Series](#). Attendance at this session will enable attendees to complete the training and certification required.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Prepare to complete training and certification required to be completed by TAs before they can access and administer the assessment. The OPI Assessment Unit is offering a facilitated training during the [STC Workshop Series](#). Attendance at this session will enable attendees to complete the training and certification required.
- ✓ 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 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 were recently notified. In the past, districts were notified in the spring of the previous school year, but there were delays in the federal government approval process.

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. Assessment dates will be available in early November.

- ✓ Principals: [School Coordinator Designation](#) Due
 - **Deadline: September 26**

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.

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).

- ✓ Download Individual Student Reports (ISRs) from [MSAA System](#) **between July 14 and September 12, 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 12, 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 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

****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.

View the recording of the June 10, 2025 [DLM Assessment Overview webinar](#) on June 10, 2025. 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](#).

****MAST Updates****

Note these Student Portal Updates:

Chrome: There is no new Student Portal app for the 2025-2026 school year. The app remains a Chrome Web Store app which Google has confirmed they will support through July 2026. **ACTION:** School IT staff will need to make a slight change in the Google Admin Console as outlined in the [SY25-26 Kite Student Portal Updates](#) document.

Windows: Windows will have the same Student Portal app for the 2025-2026 school year. Windows 10 will no longer be supported due to security risks. Clients may still run on Windows 10 devices, however there will be some limitations. Due

to how Windows handles system-level geolocation APIs and their interaction with security-restricted environments, like Kite Student Portal, location access is required. **ACTION:** School IT staff will need to ensure this is enabled as outlined in the [SY25-26 Kite Student Portal Updates](#) document.

No changes for iPads and Mac for the 2025-2026 school year.

Kite Multifactor Authentication: To protect student Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Kite will be implementing Multifactor Authentication (MFA) when logging into the Educator Portal, effective July 25, 2025. See the [Kite Multifactor Authentication document](#) for more details.

****WIDA ACCESS Updates****

Install the **new version of DRC INSIGHT** for the 2025-2026 school year. DRC INSIGHT Version 16 will be required, and students will not be able to test until it is installed. Download it from the [Technology Downloads](#) tab in WIDA AMS.

Training courses are being updated and will become available during September 2025. **TAs will be required to complete all new training courses** regardless of completion during the 2024-2025 school year.

Watch for information on the **brand new WIDA Alternate Screener**.

****Note the updated home page of the Statewide Testing website****

Based on feedback from the field, the OPI Assessment Unit has updated the OPI Statewide Assessment home page. On the [home page](#), you'll find three important areas:

- A yellow dropdown titled **"Click for a List of Upcoming Events"** – open this dropdown for dates and links to attend important training and PD events regarding statewide assessments.
- A yellow dropdown titled **"Click for a List of Upcoming STC Deadlines"** – open this dropdown to keep up to date with deadlines for your STC tasks.
- A heading titled **"STC Checklist"**. This checklist is updated weekly and will include a list of all the timely tasks for the various assessments with resources to assist you in completing them.

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.



2025-2026 STC Workshop Series

The OPI Assessment Unit will be offering the STC Workshop Series over three Thursdays; September 4, September 11, and September 18, 2025. Learn about the sessions being offered and find the links to join each session on the [2025 STC Workshop Series website](#).



MAST Professional Learning Opportunities

Find out more about each of these opportunities by clicking the accompanying link!

- ✓ [MAST Fall Summit](#): Thursday, September 4; 9:00 AM-2:00 PM
- ✓ [MAST Training Wednesdays](#): October 1, 8, and 15, 2025;



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.



System Test Coordinators Basics HUB Course

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 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](#)).

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

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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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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