

Insert School Letter Head Here

[Insert Date]

Dear Parent/Guardian:

[Insert School] is preparing for the annual administration of the [Montana Science Assessment]. As listed on our school calendar, students in [Grade 5/Grade 8] will take the assessment on [Insert Dates/Date Range]. State and federal law require all students in our school to participate in this statewide grade-level assessment for school accountability and academic achievement reporting purposes.

Participation in this test is important. Statewide assessments are based on the progression of skills and knowledge that are needed at particular grades to ensure students graduate college and career ready. Teachers use the statewide assessment as one of the many tools to understand student performance or competencies consistent with the challenging academic achievement standards for science (how much a child knows at the end of the year) and to identify which students are not making sufficient progress toward, and attaining, grade-level proficiency on such standards. Teachers use these student results to identify academic needs and adjust instructional plans accordingly.

Our school uses statewide assessments to determine if we have reached the state educational goals, to identify areas for improvement, and to address any equity issues. Once we identify areas for improvement, we use the data to set goals in our [annual Comprehensive School Improvement Plan addressing student achievement needs].

The Montana Science Assessment is aligned to the challenging academic achievement standards for science. The test is delivered via the TIDE platform and is computer adaptive. Testing time is expected to be 1–2 hours. Students can use the universal tools, supports, and/or accommodations on the test per their educational need[s]. The assessment items are clustered around specific scientific phenomena, as well as some stand-alone items. These items were developed in partnership with Montana educators and ask students to use the scientific knowledge from the three dimensions (core ideas, crosscutting concepts, and scientific practices) to make sense out of [real-world phenomena](#). Students can become familiar with the item types, test format, and functionality of the online system by using the [Practice Test](#). [Note: practice tests are not adaptive and the difficulty of the items may be higher than what students will see on the actual test.]

[In the fall/After testing,] our school will provide you with your child's individual score report. Our district has implemented a policy to deliver score reports to families that protects student privacy and provides timely access so parents, teachers, and principals can work together to address specific academic needs identified from this assessment.

Our school's statewide assessment results will be available to the public after administration of the Montana Science Assessment, and can be accessed on the Office of Public Instruction's state longitudinal data warehouse, [GEMS Student Achievement Dashboard](#). You can also visit the [Montana's Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Report Card](#) to see how our school compares to other schools across Montana in a variety of different measures.

Here are some things to note about statewide assessments:

- Your child's grades will not be impacted by their scores on the state tests.
- 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 this statewide test.
- Make sure your child 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.

We appreciate your partnership in helping [Insert School] fulfill the state requirement for assessment and supporting your child to do their best.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about statewide testing this year. Questions can be directed to [School Contact] at [Contact Information].

Sincerely,

[Principal's Name]