



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, December 10th, 2025 – 12:00 PM

This meeting will occur at the Lincoln Center (1325 Poplar St., Helena, MT 59601) and via Microsoft Teams.

To participate remotely, please use this link on Microsoft Teams:

[Join the meeting now](#)

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

II. REVIEW OF AGENDA

III. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

This is the time for comment on public matters that are not on the agenda. Public matters do not include any pending legal matters, private personnel issues, or private student issues. Please do not attempt to address such issues at this time or you will be ruled out of order. The Board cannot enter into a discussion during General Public Comment.

IV. REVIEW OF MINUTES

Review of 11.12.25 Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting Minutes

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

- A. HPS Student Health Services
- B. HPS Fall Data

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

VII. ADJOURNMENT



The Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner.

Board of Trustees Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting

Wednesday, November 12th, 2025

12:00pm

Lincoln Center & TEAMS

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Trustees: *Others:*

Jenny Murnane Butcher, Trustee	Rex Weltz, Superintendent
Siobhan Hathorn, Trustee	Candice Delvaux, Executive Assistant
	Josh McKay, Assistant Superintendent 6-12
	Justine Alberts, Assistant Superintendent PreK-5
	Kaitlyn Hess, Assessment and Federal Programs Director
	Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology
	Lona Carter, Student Health Services & Special Education Director
	Keri Mizell, Human Resources Director
	Jane Shawn, HEA President
	Taylor Lassiter, Communications Specialist
	Todd Verrill, Facilities Director
	Brice Burton, Jefferson Elementary Principal
	Amanda WalkingChild, IEFA Instructional Coach
	Joe Pichardo, Indian Ed/Title VI Academic Specialist
	Terri Johnson, Indian Ed/Title VI Academic Specialist
	Jenny Wade, Indian Ed/Title VI Academic Specialist
	KC Sackman, Indian Ed/Title VI Academic Specialist
	Michele Zentz, Homeless Liaison
	Therese Tucker, EL/ML Coordinator

I. CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 p.m. by Trustee Jenny Murnane Butcher.

II. GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no general public comment.

III. REVIEW OF AGENDA

No changes were requested to the agenda.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The committee reviewed and accepted the minutes from the 10.8.25 Teaching and Learning Committee Meeting.

V. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION/DISCUSSION

A. IEFA

Staff members from the Helena School District's Indian Education for All program (IEFA) introduced themselves and described their roles within the schools. They shared a variety of initiatives and programs, including tutoring and mentoring for Native students, monthly cultural lessons for different grade levels, traditional games, storytelling units, and collaboration with community partners like Carroll College. The staff also highlighted their work with high school students through mentorship programs, family nights, field trips, and large-scale projects such as a collaborative canvas art project. They addressed questions from the Teaching and Learning Committee, emphasizing their goal of supporting students while also training and equipping teachers to incorporate Native American history, culture, and perspectives into the curriculum.

B. Homeless

Next, Ms. Michele Zentz, the district's Homeless Liaison, provided an update on her role and the work she is doing to support students experiencing housing instability. She shared current data, noting that the district is serving 363 students under the McKinney-Vento and foster care categories, including those who are doubled up, sheltered, unsheltered, or living in motels. She explained the nuances of these categories and emphasized the importance of identifying and supporting students' basic needs to help them succeed academically. Ms. Zentz described several initiatives underway, including: creating monthly infographics to share data with school staff, collaborating with principals and counselors to remove barriers to learning, and addressing individual student needs through direct support and advocacy. She also highlighted the ways the prevalence of homelessness varies by grade level, with younger students more likely to be identified due to closer relationships with teachers and less stigma around reporting housing challenges. Overall, Ms. Zentz emphasized that meeting students' basic needs is critical to their

success, and her work focuses on identifying vulnerable students, coordinating supports, and ensuring that all children in the district have equitable access to learning opportunities. Ms. Zentz addressed questions from the Teaching and Learning Committee.

C. ELL

Next, Ms. Therese Tucker, EL/ML Coordinator, provided an update on her work supporting students across the district. As the K–12 EL/ML coordinator, she works directly with students, teaches classes, and collaborates with classroom teachers to develop academic English skills. Currently, there are 79 identified ELL students in the district, representing a highly diverse population, including Spanish-speaking students from Mexico, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, Honduras, and Peru; Afghan students speaking Dari and Pashto; and smaller groups from countries including Thailand, China, Indonesia, and Jamaica. Therese highlighted the varying needs of her students, including newcomers (students in the U.S. less than 12 months), students with interrupted or limited formal education (SLIFE), and long-term English learners, some of whom take 5–7 years to fully acquire academic English proficiency. She explained how students may appear conversationally fluent but still require support to navigate the specialized language of school subjects, such as math problem-solving or academic reading and writing. Therese also collaborates with Michelle Zentz, the Homeless Liaison, to support students who are experiencing housing instability, ensuring they have access to resources such as the district’s resource closet. Her work emphasizes both individualized student support and teacher collaboration, helping staff implement strategies that allow ELL students to succeed academically while building long-term English proficiency. Ms. Tucker addressed questions from the Teaching and Learning Committee.

D. Fall Data Report-Including MAST

Due to time constraints, the Teaching and Learning Committee decided that the Fall Data Report, including MAST, will be presented and reviewed at a future meeting.

VI. BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS

There were no further board or superintendent comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m. by Trustee Murnane Butcher.

HPS Student Health Services and Special Education Department Update





Special Education District Team

Snapshot

- 48 SpEd Teachers
- 104 SpEd Para-Educators
- 11 Motor Poole
- 8 School Psychologists
- 15 Speech Language Pathologists
- 11 School Nurses
 - (nine building, two 1 on 1)

Disability	PK	K-5	MS	HS	Total	% of 7537	
Autism		1	56	46	45	148	1.96
Cognitive Delay		0	17	17	20	54	0.72
Deafness		0	0	1	1	2	0.03
Developmental Delay		17	82	0	0	99	1.31
Emotional Disability		0	18	27	49	94	1.24
Hearing Impairment		0	1	2	1	4	0.03
Learning Disability		0	113	121	136	370	4.91
Orthopedic Impairment		0	2	0	1	3	0.04
Other Health Impairment		0	31	36	47	114	1.51
Speech-Language Impairment		32	343	20	10	405	5.37
Traumatic Brain Injury		0	2	0	1	3	0.04
Visual Impairment		0	5	2	3	10	0.13
Total		50	670	272	314	1306	17.3



Updated processes

- ASEB (Academic-Social Emotional-Behavior) Referral Process
- Child Find
- KinderSprouts Language Intervention Team
- Special Education Accommodation Process
- Special Education Enrollment Process
- Special Education DLM Assessment
- Medicaid Billing
- Private School Plan Process
- Flowchart with resources for deaf/blind, hearing impaired and visually impaired students
- Group Home Student Enrollment Process
- Updated MOU's and ROI's with MSDB, MTLs, Family Outreach, ProCare, Voc Rehab
- 9-12+ Pre-ETS programming
- Disability & Transitions Process
- Adult Disability Services Process



Student Health Services



Resources & Initiatives

- SRA/BTA
- CPI & Ukeru Trainings
- Mental Health Trainings
- MT Cares App
- PAX, Second Step, SOS, YAMH, QPR
- RBHI
- DOJ STOP School Violence Program Grant
- MTSS-B
 - ASEB Referral Process
 - Character Strong Tier 1 Resources and Tier 2 Student Screenings/Interventions
 - Restorative Circles/Practices

Partners

- Shodair
 - Bryant (2 CSCT Teams & 2 TLC classrooms)
 - Central, HMS, Kessler, [Rossiter](#) and Warren (1 CSCT Team at each site)
- PureView
 - CHS, PAL, HMS and [4G's](#)
- Helena Indian Alliance
 - HHS, CRA, [Jefferson](#) and [Smith](#)
- AWARE
 - Broadwater and CRA
- Intermountain
 - [Jim Darcy](#)



Department Needs to Better Serve District Needs

- Expand Behavior Team (1 BCBA, 2 BI's)
- Add 6-12 Social Workers with Case Management Services
- Hire District Interpreters
- Attract Highly Qualified Special Education Teachers for openings
- Hire a Pre-ETS Coordinator, combined with a 19-22 teacher and para

Thank you!
Questions?



2025



FALL STUDENT DATA

OUR VISION

Helena Public Schools foster dynamic educational experiences that prepare all students for life.

OUR MISSION

Helena Public Schools educate, engage, and empower each student to maximize his or her individual potential with the knowledge, skills and character essential to being a responsible citizen and life-long learner. This mission will be supported through the wise use of resources to meet students' needs, regardless of interests and talents. Students, families, educators and the community are committed to sharing the responsibility for creating a student-centered educational community that acknowledges learning as a life-long process.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

01.

Each student enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.

02.

Each student learns in an intellectually challenging environment that is physically and emotionally safe for students and adults

03.

Each student is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

04.

Each student has access to personalized learning and to qualified, caring adults.

05.

Each graduate is prepared for success in college or further study and for employment in a global environment.

HPS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

The Helena Public Schools Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to ensure that all students receive a high-quality education that meets rigorous academic standards. Our mission is to provide accurate, meaningful assessments that support student learning, inform instructional practices, and guide decision-making at every level of our school district.

DISTRICT BENCHMARKS



Acadience PELI

Early Literacy



Acadience

Grades K-1
Reading



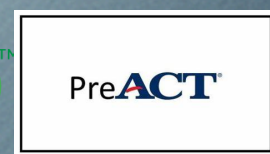
iReady

1st-8th Grade
Math
2nd-8th Grade
Reading



MAP

9th & 10th
Grade
Reading and
Math



PreACT

10th Grade

STATE ASSESSMENTS



New! MAST

Grades 3-8
Reading and
Math



SBAC

Retired State
Assessment for
grades 3-8



**Mt Science
Assessment**

Grades 5 & 8

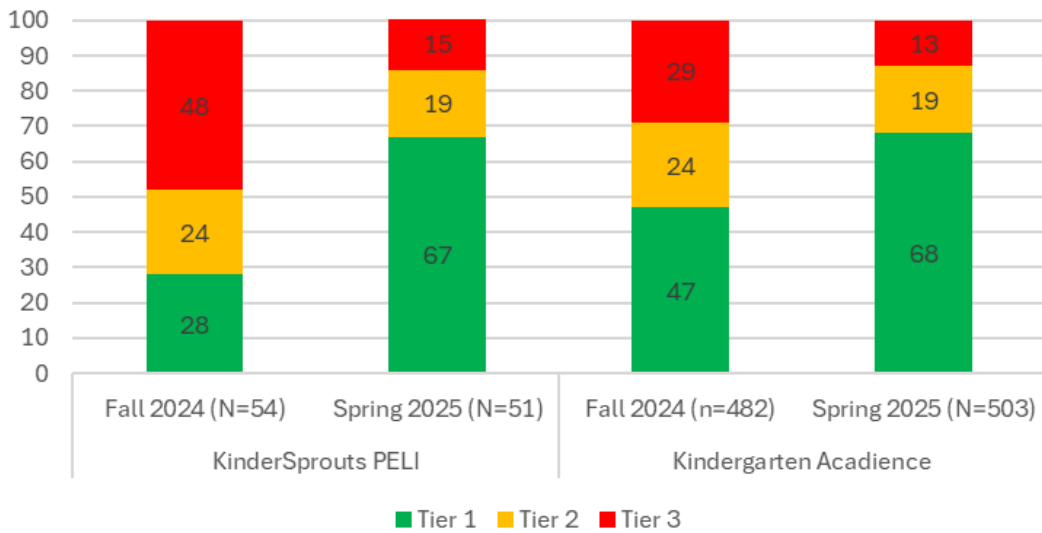


ACT

11th Grade

KINDERSPROUTS DATA

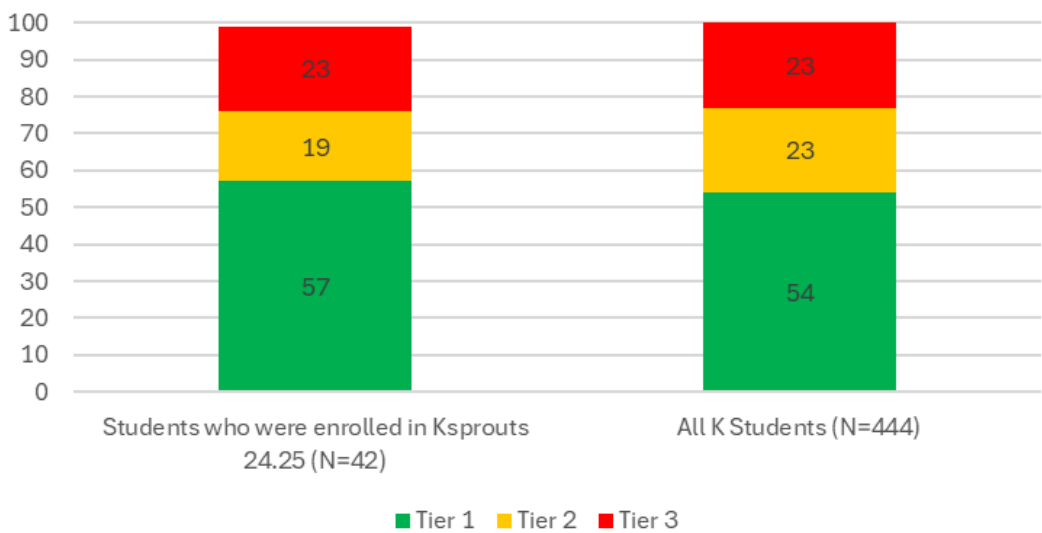
2024-2025 KSpouts and Kinder Growth



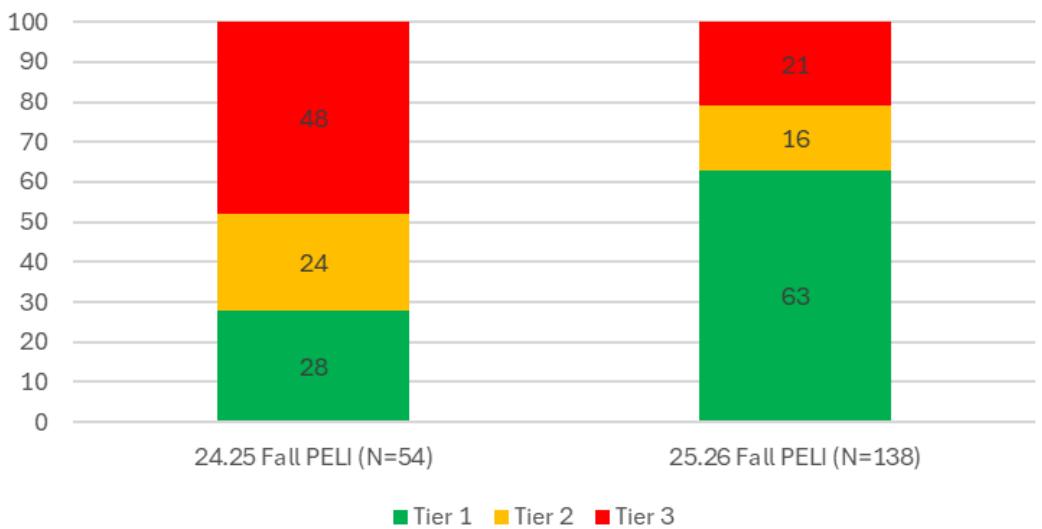
Considerations:

- The 2024-2025 cohort had a lower cut score for qualification. In 2025-2026, we raised the threshold, enabling more students to qualify.
- Students in the 2024-2025 cohort were enrolled for 4 hours each day, whereas students in the 2025-2026 cohort are enrolled for 6.5 hours daily.

2025 Fall Acadience Reading



Fall KinderSprouts PELI Year over Year



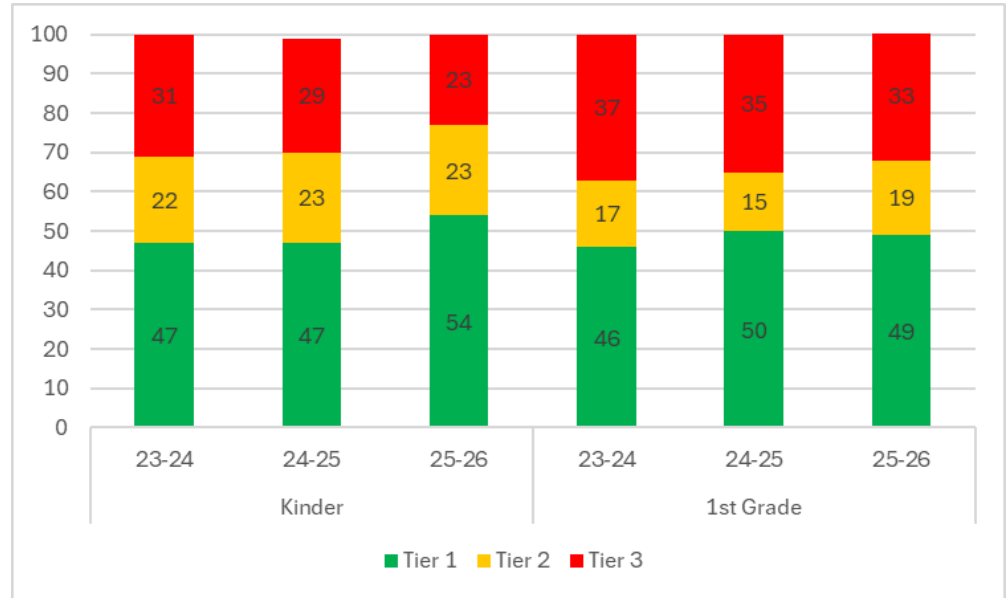
FALL BENCHMARKS ACADIENCE



acadience™

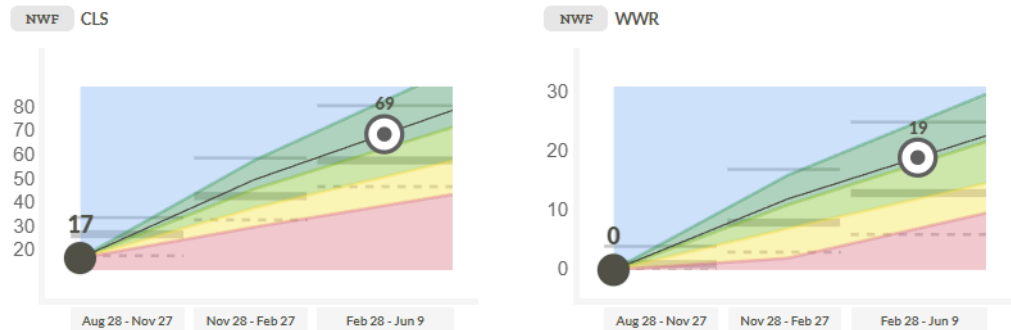
HPS 2025-2026 Academic Goal

Goal 1: By spring 2026, 70% of Helena Public Schools' first-grade students will score proficient on the Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) subtest as evidenced by the Acadience assessment.



PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS

District K-8 literacy TOSA has been working with K & 1 teams to set goals tied to progress monitoring within Acadience and Pathways of Progress. This tool charts student growth more clearly and gives teachers tangible progress metrics.



ORAL READING FLUENCY TESTING

District K-8 literacy TOSA has been working with 2-8 teams to set goals tied to iReady fluency subtest when students are flagged for needing fluency support. This tool allows teams to measure the effectiveness of fluency interventions and make adjustments as needed to best meet student needs.

FALL BENCHMARKS GRADES 1-5



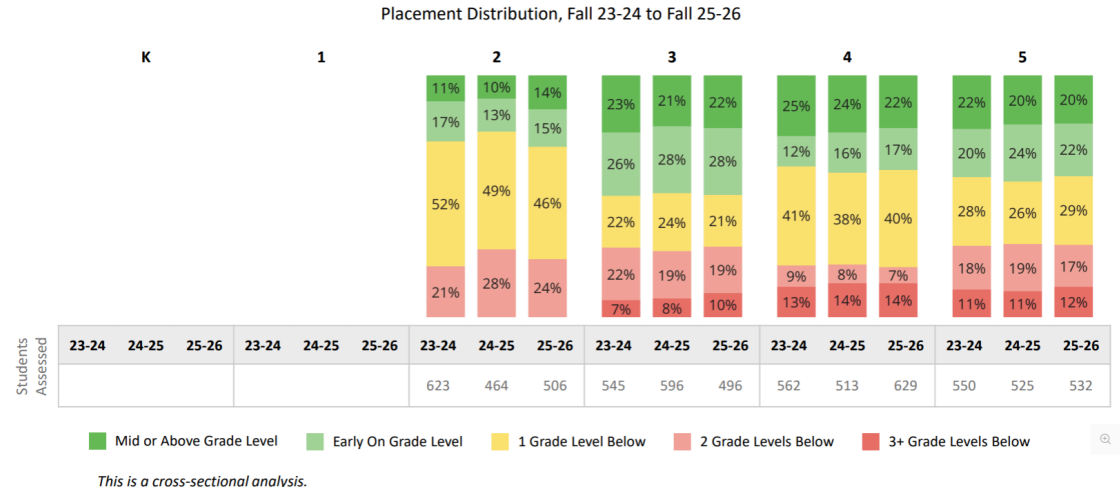
HPS 2024-2025 Academic Goals

Goal 2: By spring 2026, an average of 72% of Helena Public Schools third-grade students will score on or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency of grade-level standards, as evidenced by the i-Ready Reading assessment.

Goal 3: By spring 2026, an average of 65% of Helena Public Schools' third-grade students will score on or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency in grade-level standards, as evidenced by the i-Ready Math assessment.

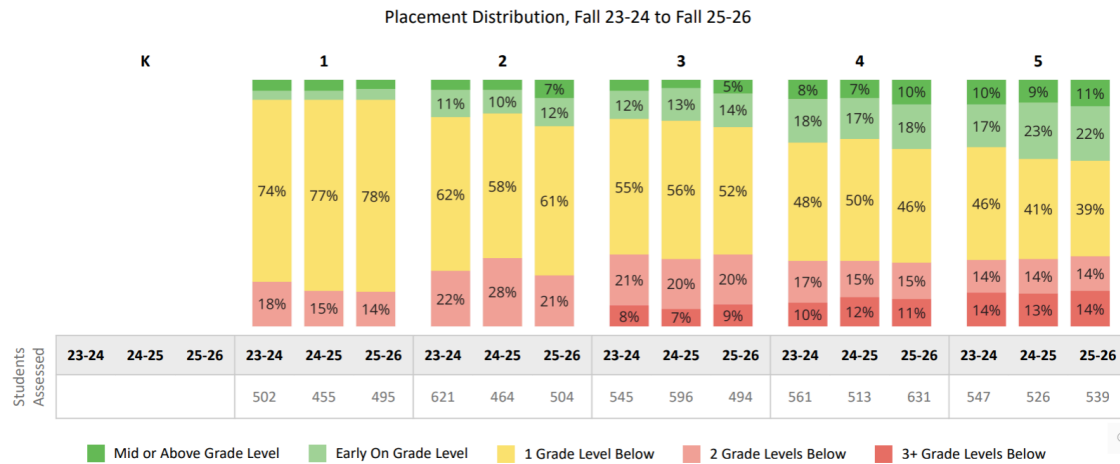
Reading

How Have Relative Placements Changed From Fall to Fall?



Mathematics

How Have Relative Placements Changed From Fall to Fall?



Fall benchmarks serve as a foundational assessment tool to gauge students' initial understanding at the beginning of the academic year. These criterion-referenced assessments evaluate students' comprehension of grade-level standards prior to their exposure to the associated content and curriculum for the year.



HPS 2024-2025 Academic Goals

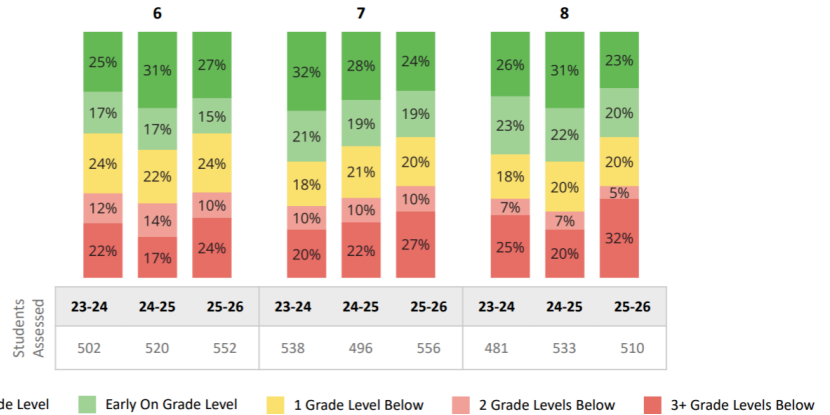
Goal 4: By spring 2025, an average of 65% of Helena Public Schools seventh-grade students will score on or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency of grade-level standards, as evidenced by the i-Ready Reading assessment.

Goal 5: By spring 2025, an average of 50% of Helena Public Schools seventh-grade students will score on or above grade level, demonstrating proficiency of grade-level standards, as evidenced by the i-Ready Math assessment.

Reading

How Have Relative Placements Changed From Fall to Fall?

Placement Distribution, Fall 23-24 to Fall 25-26

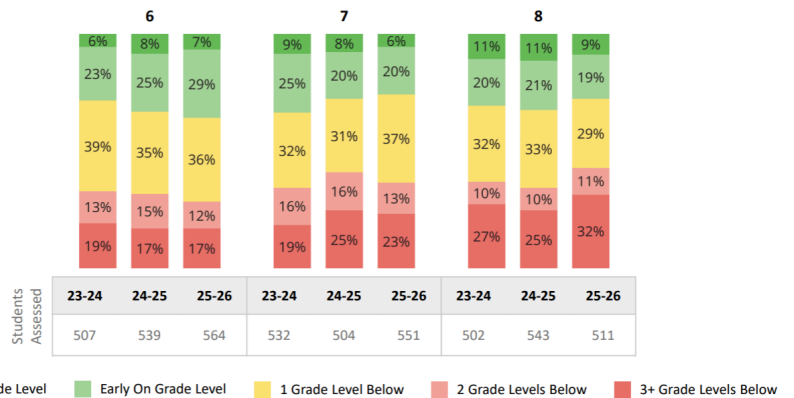


This is a cross-sectional analysis.

Mathematics

How Have Relative Placements Changed From Fall to Fall?

Placement Distribution, Fall 23-24 to Fall 25-26



This is a cross-sectional analysis.

Overview of the Assessment

THE MONTANA ALIGNED TO STANDARDS THROUGH-YEAR (MAST) ASSESSMENT IS MONTANA'S STATEWIDE TEST IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA) AND MATHEMATICS FOR GRADES 3-8.

MAST IS ADMINISTERED THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR IN SHORTER SEGMENTS, CALLED TESTLETS, RATHER THAN A SINGLE, END-OF-YEAR TEST.

TESTLETS MEASURE PROGRESS TOWARD GRADE-LEVEL STANDARDS IN READING, WRITING, AND MATH. THE RESULTS COMBINE INTO ONE SCALE SCORE AND ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL AT THE END OF THE YEAR.

ABOUT THE WRITING SCORES

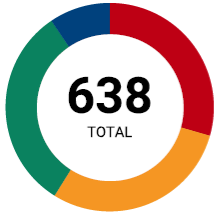
- THE WRITING PERFORMANCE TASK IS NEW STATEWIDE THIS YEAR.
- STUDENTS READ MULTIPLE PASSAGES, ANALYZE THE INFORMATION, AND WRITE AN EXTENDED RESPONSE THAT DEMONSTRATES ORGANIZATION, EVIDENCE, AND EFFECTIVE LANGUAGE USE.
- THE TASK WAS ADMINISTERED MIDYEAR (JAN-FEB), BEFORE STUDENTS HAD FULLY MASTERED ALL GRADE-LEVEL WRITING SKILLS.
- LOWER WRITING SCORES ARE EXPECTED STATEWIDE AND REFLECT THE CHALLENGE OF A NEW FORMAT, NOT A LACK OF EFFORT OR LEARNING.
- HELENA PUBLIC SCHOOLS' STUDENTS SCORED ABOVE THE STATE AVERAGE OVERALL IN ELA.



Helena

ELA, 3rd Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 311

- Novice: 188 Students (29%)
- Partially Proficient: 187 Students (29%)
- Proficient: 202 Students (32%)
- Advanced: 61 Students (10%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	308

Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
Literary Text Reading Comprehension	48
Informational Text Reading Comprehension	49

3RD GRADE

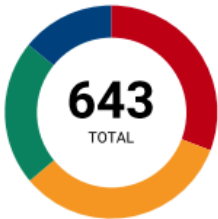
2024-2025 MAST

4TH GRADE

Helena

Math, 3rd Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 307

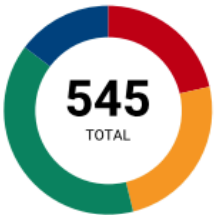
- Novice: 199 Students (31%)
- Partially Proficient: 212 Students (33%)
- Proficient: 141 Students (22%)
- Advanced: 91 Students (14%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	307

Helena

ELA, 4th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 317

- Novice: 117 Students (21%)
- Partially Proficient: 134 Students (25%)
- Proficient: 214 Students (39%)
- Advanced: 80 Students (15%)

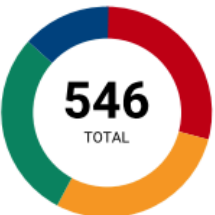
Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	312

Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
Literary Text Reading Comprehension	51
Informational Text Reading Comprehension	53

Helena

Math, 4th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 310

- Novice: 159 Students (29%)
- Partially Proficient: 156 Students (29%)
- Proficient: 157 Students (29%)
- Advanced: 74 Students (14%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	308

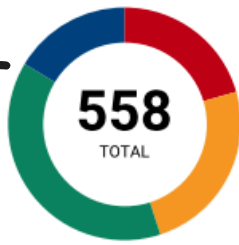
5TH GRADE

2024-2025 MAST

6TH GRADE

Helena
ELA, 5th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 319

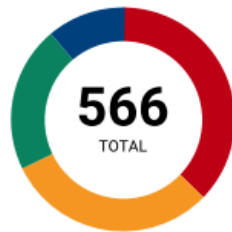
- Novice
114 Students (20%)
- Partially Proficient
137 Students (25%)
- Proficient
215 Students (39%)
- Advanced
92 Students (16%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	315

Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
Literary Text Reading Comprehension	52
Informational Text Reading Comprehension	53

Helena
Math, 5th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



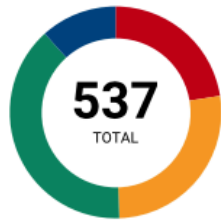
Average Scale Score: 304

- Novice
210 Students (37%)
- Partially Proficient
173 Students (31%)
- Proficient
119 Students (21%)
- Advanced
64 Students (11%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	306

Helena
ELA, 6th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 315

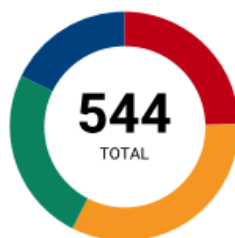
- Novice
121 Students (23%)
- Partially Proficient
145 Students (27%)
- Proficient
209 Students (39%)
- Advanced
62 Students (12%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	309

Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
Literary Text Reading Comprehension	50
Informational Text Reading Comprehension	51

Helena
Math, 6th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 312

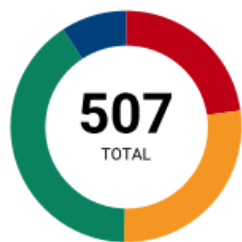
- Novice
134 Students (25%)
- Partially Proficient
179 Students (33%)
- Proficient
134 Students (25%)
- Advanced
97 Students (18%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
Montana	307

Helena

ELA, 7th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 316

- Novice**
116 Students (23%)
- Partially Proficient**
139 Students (27%)
- Proficient**
205 Students (40%)
- Advanced**
47 Students (9%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
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Montana	312
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Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
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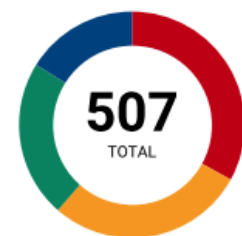
Literary Text Reading Comprehension	50
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Informational Text Reading Comprehension	51
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Helena

Math, 7th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 311

- Novice**
168 Students (33%)
- Partially Proficient**
144 Students (28%)
- Proficient**
114 Students (22%)
- Advanced**
81 Students (16%)

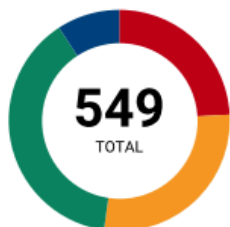
Organization	Average Scale Score
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Montana	309
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Helena

ELA, 8th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 315

- Novice**
133 Students (24%)
- Partially Proficient**
154 Students (28%)
- Proficient**
212 Students (39%)
- Advanced**
50 Students (9%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
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Montana	311
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Reading Comprehension Results	Average Scale Score
-------------------------------	---------------------

Literary Text Reading Comprehension	50
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Informational Text Reading Comprehension	51
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Helena

Math, 8th Through-Year Assessment

Achievement Summary



Average Scale Score: 313

- Novice**
159 Students (29%)
- Partially Proficient**
164 Students (30%)
- Proficient**
135 Students (25%)
- Advanced**
92 Students (17%)

Organization	Average Scale Score
--------------	---------------------

Montana	309
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11

7TH
GRADE

2024-2025
MAST

8TH
GRADE

Juniors participate in the ACT every spring as part of our state assessment. The results are reported by graduating cohorts. For instance, the 2026 graduating cohort, discussed here, were juniors during the spring of 2025 when they completed the ACT.

