

March 9, 2020

Glacier Gateway is preparing for the annual administration of the state required Smarter Balanced assessment. As listed on our school calendar, in Grades 3-5 will take the assessment starting March 16th through May 15th. State and federal law require all students to participate in grade-level assessments for academic achievement reporting.

Participation in this test is important. State 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 these state assessments as one of the many tools to understand individual student achievement (how much a child knows at the end of the year) and individual progress (how much a child has improved over the previous year). Teachers also use these results to identify student academic strengths and weaknesses and adjust instruction accordingly.

Our school uses state 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.

Results from state assessments provide the state, our district, our school, teachers, you, and your child with information about the knowledge gained over the past school year. Individual student reports give results from the test and will be sent home to parents. **A new website is available for parents to assist in understanding and making meaning out of the score reports. This website can be found at www.mt.startingsmarter.org. We encourage you, as a parent/guardian, to access this to better understand Smarter Balanced score reports.** It is important to remember that state assessments provide only one measure of student learning, but when combined with grades, classroom activities, unit quizzes and tests, and district-level assessments, the end-of-year tests 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.

Here are some things to note about the state 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 end-of-year state test.
- 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.

We appreciate your partnership in helping Glacier Gateway fulfill the state requirement for end-of-year assessments and supporting your child to do his/her best. Future reminders will be sent out for exact testing weeks for each grade.

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
English Lang. Arts (ELA): 3/31-4/3	English Lang. Arts (ELA): 4/13-4/17	English Lang. Arts (ELA): 4/21-4/24
Math: 4/27-5/1	Math: 4/27-5/1	Math:5/4-5/8
		(5th grade only) Science: 3/16-3/19

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about state testing this year. Questions can be directed to Penni Anello at 406-892-6540 .