HELLGATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 4
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October 2, 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Hellgate Elementary School District is preparing for the *Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) assessment* through the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Students in grades 3-8 will take Math and English Language Arts (ELA) assessments in 3 administration windows as indicated in the chart below:

Sessions	**Testing Dates** (8 weeks each)	**Testlets**	**Notes**
Session 1	Oct. 19 - Dec. 11, 2026	3-5	
Session 2	Jan. 11 - Mar. 5, 2027	3-5	ELA includes 1 Performance Task
Session 3	Mar. 29 - May 21, 2027	3-5	Includes 1 Math Anchor Testlet
Note: The number of testlets your child will take depends on the subject and grade level.			

What is the purpose of the MAST assessment?
The Montana OPI, in partnership with New Meridian, developed an improved assessment system to reflect the needs of our students, teachers, and schools while offering more flexibility in how tests are administered.

Instead of one large end-of-year test, MAST uses smaller tests, called “testlets,” spread throughout the school year. This approach better connects testing to classroom learning and provides teachers and families with timely information to support student growth.

It is important to remember that statewide assessments are only one measure of student learning. Combined with grades, classroom, and local assessments, they provide a more complete picture of a child’s progress toward Montana’s Content Standards.

Details about the 2025-2026 administration:

- **Participants**: Grades 3- 8 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:** Teachers and schools receive results after each administration. Parents can access results through the Parent Portal and will also receive a summative report at the end of the year. Access to the Parent Portal will be provided after the first test window.

Other important information:

- 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 Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs), Section 504 plans, or English Learner plans will be assessed based on their individual needs, consistent with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Here are some things you can do to help:

- Encourage your child to do their best on everything they do in school, including the MAST assessments.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of sleep before testing days and has a healthy breakfast.
- Talk to your child about the purpose of the tests and help them with homework and review activities.

To learn more about MAST, visit:

- Montana OPI webpage link
- New Meridian: Assessment creator link
- Resources for Parents can be found on the Parent MAST Portal link

If you have any questions or concerns about the MAST, please contact me.

Sincerely,

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