Smarter Balanced Field Test

Parent and Guardian Notification Letter Template

DIRECTIONS: Before this letter is distributed, place the following text on school letterhead and insert the information indicated by red type in parentheses.

**(Month Day, Year)**

Dear Parent or Guardian:

The Montana Office of Public Instruction has been granted a testing waiver from the U.S. Department of Education in order to avoid double-testing of Montana students this school year and to allow schools to smoothly transition to a new online statewide assessment of English and Math in 2015. Without this waiver, Montana students would have been tested on our old standards as well as participating in a field test of the Smarter Balanced assessment, which is aligned to our new standards.

All Montana students in grades 3-8 and grade 11 will take the Smarter Balanced Field Test in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math with the exception of qualifying students with disabilities, who will take the CRT Alternate assessment. The current paper-and-pencil Science CRT assessment and Science CRT Alternate will continue to be given in grades 4, 8, and 10.

Our school is one of many in the country that will participate in the Smarter Balanced Assessment Field Test this spring. A field test is an opportunity to “test the test.” Information from the field test will be used to evaluate the testing software, ensure the quality of test questions, and evaluate the effectiveness of the test administration and training materials. Because the field test is a “test of the test,” students, parents, schools, and the state will not receive scores.

Our school’s window for the spring 2014 assessment is (school testing window here). The assessment will be administered over multiple days and will take approximately four hours each for ELA and Math. Participation is confidential, and your child’s grades will not be affected.

This is a good opportunity for our school to allow students to try out the new online testing software and innovative question types that will be very similar to future Smarter Balanced assessments. By participating in the field test, your student will also be influencing the development of future Smarter Balanced assessments used in our schools.

If you would like more information about Smarter Balanced, please visit the Smarter Balanced website at <http://www.smarterbalanced.org/>. You can find additional information about Montana’s new English and Math standards as well as the testing waiver from the U.S. Department of Education at <http://opi.mt.gov>.

If you have any questions regarding your child’s participation, please contact (***name of school contact)*** at **(*phone number and/or e-mail address*)**.

Sincerely,

(***name of school principal***)

Principal