

OPI Parent Notice Letter Customization Checklist

Schools may notify parents through a variety of means of communication, such as a newsletter, e-mail, or by postal service as long as they are confident the communication will reach parents/guardians. We encourage schools to notify parents at least one week prior to the planned assessment. It is especially important to notify parents/guardians with children that have educational plans in a timely manner so they are knowledgeable about the supports and accommodations planned for their child.

Accommodations and supports must be in place one week prior to testing. Supports that are provided on statewide assessments must be familiar to the student and must match those supports and accommodations that are provided for classroom instruction and assessments throughout the school year. Parents/guardians should be knowledgeable about the supports and accommodations planned for their child so they are aware of the conditions under which their child will participate in the assessment.

Requirements for and References within the Parent Notice Letter:

- **ARM Chapter 56:** 10.561.2(6)
- **ARM Chapter 55:** 10.55.601(3), 10.55.603(3), 10.55.701(1), and 10.55.701(5)
- **Elementary and Secondary Education Act:** Section 1111(b)(2)

Steps for preparing the letter for distribution:

- ☐ Do not alter the language of the letter, other than the indicated **highlighted** text.
- ☐ Do not add any addendums, including permission/refusal forms.
- ☐ Customize the letter for your school as indicated in **highlighted** text.
 - Delete heading
 - Add date sent
 - Customize this letter specific to the assessment by editing the appropriate **highlighted** text.
 - Add information indicated by the **highlighted** text.
 - You may delete the **red text** if it does not apply to the specific assessment.
 - If the distribution method is a printed copy keep the links shown in (**parentheses**); otherwise, delete.
 - You may adjust the margins and/or font size to allow the letter to fit on one page or print it on two sheets.
 - Provide deadline for parents to notify the school of any questions or concerns with participation in the test.
 - [Six Things Stakeholders Should Know About Participation and Testing in Montana](#) - The purpose of this document is to ensure that readers are aware of the significant value to stakeholders (e.g., parents/guardians) of the information derived from participating in state-level tests.
 - The local board of trustees shall ensure that the school district complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations ([ARM 10.55.701](#)). Should the district have a policy on processing parental refusals, this policy may be cited as an enclosure. However, there is no “opt out” law in Montana, and both state law and accreditation rules require all students in public and accredited non-public schools to participate in statewide testing. Per the OPI’s policies and federal reporting, only students with documented “medical exemptions” may be excluded from participating, meaning all other instances of non-participation (or absence) impact the school’s participation rates.
- ☐ Print or PDF the completed letter on school letterhead.