



Board of Public Education

Montana Board of Public Education 2-15-122, MCA, Advisory Council Requirements

The council's name, in accordance with subsection (2):

Early Literacy and Numeracy Advisory Council

The council's composition:

(See below)

The appointed members, including names and addresses:

(See below)

The council's purpose:

To meet and provide recommendations to the Board of Public Education on the requirements to provide targeted interventions to support 3rd grade reading and math proficiency.

The council's term of existence, in accordance with subsection:

July 2025-July 2027

****Send to Governor's Office and Secretary of State for a record of the council****

Facilitators

McCall Flynn

PO Box 200601

Helena, MT 59620

McCall Flynn is the executive director of the Board of Public Education.

Caitlin Jensen, MSW

PO Box 4464

Helena, MT 59604

Caitlin Jensen is the Executive Director of Zero to Five Montana, a statewide early childhood policy organization. She has over 20 years of experience in the field of early care and education.

Members

Norah Barney, EdD

1410 W Park Ave

Anaconda, MT 59711

5483 Fairmont Rd

Anaconda, MT 59711

Dr. Norah Barney serves as a Special Education and Curriculum Director at the Anaconda School District where she has overseen the Early Childhood program for the past 11 years. Dr. Barney earned a Bachelor's Degree from Montana State University in Elementary and Special Education in 2002. She earned a Masters' Degree in Special Education in 2005 and earned a Doctorate Degree in Education Leadership in 2018. She created the first inclusive preschool program in the district and expanded the program in 2015. The program is considered high quality as it has excellent staff (all 4 Early Learning Teachers have Masters' Degrees), the literacy scores of

the students average at 80% or above for kindergarten readiness, and the program ensures at least 90% of the students have the social emotional skills necessary to be successful. Dr. Barney has a strong background in Developmental Screeners and understands that the MTSS process is imperative to ensure student success. She is a former Special Education teacher with 11 years of experience in P-12 grade settings. Dr. Barney spent 4 years as an Assistant Principal/Special Education teacher in a P-12 grade setting in Burlington, Wyoming. She then served as the Primary School Administrator (P-2) in Anaconda from 2013 - 2022. Her dissertation was titled Impact of Leadership on Early Childhood Education Program Quality. In 2020, she was the recipient of the Adrian Langstaff Award, presented to a Montana school leader for outstanding service in education. She has presented at many state, national, and international conferences.

Laurie Barron, EdD

18 West Evergreen Drive
Kalispell, Montana MT 59901
306 Cascade Court, Unit F
Whitefish, MT 59937

Dr. Laurie Barron is in her twenty-ninth year in education, serving as a high school English teacher, a middle school assistant principal, and nine years as a middle school principal. Since 2013, she has served as the superintendent of the Evergreen School District in Kalispell, Montana. Barron holds a BSEd in English Education from the University of Georgia, an MEd in Supervision and Administration from the University of West Georgia, and an EdS and EdD in Educational Leadership from the University of Sarasota. She also studied abroad at Oxford University. She holds National Superintendent Certification through AASA, is a National Board Certified Teacher, was honored as Teacher of the Year and STAR Teacher, is the 2012 Georgia Middle School Principal of the Year, and the 2013 National Middle School Principal of the Year. Barron is also the 2018 School Administrators of Montana G.V. Erickson Award recipient, given to a member of the School Administrators of Montana who has made the greatest contribution to the betterment of education in Montana, was named the 2019 Empowered Superintendent of the Year by the Montana Educational Technologists Association, and is the 2021 Montana Superintendent of the Year. In 2022, Barron was honored with the Distinguished Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award from the University of Georgia College of Education. Barron co-authored *The Successful Middle School: A Place to Belong and Become, 2nd Edition* (AMLE, 2024), *We Belong: 50 Strategies to Create Community and Revolutionize Classroom Management* (ASCD, 2021), *Middle School: A Place to Belong and Become* (AMLE, 2018), and *What Parents Need to Know about Common Core and Other College- and Career-Ready Standards* (World Book, 2015) and has authored numerous education articles. Barron is also a national speaker, consultant, and leadership coach who provides motivation and professional learning to teachers and administrators through promoting student belonging, classroom management, student engagement and voice, school culture and climate, inclusive teaching and learning environments, co-teaching environments, standards-based instruction and assessment, effective and engaging school leadership, school improvement, middle school master scheduling, strategic planning, and school-based health and community services. Barron is living the dream in northwest Montana with her husband Daniel, where together they enjoy watching Georgia Bulldogs football, snow skiing, camping, rafting, hiking, and watching their daughter Emma play college soccer.

Anne Penn Cox, EdD

PO Box 1772
Livingston, MT 59047
1005 Ridgeway Dr
Livingston, MT 59047

Dr. Anne Penn Cox serves as the PreK–12 Director of Student Support Services and Early Childhood Liaison for Livingston Public Schools in Livingston, Montana. With over 12 years of experience as both an educator and administrator in Park County, Anne Penn brings deep expertise in supporting students, staff, and families through the lens of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework. Her career has centered on expanding access to high-quality early childhood education, fostering safe and equitable learning environments,

advancing inclusive instructional practices, and building collaborative partnerships with local and state stakeholders. In her role as Early Childhood Liaison, Anne Penn works closely with community partners to reduce barriers and support the expansion of high-quality childcare services for families with children aged 0–4 across Livingston and Park County. Her efforts also focus on equipping providers and families with the tools and resources needed to ensure enriching early childhood experiences for all children. Outside of her professional work, Anne Penn enjoys exploring Montana’s mountains—running, skiing, and snowmobiling—or spending quality time at home with her family.

Tammy Elser, EdD

1701 Missoula Avenue
Missoula, MT, 59802

Dr. Tammy Elser is faculty and the director of literacy, equity, and excellence at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, MT. She has a Doctoral Degree in Curriculum and Instruction and a Master’s Degree in Counseling, both from the University of Montana. Dr. Elser is in her 40th year as an educator and teacher educator with emphasis on literacy—including emergent literacy, the role of encoding in learning to read, application and interpretation of basic cognitive, neurological, psycholinguistics, and other lines of basic science in literacy as applied to classroom practice in learning to read. Her work with master and future teachers focuses on integrative models of literacy learning for delivery of effective early literacy education with emphasis on all processing systems. Dr. Elser is also a specialist in Indian Education for All and has strong interest in student motivation and well-being.

Karen Filipovich

426 N Grand Ave
Bozeman, MT 59715

Karen Filipovich is the executive director of the Montana Head Start Association. Her career has been committed to helping communities and organizations identify, prioritize, and realize their priorities. She has a background in public policy and science. She has worked with early childhood, public health, and natural resource groups for more than twenty years in Montana and Massachusetts.

Colette Getten

3905 15th Ave S
Great Falls, MT 59405

Colette Getten is a mom of 4 children and married to an educator. She grew up in Butte, MT and graduated from Butte High School. She attended Western Montana College in Dillon and graduated with a BA in Education and as well as an Associate Degree in Early Childhood. After being in the classroom for 2-3 years, she realized she needed to learn more about how to engage students with special needs, so she returned to college and earned an endorsement to teach Special Education PK-12. Colette was hired by Great Falls Public Schools in the Fall of 2000 to teach Special Education Preschool. While teaching, she completed a MA in Creative Arts in addition to Educational Leadership from Montana State. In 2010, she transitioned into a leadership position collaborating with community partners to build an inclusive early childhood education program within Great Falls Public Schools. For the past 13 years, Colette has had the opportunity to collectively build capacity in a team of highly-qualified educators dedicated to working with 3–5-year-old children who meet criteria for exceptional circumstances. Most recently, the entire transitional kindergarten staff spent the past year growing their reading brains around the science of reading by engaging in a book study during PLCT, listening to podcasts and reviewing literacy curriculum and practices. She continues to acquire professional knowledge by reading current research, attending professional conferences and participating as a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Marisa Graybill

820 S California St
Helena, MT 59601

Marisa Graybill is passionate about empowering students to experience the joy and beauty of math through expanded access to high-quality mathematics instruction. She is the founder of MG Education Innovations, an education consultancy. Marisa previously worked at the national education nonprofit EdReports where she facilitated curriculum adoption through partnerships with states, districts, and nonprofit organizations across the country to ensure students have access to high-quality instructional materials. She also served as the Mathematics Instructional Coordinator for the Montana Office of Public Instruction and as a member of the Montana Math Standards Writing and Review Committee. Marisa's roots are in the classroom, where she served as a high school and middle school math teacher and instructional coach in districts across the country. Marisa holds an undergraduate degree in mathematics and statistics from Barnard College and master's degree in curriculum and instruction from Boston University. She lives in Helena, MT, with her husband and three children.

Marie Judisch

PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620

Marie Judisch is the Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning at the Office of Public Instruction. She is a born and raised Montanan. Marie graduated from Montana State University with Bachelor's Degrees in Elementary Education and Media Theater Arts in 2011. Marie began her career in education as an elementary math interventionist, gaining experience from the ground up of school systems to support student learning. She has taught a variety of components of all grades K-8 in her twelve-year career, understanding of the great honor and responsibility it is to meet learners of all abilities where they are. After completing her Master's Degree in Educational Leadership at Montana State University as the Outstanding Graduate for her cohort, Marie served as an elementary school principal in North Central Montana. Throughout her interim as the PK-3 leader, she carried with her the title of K-12 Curriculum Coordinator, K-12 Data and Testing Coordinator, Gifted and Talented Coordinator, as well as serving as the administrator for the 21st Century Community Learning Century grant, all while continuing to teach classes as much as possible. Marie is passionate about supporting Montana educators and students, firmly believing that those living in this great state deserve the very best educational opportunities possible. She calls their family farm in Ledger home, where she and her husband are proudly raising two young daughters.

Dr. Christine Lux

Montana State University
PO Box 173540
Bozeman, MT 59717

Dr. Christine Lux is the Don and Sue Fisher Family Endowed Professor of Early Childhood Education at Montana State University. Dr. Lux began her career as a preschool teacher before moving into early childhood program administration and early childhood teacher education. For nearly 30 years, Dr. Lux has worked for and with young children and their families. In Montana, Dr. Lux has been a member of several stakeholder and state level leadership teams to support a variety of early childhood education initiatives. Specifically, she contributed to ARM 10.58.531 Early Childhood Education P3 teacher endorsement standards and ARM 10.63 Preschool Education standards and co-leads the Montana Early Childhood Higher Education Consortium.

Lance Melton

863 Great Northern Blvd, Suite 301
Helena, MT 59601

Lance Melton serves as the executive director for the Montana School Boards Association, where he has worked since 1996. Melton previously served as an attorney, lobbyist, director of advocacy and general counsel before the MTSBA Board selected him as its executive director in January 2000. Melton has long represented

and championed the constitutional role of community-elected volunteer trustees in developing the full potential of each person under Article X of the Montana Constitution. Working collaboratively with school boards and legislators from throughout Montana, Melton has helped craft and pass legislation expanding opportunities for students and families to enjoy personalized learning paths in Montana's public schools. Melton earned a B.A. in Political Science with highest honors from the University of Montana and earned his J.D. from the University of Montana School of Law in 1992 where he was selected as a member of the Public Land Law Review. Before joining MTSBA, Melton served as an attorney and lobbyist for the Montana Department of Commerce.

Melissa Nikolakakos

5112 4th Ave N #9
Great Falls, 59405

Melissa Nikolakakos is an educator, 4th generation Montanan, mom of four, and twenty-year military spouse. She has served as a preschool president, led with the "Raising Readers" Program, serve as a Girl Scout Service Unit Leader, and served countless times as a PTA president. Melissa was elected to the Montana House of Representatives in 2024 and took office in 2025.

Stephanie Olson

732 56th St S.
Great Falls, MT 59405

Stephanie Olson is from a family of educators. Both of her parents taught for a combined 71 years. She has 2 sons and is also married to an educator. She grew up in Great Falls, MT, and graduated from Great Falls High School. She continued her education at Montana State University in Bozeman, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and a Reading Endorsement for grades k-12. She then attended Lesley University and received her Master's Degree in Computer Science. Stephanie has taught in the elementary setting for 27 years. She has taught literacy for grades k-6 and then transitioned to the classroom, teaching 2nd grade and now currently 3rd grade, all within Great Falls Public Schools. Stephanie is a very involved educator with being committed to many opportunities to grow as a professional, and to help her colleagues. She is currently the secretary/treasurer for the Great Falls Education Association, a position she has held for the last 24 years. In her spare time, she enjoys being with her family on the golf course, spending time at her cabin in the mountains with her dogs and loves to bake.

Doug Reisig, EdD

PO Box 17311
Missoula, MT 59808
2828 Campsite Place
Missoula, MT 59808

Dr. Douglas Reisig is the Executive Director of Montana Quality Education Coalition. He retired as the Superintendent of Hellgate Elementary on June 30, 2022, a Department of Education recognized "Blue Ribbon" school district in Missoula, Montana which is the largest Montana independent elementary school district. Dr. Reisig was the Hellgate Elementary school district superintendent for twenty-two years. Altogether, Dr. Reisig was involved in Montana Education for forty-six (46) years with thirty-years (34) spent in superintendent positions at St. Ignatius, Troy, Anaconda, and Hellgate Elementary. At the time of his retirement, Dr. Reisig was the longest continuous serving school district superintendent in Montana. Dr. Reisig received his B.S. degree and M.Ed. degrees from the University of Montana and his Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Montana State University. In 2010 and in 2021, Dr. Reisig was awarded the G.V. Erickson Award for "notable service and dedication to education". The G.V. Erickson Award is the highest award the School Administrators of Montana organization can give to a Montana school administrator. Dr. Reisig is the only school administrator to ever be awarded the GV Erickson Award twice.

Melissa Romano

Po Box 6393

Helena, MT 59604-6393

Melissa Romano lives in Helena, MT. Melissa earned an associate degree in photography from Northwest College in 1997, a B.S. in social sciences in 2002 and an M.S. in elementary education in 2003, both from the University of Bridgeport. Her 20-year experience includes working as a teacher in the Helena School District, a facilitator at Illustrative Mathematics, and a special project coordinator for the Montana Federation of Public Employees. Romano served a three-year term on the Montana Council of Teachers of Mathematics where she served as president. Melissa served as Montana's 2018 Teacher of the Year, and has spent her lifetime building a love of learning and a foundation of skills in her students. Melissa was elected to the Montana House of Representatives in 2022 and took office in 2023. She has continued to serve residents of Helena, MT.

Doug Rossberg

101 Hearth Ct

Missoula, MT 59803

Doug Rossberg is the Title I Instructional Coach for Missoula County Public Schools. Doug grew up in Helena, Montana and attended the University of Montana-Missoula for his B.A. in Elementary Education. Upon graduation, Doug began teaching 1st grade for Ogden City School District in Utah, where he also received his ESL Endorsement from Weber State University. While in Utah, he frequently worked side-by-side with site-based Instructional Coaches and grew to deeply value the growth and encouragement of the professional relationship. Returning home to Montana, Doug continued to teach 1st and 2nd grade and received his M.A. in Educational Leadership before moving into an Instructional Coach role himself. In his current role at the department, Doug focuses on Early Childhood intervention, Kindergarten readiness, and Science of Reading classroom implementation. In his personal life, Doug loves to explore the outdoors in Montana with his golden retriever, Rex, and spend time with friends and family.

Nicole Simonsen

PO Box 459

Culbertson, MT 59218

Nicole Simonsen began her career in education with her first 12 years in Sidney Public Schools. The first decade was spent in first grade and the next 2 years she was able to catch up with some of her previous first graders at the middle school in Sidney where she taught ELA and math. Nicole then spent 4 years in Lambert School, the first 3 years as principal and the fourth year as superintendent/principal combo position. She's now returned to her hometown to serve as the superintendent of Culbertson Public Schools. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Mary in Bismarck, ND, received her Master's in Elementary Reading and Mathematics online through Walden University, and received her principal and superintendent certifications from the University of Montana.

Dr. Danielle Thompson

348 Stafford

Bozeman, MT 59718

Dr. Danielle Thompson is an experienced National Consultant and Trainer with a demonstrated impact in PreK-school age populations. Dr. Thompson is a dynamic, fun, engaging human with tried-and-true experience in early childhood and school age language and literacy education, language development and disorders, reading acquisition and disorders, staff wellness and mindfulness, positive thinking and building positive change and momentum in schools. It has been said that "Dr. Thompson is an asset to any school, district and/or state that employs her because her wisdom is deep, her practicality is on target and her happiness is infectious!"

Dr. Allison Wilson

301 PJW College of Education

32 Campus Drive

Missoula, MT

Dr. Allison Wilson, an Associate Professor and the Director of the University of Montana Institute for Early Childhood Education, earned her PhD in Special Education and Early Intervention from the University of Oregon. With over two decades of experience, Dr. Wilson has dedicated her career to supporting young children and their families. Her teaching encompasses a range of topics including family engagement, curriculum design, early assessment practices, and child guidance. Dr. Wilson's research, which employs an Improvement Science framework, is focused on enhancing the preparation of early childhood professionals, implementing community-level initiatives to promote equitable opportunities for young children, and developing strategies to foster positive, language-rich interactions between young children and their caregivers.