Olney Bissell School District #58

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August 18th, 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian

Olney Bissell School District 58 is preparing for the **Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)** assessment through the Montana Office of Public Instruction. This assessment has replaced the previous SBAC (Smarter Balanced) assessment that students took. Students in Grades 3-8 will take Math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments in 3 administration windows as indicated in below chart:

Administration	Start Date	End Date	ELA	Math*
Admin 1	October 19th, 2026	December 11th, 2026	2 Testlets	3-5 Testlets
Admin 2	January 11, 2027	March 5th, 2027	2 Testlets 1 Performance Task	3-5 Testlets
Admin 3	March 29, 2027	May 21, 2027	2 Testlets	3-5 Testlets

What is the purpose of the MAST assessment?
The Montana OPI in partnership with New Meridian has developed an improved assessment system that will accurately reflect the needs of our students, teachers, and administrators while providing useful flexibility in terms of test administration. The MAST Assessment implements

"through year" assessments across the state that satisfy federal testing requirements and better aligns assessment with instruction.

The ultimate goal with the "through year" model is to support the formative instructional process that is closer to the local decisions required to support teaching and learning needs. Rather than a single end-of- year assessment, the MAST assessment is broken up into smaller testlets over the course of the academic year. The "Through-Year Assessment" design benefits students, teachers, parents, and administrators by more closely aligning assessment with instruction while providing actionable data throughout the school year.
It is important to remember that statewide assessments provide only one measure of student learning, but when combined with grades, classroom activities, unit quizzes and tests, and district-level assessments, statewide assessments can complete the picture of a child's abilities and help him/her down a path toward academic success in reaching Montana's Content Standards.

Details about the 2026-2027 administration:

- **Participants**: 3-8 Grades Math and ELA
- **Administrations**: 3 administration windows throughout the year
- **Total Estimated Testing Time:** 15-30 minutes per testlet

Technology: Computer-based test delivery via secure site

- **Reports:** Student reports will be available for teachers and districts after administration. Individual student reports will provide results from each testlet and will be made available at the request of the parents/guardian via email.

Here are some things to note about the MAST test:

- Your child's privacy will be protected. State and federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), ensure these data remain confidential.
- Students with Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or English Learner plans will be assessed based on individual student needs, consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations.

Here are some things you can do to help:

- Encourage your child to do their very best on everything they do in school, including the MAST assessment.
- Make sure he or she gets plenty of sleep the night before each test and has a healthy breakfast.
- Support your child by explaining the purpose of the tests and helping with homework and test reviews.

Learn More:
To learn more about this initiative follow this link to the Montana OPI MAST webpage. New Meridian is a non-profit organization that creates high-quality, innovative assessment solutions that focus on the skills that matter most for success in school and in life. You can learn more

about New Meridian here. Parent MAST resources can be found on the MAST Portal under *Resources for Parents*.

We appreciate your partnership in helping Olney Bissell School District 58 fulfill the state and federal requirements for statewide assessments and supporting your child to do his/her best.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about MAST. Questions can be directed to Trevor Dahlman at 406-862-2828.

Sincerely,

Trevor J. Dahlman, Principal