

***BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
MEETING AGENDA***

MARCH 18, 2024

***Montana State Capitol Building, Room
152
Helena, MT***

AGENDA

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

March 18, 2024
Montana State Capitol Building, Room 152
Helena, MT

Monday, March 18, 2024
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance
- B. Roll Call
- C. Statement of Public Participation
- D. Welcome Visitors

PUBLIC COMMENT

This time will be provided for public comment on items not listed on the agenda. This meeting is open to the public both in person and electronically. For those wishing to give virtual public comment, please contact bpe@mt.gov to request the Zoom link for the meeting. Members of the public who have joined virtually on Zoom may "raise their hand" at the appropriate time to participate after being recognized by the Board Chair. Members of the public who wish to share written public comment with the Board members must submit written public comment to the Executive Director at bpe@mt.gov no later than two (2) business days before the start of the meeting. Any written public comment received after this deadline will be shared with the Board members after the meeting. All written public comment will be included as part of the official public record.

Action may be taken on any item listed on the Board agenda. Per §2-3-103, MCA, the Board encourages public comment on any item prior to Board final action.

CONSENT AGENDA – page #4

(Items may be pulled from Consent Agenda upon request)

- A. January 18-19,2024, February 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes
- B. Financials

ADOPT AGENDA

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-6)

- Item 1 **CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #96**
Dr. Tim Tharp
 - Welcome New Board Member
 - Board Committee Assignments

- Item 2 **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #98**
McCall Flynn

- Item 3 **STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 1 Hour, page #99**
State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen
 - Assessment Update
 - MAST Update

- Federal Update
- Accreditation Report
- Annual School Food Services Report
- Content Standards Revision Update
- Data Modernization Update

Item 4 **COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #160**
 Dr. Angela McLean

Item 5 **GOVERNOR’S OFFICE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #161**
 Dylan Klapmeier

Item 6 **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #162**
 Gavin Mow

❖ **MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Item 7)**

Item 7 **MSDB REPORT – 30 Minutes, page #163**
 Paul Furthmyre

ACTION ITEMS:

- Out of State Travel Request
- Personnel Items
- MSDB School Calendar
- 2nd Reading of MSDB Policies (1513, 1700)

❖ **MACIE LIAISON – Susie Hedalen (Item 8)**

Item 8 **MACIE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #175**
 Jordann Lankford Forster

ACTION ITEM:

- Action on Chippewa Cree Tribal Representative

❖ **CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Items 9-10)**

Item 9 **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 15 Minutes,**
page #179
 Trish Schreiber

Item 10 **UPDATE ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 15 Minutes, page #180**
 Jane Hamman

*******LUNCH BREAK*******
****Lunch will be provided for Board members****

*******TIME CERTAIN AT 12:30PM*******

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 11-17)**

Item 11 **NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE CASE #2024-01 – 5 Minutes, page**
 #181
 Rick Wooten, OPI Legal Counsel

- Item 12 **NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE CASE #2024-02 – 5 Minutes, page #182**
Rick Wooten, OPI Legal Counsel
- Item 13 **ACTION ON HEARING OF BPE CASE #2023-08, RAUSCH – 30 Minutes, page #183**
Chad Vanisko, ALSB Legal Counsel
- Item 14 **ACTION ON MOTION TO DISMISS BPE CASE #2022-13, HARNING – 5 Minutes, page #184**
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel
- Item 15 **ACTION ON AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS – 30 Minutes, page #185**
Susie Hedalen
- Item 16 **REVIEW DRAFT COUNCIL FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – 15 Minutes, page #198**
Dr. Julie Murgel
- Item 17 **ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION TO INITIALLY APPROVE ABCT_e AS AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM – 30 Minutes, page #209**
Dr. Julie Murgel and Crystal Andrews
- ❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Tim Tharp (Item 18)**
- Item 18 **INFORMATION ON K-12 PAYMENT SCHEDULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025 – 15 Minutes, page #214**
Barb Quinn
- ❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Items 19-20)**
- Item 19 **INITIAL REVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT’S PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 56, ASSESSMENT STANDARDS – 45 Minutes, page #217**
Dr. Julie Murgel and Marie Judisch
- Item 20 **ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 56, ASSESSMENT STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15 Minutes, page #236**
Renee Rasmussen
- ❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Items 21-26)**
- Item 21 **INFORMATION ON PROPOSED PRAXIS TEST SCORE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION – 15 Minutes, page #239**
Crystal Andrews

- Item 22** **ACTION ON GRASS RANGE ANNUAL REPORT PERTAINING TO THE MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANT PROGRAM – 15 Minutes, page #242**
Krystal Smith
- Item 23** **ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO THE AMENDMENT OF ARM, TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE’S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15 Minutes, page #247**
Madalyn Quinlan
- Item 24** **ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO THE AMENDMENT OF ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE’S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15 Minutes, page #252**
Madalyn Quinlan
- Item 25** **ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO THE ADOPTION OF ARM, TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE’S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15 Minutes, page #267**
Madalyn Quinlan
- Item 26** **ACTION ON THE APPROVED LIST OF SCREENING TOOLS PERTAINING TO THE TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS – 15 Minutes, page #273**
Madalyn Quinlan

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS May 9-10, 2024 – Great Falls, MT

MACIE Update
Approve K-12 Schools Payment Schedule
Assessment Update
Accreditation Report
Federal Update
Content Standards Revision Update
Executive Director Performance Evaluation

PUBLIC COMMENT

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ADJOURN

The Montana Board of Public Education is a Professional Development Unit Provider. Attending a Board of Public Education Meeting either in person or via Zoom may qualify you to receive professional development units. Please complete the necessary information on the sign-in sheet if you are applying for professional development units.

Agenda items are handled in the order listed on the approved agenda. Items may be rearranged unless listed “time certain”. Public comment is welcome on all items listed as “Action” and as noted at the beginning and end of each meeting.

The Board of Public Education will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual’s ability to participate in the meeting. Individuals who require such accommodations should make requests to the Board of Public Education as soon as possible prior to the meeting start date. You may write to: Kris Stockton, PO Box 200601, Helena MT, 59620, email at: kmstockton@mt.gov or phone at 406-444-0302.

CALL TO ORDER

- A. Pledge of Allegiance**
- B. Roll Call**
- C. Statement of Public Participation**
- D. Welcome Visitors**

CONSENT AGENDA

Items may be pulled from Consent Agenda if
requested

- A. January 18-19, 2024 and February 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes**
- B. Financials**

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

January 18-19, 2024
Montana State Capitol Building, Room 152
Helena, MT

Thursday, January 18, 2024
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER 08:30:23

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation, and welcomed guests.

Board members present: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Anne Keith; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Mr. Gavin Mow, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, Governor's Office. Staff present: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Dr. Daniel Sybrant, Cognia; Ms. Jordann Lankford-Forster, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) Chair; Mr. Lance Melton, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA); Dr. Christine Lux; Montana State University (MSU); Ms. Marie Judisch, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Principal Anne Penn Cox Winans Elementary School, Livingston; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Mr. John Melick, MSU; Dr. Rob Watson, School Administrators of Montana (SAM); Mr. Brenton Craggs, Attorney, OPI; Mr. Chad Vanisko, Board Legal Counsel, Agency Legal Services, Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB); Mr. Larry Crowder, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA); Principal Brett Zanto Capital High School; Ms. Melina Pyron, Polaris Classical School; Superintendent Pete Joseph, Corvallis Public Schools; Superintendent Tony Biesiot, Darby Public Schools, Superintendent Rick Duncan, Powell County Public Schools; Dr. Dan Lee, University of Montana (UM); Superintendent Dan Rispens, East Helena Public Schools; Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher, Montanans Organized for Education (MOFE); Mr. Alex Rotzal, Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS); Mr. Austin Amestoy, Montana Public Radio; Ms. Christine Kolczak; Dr. Jeril Hehn, Billings Public Schools (BPS); Ms. Jenn Gilbert; Ms. Carrie Kouba, OPI; Mr. Brad Weaver, Cognia; Ms. Barbara Frank, MCPS; Ms. Elizabeth Kaleva, Kaleva Law Firm; Mr. Gary Meyers, Helena Public Schools (HPS); Mr. Rick Wooten, OPI; Mr. Gordon Klasna, BPS; Dr. Chris Olszewski, BPS; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Mr. Caleb Swanson, Glendive Public Schools; Mr. Rob Stutz, Deputy Superintendent and Chief Legal Counsel, OPI; Superintendent Dan Grabowska, Park City Schools; Ms. Kim Popham, Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE).

PUBLIC COMMENT – 08:32:21

Ms. Melina Pyron, founding member of the Polaris Classical School, commented on charter schools and concerns she has with the process the Board has taken in opening Public Charter Schools in Montana.

CONSENT AGENDA – 08:40:46

Board member Quinlan moved to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Rasmussen thanked the Board for the time stamps and the work taken to complete the minutes.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Slinger moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

*******Items are listed in the order in which they are presented*******

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-2)**

**Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 08:42:00
 Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tharp thanked members for the work they have put in since the November meeting related to Public Charter School applications, noting that for a volunteer Board there has been a dramatic increase in work for Board members.

**Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 08:44:44
 McCall Flynn**

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed work completed by Board staff since the November meetings, thanked Board members for scoring the applications for Public Charter Schools, and asked for ideas to streamline the process for the next application cycle. Ms. Flynn reviewed recent meetings of the Community Choice School Commission and discussed work completed by the Early Literacy Advisory Council to create the Early Literacy Targeted Intervention program standards. Ms. Flynn noted the Board will act on the proposed standards at this meeting, then concluded her report with a summary of work for HB 338 pertaining to Indian Education for All. Chair Tharp reviewed the implementation process for HB 338 and stated the Board, MACIE, and OPI are working together to implement the new legislation. Ms. Flynn answered Board member questions.

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Item 3)**

**Item 3 PRESENTATION ON THE CROSSWALK BETWEEN COGNIA AND ARM
 TITLE 10, CHAPTER 55, ACCREDITATION STANDARDS – 08:54:40
 Dr. Daniel Sybrant**

Mr. Daniel Sybrant presented an overview of the Cognia accreditation process and its alignment with the Montana accreditation standards. Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Principal Brett Zanto, Superintendent Pete Joseph, Superintendent Tony Biesiot, and Superintendent Rick Duncan all discussed their experience with the Cognia accreditation process and how it aligns with the Montana Accreditation Standards. Board members asked questions of the group.

❖ **CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Item 4)**

**Item 4 WORK SESSION ON THE APPROVAL AND DENIAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER
 SCHOOLS – 10:00:50
 Jane Hamman**

Chair Tharp opened the item highlighting work done by the Board to review the 26 applications received for the Public Charter School program. Board member Hamman, Chair of the Charter School Committee, thanked the Board for their work, and discussed the process the Board held to review and score the applications, and the interview process that took place during the special Board meeting on November 30, 2023. Board member Keith explained the scoring process and how the numbers were calculated to give each application a final score. Ms. Flynn noted that education partners were asked to review the applications and submit their scores to the Board. Board member Hamman reviewed the number of public comments for each application and whether the comments were in support of, or opposed to, the

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Anne Keith (Item 7)**

- Item 7** **INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION OF EARLY LITERACY ADVISORY COUNCIL’S RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS – 13:18:27**
Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Board Association; Dr. Christine Lux, Professor of Early Childhood Education, Montana State University; Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning, OPI; Dr. Anne Penn Cox, Principal, Winans Elementary School – Livingston

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed work the Early Literacy Advisory Council completed pertaining to the implementation of HB 352, Early Literacy Targeted Interventions, the recommendations the Council has made to the Board, and work related to create new standards. Ms. Flynn briefly reviewed the proposed standards recommended by the Council then asked panel members to introduce themselves. Board member Keith began the questions for the panel and upon conclusion of the panel thanked the members for their work.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 8-12)**

- Item 8** **WORK SESSION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS AND EXPERT PANEL – 13:54:41**
Crystal Andrews, Director of Accreditation and Licensure, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, OPI; John Melick, Director of Field Placement and Licensure, Montana State University; Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana

Vice Chair Hedalen opened the item for the Board and asked Ms. McCall Flynn to introduce the panel members. Vice Chair Hedalen and Board members asked questions of the panel pertaining to the proposed revisions to the Educator Licensure Standards, and Ms. Flynn noted the Board will act on Friday to approve the notice and called for questions.

Dr. Tharp closed the meeting for Executive Session at 2:38 PM for the evaluation of the MSDB Superintendent.

- Item 14** **MSDB SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION**
Dr. Tim Tharp

Executive Session ended at 2:57 PM.

- Item 9** **NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE CASE #2023-07 – 15:03:02**
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs notified the Board of the surrender in BPE Case #2023-07.

- Item 10** **ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2022-13, HARNING – 15:05:16**
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed the Superintendent’s request for revocation in BPE Case #2022-13, Harning and answered Board member questions.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve moving BPE Case #2022-13, Harning to a contested case hearing. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 11 **ACTION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2023-08, RAUSCH – 15:09:07**
Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

Mr. Brenton Craggs reviewed the Superintendent’s request for a six month suspension of the educator’s license in BPE Case #2022-13, Rausch and answered Board member questions.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve moving BPE Case #2023-08, Rausch, to a contested case hearing. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 12 **ACTION ON APPEAL HEARING OF BPE CASE 2023-06, SWANSON –**
15:15:17
Chad Vanisko, Board Legal Counsel

Mr. Chad Vanisko opened the hearing and the parties made opening statements to the Board.

Mr. Swanson testified and was cross examined by Mr. Craggs, followed by questions from Board members.

Mr. Craggs presented the case on behalf of the Superintendent and called Ms. Crystal Andrews, Educator Licensure Manager, and Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, as witnesses.

Mr. Swanson waived closing arguments, and Mr. Craggs presented his closing arguments.

Board members asked questions of Mr. Swanson prior to deliberating their decision.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to uphold the Superintendent’s decision to deny a Class 3 License in BPE Case #2023-06, Swanson. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Items 13-14)**

Item 13 **MSDB REPORT – 16:23:10**
Paul Furthmyre

Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the personnel report, the proposed 2024-2025 MSDB calendar, the Out-of-State-Travel request, and the final approval of MSDB polices which have been under review. Superintendent Furthmyre stated MSDB is nearing completion of the AER Accreditation review, and it should be finalized by mid-February. Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the presentation by MSDB at the Education Interim Committee the previous week and discussed a new committee the school has created to define the “portrait of a graduate” for MSDB. Superintendent Furthmyre answered Board members questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the personnel actions for the MSDB as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Out-of-State-Travel Request for the MSDB as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Keith.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the 2nd Reading of MSDB Policies as listed in the agenda packet: 2050, 1000, 1100, 1310, and 1401. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board recessed for the day at 4:54 PM.

Friday, January 19, 2024
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 08:30:06

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation, and welcomed guests.

Board members present: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Anne Keith; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan. Ex Officio members: Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE; Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, Governor's Office. Staff present: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guests: Ms. Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Ms. Jacque Treaster, OCHE; Ms. Crystine Miller, OCHE; Dr. Lauren Fern, UM; Ms. Ciera Franks-Ongoy, OCHE; Ms. Krystal Smith, OPI; Mr. Jay Phillips, OPI; Ms. Genie Zeeck, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Dr. Dan Lee, UM; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Donnel Rosenthal, OPI; Ms. Wendi Fawns, OPI; Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher, MOFE; Dr. Jeril Hehn, BPS; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Deputy Superintendent and Chief Legal Counsel Rob Stutz, OPI; Mr. Gary Meyers, HPS; Ms. Kathleen Thatcher, MSU Billings; Ms. Judy Snow; Dr. Gordon Klasna, BPS; Mr. Patrick Cates, OPI; Mr. Larry Crowder, MREA; Ms. Barbara Frank, MCPS; Mr. Bob Funk; Ms. Elizabeth Kaleva, Kaleva Law Firm.

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 15-16)**

Item 15 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORT – 08:32:16
Dylan Klapmeier

Mr. Dylan Klapmeier announced Governor Gianforte will be resuming school tours soon, and that he recently hosted students and families for the Youth Hunting Reception. The Governor is seeking applications for the upcoming open seat on the Board and extended his thanks to Board member Keith for her service. Mr. Klapmeier thanked the Board and staff for their work implementing legislation passed during the 2023 session particularly the work surrounding Public Charter Schools. Mr. Klapmeier noted that the Department of Revenue recently opened the donation portal for the Innovation Education program and Big Sky Scholarship program.

Item 16 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 08:36:45
Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz

Assistant Superintendent Christy Mock-Stutz announced that the Montana Purple Star Schools have been awarded, and Ms. Dani McCarthy has been selected as the Special Education Director at the OPI. Superintendent Arntzen recently met with the Montana High School Association (MHSA) which is ready for Charter Schools to participate in MHSA sanctioned sports and that a Native American representative will be appointed to serve on their board. OPI has consolidated to one building with 60 employees on site and 130 employees working remotely. Staff have been working to implement the Special Education Savings Account by creating a Parent Advisory Council and a new FTE to manage the program. Assistant Superintendent Mock-Stutz briefly reviewed the OPI reports that will be presented to the Board.

Assessment Update – Ms. Cedar Rose, Assessment Director, discussed the third MAST window opening, reviewed the Monitoring and Field Outreach, and highlighted upcoming Assessment Events. Ms. Rose answered Board member questions.

MAST Update – Ms. Krystal Smith discussed the MAST Assessment Pilot, gave an update on outreach to schools, and reviewed the completion data required for the Federal Flexibility Testing Waiver. Ms. Smith discussed recently held external focus groups made up of educators across the state to assist the OPI with MAST implementation and answered Board member questions.

ESSER Update – Ms. Wendi Fawns presented the Federal Report to the Board highlighting the annual data reporting to the Department of Education beginning in March, finalization of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act plans, ESSER Grant Funding Project Outcomes, and an update on the Extended/Expanded Education Learning Opportunity Program. Ms. Fawns answered Board member questions.

Accreditation Report – Ms. Crystal Andrews reported that the OPI continues to provide professional development to districts regarding the new accreditation process and she has been working with SAM to provide training opportunities for districts. The new accreditation platform is on schedule to be released January 31st, and testing is being finalized ahead of implementation. The Accreditation division will be traveling across the state assisting districts with meeting the March 29th reporting deadline for the new accreditation process. Ms. Andrews stated work sessions will be provided to districts in February and March, before answering Board member questions.

Rigorous Action Information – Ms. Carrie Kouba updated the Board regarding the Rigorous Action Plan, and the method to assist schools in correcting deviations to move out of Comprehensive Support.

Transportation Report – Ms. Donnel Rosenthal presented the Annual Transportation Report reviewing the annual Transportation Conference and discussed the ongoing statewide driver shortage. Ms. Rosenthal answered Board member questions.

Content Standards Report – Ms. Marie Judisch gave a brief report on the status of the Content Standards Revision updates and where each content area is in the review cycle.

Data Modernization Update – Mr. Chris Sinrud reviewed the most recent Data Modernization Report submitted to the Education Interim Committee and provided an update on the status of the Data Modernization project for the Board.

Indian Education for All Payments in 20-9-329, MCA – Mr. Jay Phillips provided an overview of the implementation of HB 338 and discussed the status of the implementation process at OPI stating that coordination with school districts is ongoing to follow the statute. Members of the Board Legal Committee commented on the effective date of the statute of July 1, 2024, and the OPI interpretation of the law being effective retroactive to July 1, 2023. It was requested that a resolution be brought forward at the March meeting regarding the effective date. Mr. Phillips answered Board member questions.

Assistant Superintendent Mock-Stutz thanked the OPI staff for their work and for the Board for their time.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 17-24)**

Item 17

**PRESENTATION ON DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY
EDUCATION PROGRAMS – 09:44:53**

Sarah Swanson, Commissioner, Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner Sarah Swanson introduced herself and her Leadership Team to the Board. Commissioner Swanson discussed areas she is focusing on including building relationships across the state, working

Board member Keith noted there is still a question of what is transformational and what is innovative. Ms. Flynn stated that the statute defines what is transformational, the bill sunsets in 2025, and that in the future the Legislature may have other requirements.

Vice Chair Hedalen noted the increase in applications is the result of the work of OPI and DLI promoting the program.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Slinger moved to approve the Transformational Learning Grant Annual Reports for 2023. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 22 ACTION ON ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANTS – 11:42:18
Krystal Smith**

Ms. Krystal Smith reviewed changes made to the Advanced Opportunity Grant program during the 2023 Legislature and stated that an increased number of districts have applied resulting in a waitlist of districts to receive funding. Ms. Smith reviewed the application process before answering Board member questions regarding the lack of an Annual Report for Grass Range. Ms. Smith stated that Grass Range has a new Superintendent who is working on the Annual Report, and that she has followed up with the Superintendent numerous times but has not received the report to date..

Board member Slinger moved to approve the qualification of the Advanced Opportunity Grant applications for FY2025. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Slinger asked Ms. Smith the best way to handle Grass Range not submitting an Annual Report. Ms. Smith replied that the district has received funding for two years, the Superintendent is working on the Annual Report, and suggested approving the reports that have been received and she will return at the next meeting with the Grass Range report.

Board member Slinger moved to approve the Advanced Opportunity Grant Annual Reports that have been received for 2023. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 23 INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – 11:51:27
Jay Phillips**

Mr. Jay Phillips presented information on the Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program and reviewed the report of impacted schools, which the Board and OPI are required to post.

**Item 24 PRESENTATION OF THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY REPORT – 13:00:12
Genie Zeeck**

Ms. Genie Zeeck presented the 2023 Youth Risk Behavior Survey highlighting topics surveyed including drug and alcohol use, nicotine use, sexual behavior, driving behavior, seatbelt use, and more. Ms. Zeeck noted the survey is free to schools and answered Board member questions.

❖ ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Item 25)

Item 25 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 13:16:12
Madalyn Quinlan

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 53, English Language Proficiency Content Standards, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Flynn noted that implementation of these rules is not until 2025 to allow time for Professional Development.

❖ MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Item 26)

Item 26 ACTION ON MSDB SUPERINTENDENT 2024-2025 CONTRACT – 13:19:00
Dr. Tim Tharp

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the MSDB Superintendent 2024-2027 contract. Motion seconded by Board member Vice Chair Hedalen.

Chair Tharp noted this is a 3-year rolling contract.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Anne Keith (Items 27-28)

Item 27 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS AND TIMELINE, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 13:21:02
Anne Keith

Board member Keith moved to approve the proposed Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 63, Early Childhood Education Standards and Timeline, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Ms. Flynn reviewed the timeline to ensure they are completed prior to the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 28

ACTION ON AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS – 13:23:25
Anne Keith

Board member Keith moved to disagree with Comment 1 and stated that the parental notification requirements are prescribed in the Early Literacy Targeted Intervention statute in 20-7-1803(4), MCA. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

Chair Tharp noted that the statute is clear, and the Board must follow the law, so the response is to disagree.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Susie Hedalen (Items 29-32)**

Item 30

PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL EDUCATOR LICENSURE REPORT – 13:34:31
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented an overview of the 2023-2024 Annual Educator Licensure Report noting additions to the report particularly added endorsements and internships. Ms. Andrews noted the number of licenses granted under the Unusual Cases rule, number of applications denied, number of Emergency Authorizations granted, new licenses in fields of critical endorsements for a five-year period, and an increase in new applications from the previous year. Ms. Andrews answered Board member questions.

Item 29

ACTION ON PRAXIS TEST SCORE FOR AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE – 13:58:12
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews reviewed the work to add American Sign Language (ASL) to the PRAXIS Assessment and work completed by the expert panel to determine a qualifying score. Ms. Lisa Colon Durham, Educational Testing Services (ETS) explained that ETS partnered with Galludet University to have their ASL assessment added to the PRAXIS Assessment for Montana. Ms. Andrews reviewed the process the expert panel used to determine the passing score, which was forwarded to the PRAXIS Working Group and the Montana Council of Deans of Education (MCDE) who both approved the score of 3+. Ms. Andrews noted that a new test for Special Education will be under review in the coming months.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview Assessment and the qualifying score of 3+. Motion seconded by Board member Hamman.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 31

ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION TO INITIALLY APPROVE ABCTe AS AN ALTERNATIVE TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM – 14:15:41
Dr. Julie Murgel and Crystal Andrews

Dr. Julie Murgel reviewed the legislation passed allowing alternative teacher certification programs in Montana. Dr. Murgel introduced Ms. Jessie Luther, who has been assisting with bringing on a new program, and Ms. Isabelle Welch from ABCTe. Dr. Murgel and Ms. Welch provided background information on ABCTe and answered Board member questions.

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to initially approve ABCTe as an alternative teacher certification and endorsement program through January 2026. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Keith stated her concern that ABCTe does not require student teaching prior to certification, and asked if approval of this program could exclude Special Education certification due to concerns around classroom experience.

Board member Quinlan stated her concerns that current Educator Licensure Standards require classroom experience.

Dr. McLean asked how the pedagogy coursework is handled without actual classroom experience and Ms. Welch described how the test is designed to capture those areas.

Board member Rasmussen asked how long the Initial Approval is, and Dr. Murgel answered that for K-12 accreditation with new schools there is an initial timeframe before site visits occur and then recommendation for full approval for 5 years.

Dr. Dan Lee representing the MCDE gave public comment sharing MCDE's concerns with the ABCTe program and the approval process. MCDE requests the Board delay approval for further consideration.

Ms. Kim Popham commented regarding concerns about underprepared teachers struggling to succeed without classroom experience.

Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher commented about concerns with teachers not having classroom experience, and the lack of Indian Education for All training within the program.

Chair Tharp asked for clarification from ABCTe regarding other states only allowing certain endorsement areas offered by ABCTe. Ms. Welch stated that some states only approve certain areas. The Chair asked what areas OPI is requesting, and Dr. Murgel referred to page 431 in the packet for a list of the endorsement areas being requested.

Chair Tharp asked ABCTe to respond to the issue that their teachers lack student teaching requirements. Ms. Welch replied that their long-standing existence is proof their program works and that their teachers are prepared.

Board member Quinlan asked how the endorsement areas were determined and asked for a response to the concerns surrounding Special Education. Dr. Murgel stated that ABCTe approached OPI after identifying the endorsement areas specific to Montana. Dr. Murgel stated that she sent ABCTe the Montana requirements for the endorsement areas they identified, then gave an example that currently if an individual wanted a Class 5 License and was enrolled through ABCTe they would not be able to be licensed because ABCTe is not an approved teacher certification program in Montana.

Board member Quinlan asked for a comparison between the ABCTe Reading Endorsement program and the recent approval of the Reading Endorsement program at Salish Kootenai College (SKC). Dr. Murgel stated the SKC requirements are very similar to those of ABCTe.

Board member Quinlan noted the heavy work the Board has done with Charter applications and asked if it would be problematic for the Board to delay action until the March meeting for more information and consideration could take place. Ms. Welch stated that it delays an individual's ability to be in the classroom though Dr. Murgel answered a delay would not impact OPI.

Board member Keith inquired about satisfaction of schools with ABCTe teachers. Dr. Murgel responded that surveys are sent to the EPP's about the teachers they have trained, and to employers about the teachers they have hired, to find out if teachers have been adequately trained. Dr. Murgel stated that would be the same expectation for teachers trained by ABCTe.

Board member Keith asked ABCTe how many states have tried ABCTe and have not kept them as an alternative program. Ms. Welch stated that has happened historically due to legislation passed outlawing alternative teacher programs.

Board member Rasmussen stated that any time a new process comes on board the public has concerns, but that she supports an initial two year process to determine the program's success.

Vice Chair Hedalen expressed her appreciation for many aspects of the ABCTe program particularly her interest in the Veteran's component offered by ABCTe, but has concerns with the lack of student teaching, the Special Education program, and the Reading Specialist Program. Vice Chair Hedalen stated she does not want to water down expectations, but that the state is experiencing a teacher shortage, and this program offers a solution to that problem.

Dr. McLean thanked everyone for their input and noted programs such as the Teacher Residency Program, Sprint Degree, Master of Art's in Teaching, and programs that decrease the time to earn degrees and get educators prepared, licensed, and in the classroom. Dr. McLean asked that the Board address the concerns regarding IEFA and Special Education, amend the motion, and let the BPE Licensure Committee gather more information before acting.

Chair Tharp referenced work done with the Constitutional Players regarding the changing face of education and noted that other professions have alternative pathways to be licensed for their profession. However, the Board is responsible for maintaining high quality education.

Vice Chair Hedalen noted she supports many of the components of ABCTe, has concerns with other components, but recognizes that as a whole there are questions and that taking the time to address those concerns seems appropriate.

Vice Chair Hedalen amended the original motion to move Item #31 approving ABCTe as an alternative teacher certification program to the March 2024 meeting. No second.

Back to the original motion. Chair Tharp restated the original motion.

Board member Slinger stated his support of ABCTe and that he would support a friendly amendment to pull Special Education, address teacher mentorship, and the IEFA concerns. He stated he would not support the original motion.

Board member Rasmussen asked if ABCTe certified teachers can take the IEFA course online to satisfy that requirement and Ms. Andrews stated they can complete the online course. Board member Rasmussen stated concerns about slowing the process down too much and that she would not support pulling Special Education after the Annual Licensure Report noted the increased number of teachers who have added Special Education as an endorsement.

Chair Tharp noted that he intends to vote against the motion on the table and if the motion fails he will direct staff to place this on the agenda for the March meeting and direct the Licensure Committee to meet in the interim.

No further discussion. Motion failed 5-2 with Board member Rasmussen and Vice Chair Hedalen voting in favor.

Chair Tharp requested Ms. Flynn to place this item on the March agenda and for the Licensure Committee to meet ahead of the March meeting.

Item 32

**ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15:07:02
Susie Hedalen**

Vice Chair Hedalen moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 57, Educator Licensure Standards, and authorized filing of the notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Item 33)

Item 33

**ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS TO APPROVE AND DENY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 15:24:19
Jane Hamman**

Board member Hamman opened the item for the Board to act on the applications for Public Charter Schools noting some late public comment that came in regarding Billings Opportunity School, and a letter from Park City Schools withdrawing their application to create a public charter school.

Board member Hamman moved to approve the resolution to adopt the public charter proposals as listed in the resolution: Billings Early College School, Great Falls Core Elementary School, Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter, Missoula TEACH Academy, Billings Multilingual Academy, Bozeman Bridger Charter, Bozeman Charter School, East Helena 227 Academy, Frenchtown Bronc Fast Track Public Charter, Hamilton Bitterroot Polytech, Helena Mount Ascension Learning Academy, Helena Project for Alternative Learning Academy, Kalispell PACE Academy Charter, Corvallis Distance Learning Charter, Corvallis Transformational Learning Charter, Missoula CONNECT Academy, Boulder Jefferson Academy, Helena Montessori Charter School, Billings Opportunity School. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Public comment from Ms. Bea Kaleva, thanking the Board for taking the time to go through all the applications, then commented on concerns raised by the Board the previous day regarding the issue of governance, and concerns regarding for-profit vendors.

Public comment from Superintendent Dan Grabowska who thanked the Board for their time reviewing the applications and for completing their due diligence. Superintendent Grabowska offered clarity regarding funding, partnering with a for-profit entity, and the issue with governance.

Public comment from Ms. Jenny Murnane Butcher thanking the Board for the transparency and careful consideration of the applications, before addressing the question of “what is innovative”, and concerns MOFE has heard from parents that innovative programs may be part of budget cuts, which may be why schools are offering these through Public Charter Schools. Ms. Murnane Butcher noted the distinction between Education Management Organizations and for-profit entities.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Hamman stated 19 charter schools have been approved and that contracts will include a baseline for performance. The Governor’s Office of Budget and Program Planning will determine the amount of funding schools receive and disburse the funds noting that the provisions in Title 20 will need to be followed.

Board member Hamman moved to approve the resolution to deny the public charter proposals as listed in the resolution: Kalispell Rocky Mountain Academy, Corvallis Gifted Learning Center, Kalispell Community Partnerships K-3, Kalispell Community Partnerships 3-5, Liberty Elementary Charter. Motion seconded by Board member Rassmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Tharp commended Charter Committee Chair Hamman and committee members for their hard work, as well as Executive Director Flynn and Board staff. Chair Tharp noted that the Board has received critique and criticism regarding the process and that changes will be made for the next application cycle. Chair Tharp also noted there are discrepancies in the law and conflicting areas of statute that need to be addressed.

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 34)

**Item 34 RECOGNITION OF EXITING BOARD MEMBER – 15:44:08
Dr. Tim Tharp**

Ms. Flynn extended her thanks to Board member Keith for her work on the Board. Board members expressed their appreciation and admiration for Board member Keith and thanked her for her service to public education in Montana.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS March 18, 2024

MACIE Update
Approve MSDB School Calendar
Assessment Update
Federal Update
Accreditation Report
Annual School Food Services Report

PUBLIC COMMENT – 15:56:18

Dr. Rob Watson thanked Board member Keith for her work on the Board, as a colleague, and as a teacher to his own children. Dr. Watson invited Board members to upcoming SAM meetings, conferences, and monthly webinars which have covered subjects including AI and Accreditation, and upcoming webinars regarding open enrollment, and recording of school board meetings. Dr. Watson discussed concerns with the graduation requirements and implementing the new financial literacy requirements and asked for those areas to be considered if the Accreditation Standards are reopened.

Vice Chair Hedalen thanked Dr. Watson for his assistance to school districts.

Chair Tharp thanked Dr. Watson for the guidance pertaining to the new Accreditation Standards.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM.

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Agenda items are handled in the order listed on the approved agenda. Items may be rearranged unless listed “time certain”. Public comment is welcome on all items listed as “Action” and as noted at the beginning and end of each meeting.

The Board of Public Education will make reasonable accommodations for known disabilities that may interfere with an individual’s ability to participate in the meeting. Individuals who require such accommodations should make requests to the Board of Public Education as soon as possible prior to the meeting start date. You may write to: Kris Stockton, PO Box 200601, Helena MT, 59620, email at: kstockton@mt.gov or phone at 406-444-0302.

Public Comment
Public Charter School Applications

Bozeman Public Charter Applications

1. Adrienne Wallace

Bozeman, MT

My daughter is part of the **Bridger Charter Academy** and benefits greatly from its approach to education. She is motivated to learn by the somewhat self-paced model. We are grateful for the small community feeling in BCA and hope that it continues to live on.

2. Cora DeSantis

Bozeman, MT

I have a daughter at **BCA** in Bozeman. I'm writing about the success and promise BCA offers children of a different feather. My older children were normal popular kids that did fine socially in school.

My youngest is my humbling child. She has some stumbling blocks despite being brilliant. She has social anxiety, severe depression, and ADHD.

The regular school setting gave her an eating disorder in middle school - her social anxiety was not served well in a typical school setting. BCA has been amazing for her. She's found friends of a different feather where that was always difficult for her prior.

She's got straight A's and the staff works around her (dis)abilities. She loves her teachers. I mean really loves her teachers. And she's found passions that she shares with them. I'm very thankful for this program and what it's done for my child and her disabilities. Please contact me with any questions.

3. Kristina Allison

Bozeman, MT

I am writing to express my gratitude and my unequivocal support for the charter application of **Bridger Charter Academy** at Bozeman High School.

Our son struggled in middle school to "fit the box" of the traditional classroom. His experience as a ninth grader at Bridger Charter Academy has been entirely different. He reports a feeling a support, encouragement, and ultimately success. This is due to the mentoring provided by teachers, the self-pacing, smaller class size and the community feel of the BCA. This has led to higher grades, better attendance and a total absence of disciplinary issues. We view this innovative program as a win-win for students/families and the school; we hope that the Board approves the BCA's application without reservation.

4. Richard Nelson

Bozeman, MT

This letter is a vote of support for the **Bozeman Charter School** (BoCS) and Bridger Charter Academy's applications under HB549.

We have two boys enrolled in this school, in 3rd and 6th grades, and they have been thriving both educationally, and socially.

Our kids love school. Since it is a competency-based model, they are able to move ahead on subjects they have mastered and spend more time on areas that they need help on. The mixed grade model has provided the opportunities to both learn from and teach kids of different ages.

For us the school provides the perfect mix for parents who want to be more involved with their children's day to day education, but still want to be part of the state's wonderful public education program.

One of the areas that we did not think about, but now have come to appreciate, is the diversity of students the Bocs has attracted. The BoCS offers an alternative for parents whose kids struggle in the traditional school setting. At the beginning of the year, we were worried about the presence of students that had different learning "problems", but now we have come to value this. We have seen these kids also thrive under the BoCS model, as a result of direction and help from both their teachers and peers. We think this social lesson is one that will stick with our kids for the rest of their lives and has ended up being one of the most important lessons they might learn.

The local school board, superintendent Casey Betram and his staff have worked together tirelessly to navigate the changing dynamics of COVID and funding over the last several years to keep this program alive, vital and to provide what we consider will be the future educational model for our kids. The teachers we currently have are the best I have ever experienced. I am in awe of the commitment all of these people have had to the education and well being of our children.

We hope you consider both the BoCS and Bridger Charter Academy's applications favorably. In my opinion, they should be used as a model for how to successfully do this for the rest of the state. You could not find a more dedicated group of educators anywhere in the world! Thank you for your consideration.

5. Kristi Dunks
Bozeman, MT

I am writing to express my support for the **Bozeman Charter School** and **Bridger Charter Academy** within the Bozeman School District. I currently have two children enrolled in the Bozeman Charter School where they have attended for the past three years. They have each excelled in this learning environment and the flexibility it offers. The school also provides the opportunity for competency based learning, which has allowed them to excel in those subjects that they grasp quickly and spend additional time in those areas where they need it.

With this alternative model of public education, my children also benefit from the diverse student population that may include those that attend in person each day, those students that they see in-person at expeditions, or others that are online only due to their family work travels, medical needs, or sports. The unique framework provides a public school for anyone to attend based on the pathway that most closely meets their needs while providing extra time for families to spend together throughout the day. This school is a model for the future with the flexibility it offers families based on their work or personal situation, as well as creating the space for students to connect and learn, adapting based on students' locations and needs.

When I think of the Bozeman Charter School, I think of the small one room schoolhouse my dad attended in Rocker, Montana, but transformed for the modern age through technological advancements and the sharp insight of those within the Bozeman Public School District. The walls of the Bozeman Charter School extend from the structure of their physical classrooms into the students' home learning environments and out into the expeditionary adventures they experience each week. We look forward to growing the Bozeman Charter School and supporting continued operation of the Bridger Charter Academy, both which provide alternative learning paths for students within our public schools. Thank you for your work advancing public charter schools in Montana.

6. Brandt Bacha

Bozeman, MT

The **BOCS** program is wonderful. It allows my 4th grader the flexibility to attend to her academics through a hybrid learning schedule. She's able to have more one on one with her teacher and her classmates with the smaller class size.

Keeping my child adjusted and adapted to online programs is always good and will of course be more relevant further into the future. Thank you.

Corvallis Public Charter Applications

1. Joe O'Rourke

Columbia Falls, MT

The following questions and concerns are directed at the Corvallis School District's Applications to establish a new Charter school program as authorized by the new law passed this year that allows for the creation of, Public Charter Schools.

Program Name: **Corvallis Gifted Learning Center:**

1. Where are these 190 students coming from?
2. The applicant suggests using the DIBLES and MAPS "to isolate and select students who can handle the rigor of our K-12 curriculum." This is inconsistent with the law (see section 8). Public charter schools "shall enroll all students who wish to attend unless the number of students exceeds the capacity of the program." They are suggesting they can "cherry pick" their students for this program and "cream the crop" of the best students. Unconscionable.
3. The applicant further clarifies this cherry-picking plan by openly admitting the CGLC is "open to kids identified as high achieving. Each student tested as they enroll... and then placed in CGLC if..." This is not against the law.
4. This is not well thought out on many levels.
 - a. What's the plan if it turns out to be a bad match for the student?
 - b. Can they simply switch back to the normal class?
 - c. How do students get in if they are transferring from another district or state?
 - d. How frequently will they test to place students in the program?
 - e. How exactly are they going to manage offering "traditional in-class and wrap around non-traditional classes...allowing the learning environment to be whatever is best..." This isn't a plan! These children deserve an actual plan.

5. If they don't need any variances to standards to run this program, and if they have proof there is a need for it, then based on their duty stated in the MT Constitution about offering a "quality education" for all learners to reach their "full potential," then Corvallis is simply admitting that they are not currently serving their students' needs and they are not willing to do it unless they are given extra funding. This is a shame.

2. Joe O'Rourke

Columbia Falls, MT

The following questions and concerns are directed at the Corvallis School District's Applications to establish a new Charter school program as authorized by the new law passed this year that allows for the creation of "Public Charter Schools".

Program Name: **Corvallis Transformational Learning Center:**

1. The CTLC program does not anticipate needing or requesting any variances, so what is different? If they don't need variances, then they don't need a charter. Plus, doesn't this program already exist?
2. The proposal that they are going to have 218 students each year is unsubstantiated and dubious. Unless, of course, they know this because they are already running this program and receiving Transformational Learning grant money for the state and Advanced Opportunities funding? They seem to be proposing to use funding from three schemes to run a program that is already in place.
3. Why are they requesting funding for a full year in 24/25 school year but not actually "opening" until spring of 25? That's not how this works. The law does not allow for pre-operational funding.
4. Their proof of community support in item #25 shows that this program is already in place. If so, then it's already being funded and they are clearly double dipping if not triple dipping into public money for the same programing for the same students.
5. Based on the applicant's strategic plan it seems pretty clear that all of this is already in place with current funding.

Great Falls Core Elementary Charter

1. Michelle Kelly

MSU Northern University Supervisor for Great Falls
Havre, MT

I am writing in support of the proposed **Great Falls CORE Elementary Charter School** and I urge you to approve of its application.

For the past four years, I have been a university professor and student teacher supervisor for MSU Northern. My first semester, I supervised 15 student teachers within the Great Falls Public School system. Every semester following, the number of student teachers I have supervised has dwindled. This semester, I am supervising just two student teachers in Great Falls.

Great Falls Public Schools has a strong reputation of excellence in teaching and learning. My student teachers always connect what they have learned in their undergrad and methods' courses to what they are implementing in the classroom. This is due, in large part, because many of their core teachers are adjunct professors who teach in the GFPS.

The CORE school is a creative plan to solve the teaching crisis in our area. Our children deserve to have an education by learned professionals. What better way than to guide and mentor college bound education students all along the path to a degree? The college students will be able to take their core courses from the very teachers they will be observing and working side-by-side everyday. Intertwining pedagogy and philosophy with real-time implementation will only strengthen the students' knowledge and skills, which in turn will better prepare them for success in their own classrooms. The opportunity for college students to finish a teaching degree in 3 years with less debt will also be a gamechanger for many.

Building the teacher pool, relieving overcrowded classrooms, strengthening professional relationships, involving community, collaborating at all levels of education are just a few of the benefits I predict will happen with the opening of this charter CORE school. Because this idea was conceived with the best interests of our young children in mind, I have no doubt GFPS will be committed to making this school a success. Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope to hear your acceptance of this proposal soon.

2. Shannon Taylor
Instructional Coach
Great Falls, MT

I am writing in regard to the **GFPS Core School**. I know that the benefits of this model have already been presented, but I'd like to add my perspective.

I am in my 19th year as a teacher with GFPS and this is my 5th and final year as an Instructional Coach who is getting ready to transition back into the classroom. In the coaching role, a large portion of my time is spent supporting teachers that are new to GFPS and/or new to teaching. A major takeaway that I've had during this time is the wide range of levels of preparation teachers have received prior to entering the classroom. The amount of success they experience with their students both academically and behaviorally is directly tied to the training they've received, and we have already lost some of the teachers who we may have been able to save if they had opportunities and time to build their understanding of all of the skills teaching requires. I can't think of a better way to provide this training than to give future teachers opportunities to work with actual students in a GFPS school setting.

The teacher shortage can be felt throughout our district, and it impacts everyone. I'm passionate about public education and the opportunities it provides for kids, regardless of background. I am proud to be a GFPS teacher and to teach in a district that has high standards for staff and students. As fewer people are getting into the profession and the pool of potential teachers is dwindling, the standard seems to be getting lowered with each passing year. The goal of our district is "All students engaged in learning today...for life tomorrow", and we owe it to our students to have every opportunity to learn and grow to fulfill their hopes and dreams. I feel a renewed sense of hope about the future of public education with the possibilities provided by the Core School. Thank you for your time. I'm happy to discuss this further if needed.

3. Shannon Guilfoyle, Principal
Great Falls, MT

Thank you for taking the time to consider public comments re: **GFPS's charter application**. Of the many benefits this opportunity would bring to our community, I'm most excited about the opportunity for GFPS to branch out to the broader university system to bring real-life lab learning experiences for

pre-service teachers. Teacher attrition rates raise dramatically after a teacher's 3rd year in the field - fully degreed and dropping out - only to discover that teaching is WAY more than standing in front of students to impart knowledge. A lab experience negates these chances and allows master teachers to work along side pre-service teachers to work through these challenges. The bonds that are created between teachers and their pre-service students often last years past a student's degree date, thereby preventing teacher attrition and bringing stability to our community's educational foundation.

4. **Laura Crist**

Helena, MT

I am writing as a parent of four children in the **Great Falls Public School District** to express my approval and enthusiasm for the proposed CORE charter school.

I appreciate the thoughtful approach that GFPS has taken to find creative and helpful ways to have charter and public schools work together. I am enthusiastic about the teacher and student teacher model to help produce high-quality educators for our community and state. The students and families will benefit from the flexibility in curriculum approaches as well as the increased adult to child ratios. I would encourage the state to move in any direction possible to reduce classroom sizes in all schools.

I would encourage you to approve this well thought-out, innovative and personalized approach to charter education that fits the needs of the families in Great Falls. The efforts to provide a neighborhood charter school that represents the true demographics of our community will help provide helpful data and learning approaches for all students. I am excited to see what the future of education looks like in our community.

5. **Jamie Marshall**

Great Falls, MT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment regarding the proposed **CORE Charter School** through the Great Falls Public Schools District. I am writing to share my strong support for this innovative model that has great potential to positively influence children, families, teachers, and our community.

I have resided in Great Falls, Montana for almost 14 years. My husband and I are small business owners and have three children currently attending school in the Great Falls Public Schools district. I have had the opportunity to volunteer in classrooms and with our elementary school PTA for the past nine years. I am grateful to also serve on several local non-profit boards, all committed to the health, education and safety of our community and its children. In my professional life, I have nearly 20 years of experience in the fields of social work and public health, with particular emphasis in educational advocacy and community organizing.

Since learning of the potential for this CORE concept in Great Falls, I have attended a series of meetings and presentations to learn more of the details, anticipated implementation, and future impact. I am very impressed with the thoughtful approach the district has taken to develop this concept, and particularly with the partnerships in place already to bring it to fruition. The multipronged approach for the CORE school is likely to enhance not only educational opportunities for students in and out of the classroom, but simultaneously provide expanded training opportunities for future teachers and addresses the teacher shortages that have been increasing in recent years.

I have been impressed with the intentional approach the district has taken to selecting a school within Great Falls to implement this model that mirrors the true demographics of our community. This is not a school that will cater to any one specific group or area – it will be open and responsive in a true community model that meets the needs of students from differing backgrounds and learning styles. I see great hope for how this model can help to increase further partnership with both the community and families in expanding opportunities.

Great Falls is not unique in the ever-expanding demands to find creative solutions to expanded needs of students and families, tightening budgets and ever increasing dynamics of how to appropriately meet all of the learning styles of students in classrooms. I believe this CORE school concept is a timely and needed option in Great Falls to open doors to new ideas and options for families and teachers, as well as provide a potential model and catalyst for future innovation in other aspects of the district. I strongly support this model and appreciate your consideration of supporting this charter approach.

6. Charlene Ammons, Instructional Coach

Great Falls, MT

I am writing in support of the Great Falls Public Schools' charter application for the **GFPS CORE School**. As a teacher, an instructional coach, and a former adjunct professor for MSU-Northern's undergraduate Education program, I am extremely enthusiastic about the potential of this endeavor.

There are several aspects of the CORE School approach that I anticipate having tremendous positive impact on our world of education. First is the impact on preservice teacher preparation and education and resulting retention. It is a known fact nation-wide that teacher retention is at a critical stage and much of that is related to the daunting demands of a classroom with many new teachers under-prepared. In my tenure as an adjunct professor, I was able to more intensely work with my college students through both my classroom experience with and my integral knowledge of district curriculum and pedagogy to best prepare preservice teachers for stepping into a GFPS classroom. Along with my colleagues who also served as adjunct professors, our relationships with these preservice teachers continued forward when they joined GFPS as new teachers and we as their instructional coaches. Many of our principals will attest to the fact that this model repeatedly proved these new teachers were by far the most prepared and adept at stepping into a GFPS classroom than other first year teachers. This is a similar model being proposed in the GFPS CORE School framework.

In addition, the impact on students can also be improved dramatically. Because there is also a nation-wide teacher shortage, many districts, to include GFPS, have had to resort to emergency licensure and placing preservice teachers who technically are student teachers, as teachers of record in classrooms. While some of these emergency placements have been selected based on individuals showing great potential, they are still operating at a deficit in their learning curve, and students often pay the price through a lack of classroom management skills and a lack of content pedagogical knowledge. Students deserve to have master teachers guiding new teachers, so student learning is always moving forward and not negatively impacted. The model proposed in GFPS CORE School offers students the benefits of having both a master teacher and an additional developing teacher to maximize support of student learning.

Lastly, I am incredibly excited for our master teachers to have opportunities to pass on their wealth of knowledge and well-honed expertise. This is a chance to value their well-earned mastery of the classroom, which in turn not only benefits new teachers and students, but also builds incentive to continue in education. The proposed innovations of collaborative leadership and open classrooms offer

teachers an environment that is often missing in the traditional school setting, leaving many veteran teachers feeling isolated, disheartened, and discouraged when faced with difficult student behaviors and demanding curriculum and challenging cultural circumstances. This ultimately addresses the retention issue at hand with at least one possible motivation and reminder to our veteran teachers that they truly matter, and their insights and struggles are to be shared.

Thank you for your sincere and thoughtful consideration of the charter application from Great Falls Public Schools currently before you. I am hopeful that you will confidently and wholeheartedly endorse this application with your approval.

7. Sharon Patton-Griffin, EdD
Great Falls, MT

Please accept the **Great Falls Public Charter School** proposal. This Charter proposal is an example of the type of charter school that will protect our public school system and inject new ideas and opportunities into that system to invigorate it. Say YES to the Great Falls Public Charter School proposal.

Helena Public Charter Applications

1. Rick Hays
Helena, MT

I'm excited about the prospect of the **Helena School District's alternative learning charter school** and ask you to support its funding.

I've been involved in various aspects of education most of my life and have been a volunteer at one of the neighborhood elementary schools in Helena for the past six years. Because of my interest and activity, I seem to encounter several discussions about schools. One of the common topics over the years has involved the alternative high school, Project for Alternative Learning (PAL).

PAL has an enrollment of about 70 students this year but unfortunately has a waiting list of many more students. Based on various inquiries I've received over the years, many other families don't even try to enroll their students because of the extensive waiting list.

The two high schools in Helena are excellent but like most schools are limited in their resources to address every type of student that enters. That's the magic, or perhaps the miracle of PAL. It reaches those students who have other interests, learning styles, and aptitudes than the traditional high school offers.

The prospect of eventually offering the PAL curriculum to 120 or more students in the coming years seems to be the ideal purpose of your charter school offering. I hope you'll give this proposal your support.

2. Nicole Gleason

Helena, MT

I am writing to you as a parent to express my strong support for the **Helena Public School District's Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide my other children the opportunity to attend school in-person in a small, personalized learning environment, providing my students the flexibility and educational experiences they would benefit from.

Additionally, Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide me, as the parent, an avenue to obtain high quality educational services. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

I currently have a student that is set to graduate from Project for Alternative Learning and I couldn't be more amazed and blessed with the opportunity my child was given. Project for Alternative Learning has completely changed her outlook on life and has been the supporting school family she needed all along in order to help her succeed. Project for Alternative Learning was my daughter's "life saver" and I sincerely hope that other students in the future get the opportunity to attend a school such as Project for Alternative Learning to help them grow and be their potential in life. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

3. Matt Carey, Principal

Helena, MT

I am writing in strong support for the approval of the **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** in Helena, MT. This program will offer students throughout the district, and neighboring regions, an opportunity to reimagine their educational experience and support students on a direct and individual basis. The charter school will be a key resource for students, families, and the community for years to come. The partnerships between the school and a variety of stakeholders will focus on one primary goal – to serve students and help prepare them to be college or career ready.

The charter school would help students prepare for life after high school through a multitude of experiences while in school. These kinds of experiences would be intentionally part of their curriculum to help guide them towards being productive citizens and members of the community. Career surveys, practice with soft skills, job shadows and internships, public speaking, help with organization and time management would all be among the variety of skills and experiences our students would benefit from. Our goal in education is to help propel students into the next phase of their life and the Project for Alternative Learning Charter School will continue the mission of student betterment. Thank you for reading my comments and I look forward to the decision of the Board.

4. Laura Funk

Helena, MT

I am writing in full support of the **Helena Project for Alternative Learning Academy** and the **Helena Mount Ascension Charter School**.

Currently, I work as a school-based mental health therapist at both the Project for Alternative Learning (PAL) and Capital High School. Prior to this position, I worked as a school counselor at Capital High and saw firsthand the immense need for alternative educational settings for various high school students. Since beginning to work at PAL, my deep appreciation for this school has only grown. PAL truly saves

lives. As a therapist to many of the students now enrolled, I have a privileged view of the challenges these students face on a daily basis, and the often difficult and painful upbringings so many have had. I am also fortunate enough to see the impact this school has on their sense of wellbeing, their confidence, and their desire and ability to engage productively in their community. I'm humbled by obstacles these students overcome and eternally grateful they are given the support they deserve in this academic setting. I urge you to vote in favor of the Helena Project for Alternative Learning Academy charter school application.

Additionally, in both my roles, as therapist and counselor, at Capital High School I have seen the numerous reasons a student may need an alternative learning approach. For some students, being physically present in their middle or high school setting is unsafe due to mental or physical health conditions. Often, with adequate support, students are able to transition back into their regular educational setting. However, the time lost during these periods can lead to insurmountable gaps in their education which severely impact their ability to graduate. Allowing students the option of tailoring their educational needs through partial or fully remote learning, allows them to remain or get back on track to graduate. I am in full support of the Helena Mount Ascension Charter School, and hope you choose to vote in favor of this charter school application as well.

5. Betsy Kohnstamm
Columbia Falls, MT

I'm a retired reading specialist for the Columbia Falls School District, and I served on the social studies standards advisory board and the language arts standards board for the State.

I'm writing in support of some of the charter programs being proposed for Montana schools. **The Montessori program** in Helena is a good model for what elementary education should look like. I have been on the boards of two Montessori schools in the Flathead Valley and really like the individualized instruction and multi-age classrooms. These benefit children of all abilities and allow teachers to really work constructively with our increasingly needy parents and families.

Kalispell Public Charter Applications

1. Kendra Espinoza
Kalispell, MT

I wish to submit concerns and comments that I have regarding the applications for the new charter schools proposed for the Kalispell area.

Regarding the **Kalispell Community Partnerships Charters**, I feel these are a waste of taxpayer money.

1. I don't know of any K-5th grade students who are even beginning to think about career choices at that age, so to say that these students will be job shadowing, is absurd.
2. They want to start a "school within a school" to try and entice back the students that they lost to homeschooling, but they haven't even explored whether there is parental or student interest in such a program? Apparently that happens in December. They would somehow win back these 27 students plus somehow add another 130 to make the program work? Doesn't seem feasible to me.

3. The administration of this program seems like a logistical nightmare, with some students attending the regular school program and others going different places or not even being on campus at all. Who will keep track of all these little ones?
4. In addition, they want to reduce class time and reduce the number of days per week that students are actually in attendance and yet somehow they expect to rank among the top schools in their region? How? There's no indication in the application of what they intend to use for curriculum so if they plan on using the same curriculum for reading, writing and arithmetic, how will that help improve the student's learning? If they intend to use a new curriculum, why keep it solely for the charter school students and not use it for the regular program, thereby improving the learning of everyone?
5. What about teachers? Have they identified the additional teachers they'll need? What if they can't find any? Are there currently teacher openings in the district now? How will they account for the financial deficit they will incur by hiring additional teachers but not bringing in sufficient funds to cover all their expenses? How do they expect to adequately educate and manage 158 students in each program with half a principal, half a counselor and only one teacher for each of the three major classes?
6. On the schedule, what is with the yellow block? Why do they have lunch for an hour and 45 minutes? Is this just free time? Yet they expect to teach all of Math, Science and Social Studies in an hour and a half and all of Reading, Art and Writing also in an hour and a half? What is SOARing Citizenship and how is that staffed and attended? Why is there so much time allotted to specials each week? What kinds of specials are these? What about transportation for all these specials and job shadowing? Who pays for that?
7. The whole application itself seems very vague to me - very little in the way of detail and they fail to address a large majority of the questions that are asked on the application. For example, question #2 asks them to identify the targeted student population and the community they propose to serve. They fail to answer this in their response. In their answer to question # 6, how are they defining "at risk" students? And what do they mean by saying that K-3 students need a strong network of support services to help master the academic and career content? For Kindergarten through 3rd grade?
8. Why did they separate the program for K-3 and 3-5 and create two separate charters? That seems like double dipping to me, in that they are trying to get funds for two separate programs. And why the overlap at 3rd grade? The two applications are identical, including the schedule in the 3-5 application, that is identical to the one in the K-3 application.
9. Their answers to questions 19 and 20 on the application basically say that this is not a separate program from the regular current school program as far as budget goes, so why the request for additional funding?
10. On their Operating Budget Worksheet, it says the number of students is 71 yet the first page of the application says the minimum is 158. Why the discrepancy?

This application seems like this was thrown together in the hopes of bringing in more money to an already failing school district. Is this program supposed to magically somehow turn out smarter children, within the same schools already in existence, when it can't already help the students it has, because it creates some new wildcard program that demands more money? I urge you NOT to approve this application.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my letter and I ask that you **not** approve funding for these programs mentioned above, as it will put an undue burden on the taxpayers here in our valley, without improving the education levels of the students we currently serve. We already contribute a very large sum of money on our property taxes for public education and the additional funds required to support these programs would make it nearly unbearable.

2. Chuck Territo

After review of **Kalispell Community Partnership Charter K-3**. Here are some concerns.

Has any research been done as to parental interest before turning the application ?

As submitted only 3 teachers, half a principal and half a counselor for 158 students ??

27 students lost to homeschooling preferring flexibility but somehow they are going to return and add an additional 75 ?

--So by reducing class time and days of the week in attendance . The educational scores are going to rank among the top schools in the region ?

Why would a charter be requested for K-3 then 3-5 ? Seems to be double dipping .

--This application seems to be identical to K-3

It seems like the Charter application process is being abused. These seem to be some real concerns .

3. Kendra Espinoza

Kalispell, MT

I wish to submit concerns and comments that I have regarding the applications for the new charter schools proposed for the Kalispell area.

Regarding the **PACE Academy 10-12**, this program is already in place and operating, as is evidenced by their answers in several questions on the application.

1. There is no need to suddenly create a separate charter to run the same program that is already in existence. And how can they run a new program without a principal, since they are only required to have a quarter of a principal for enrollment under 175 and half a principal for enrollment between 175 and 250 (question #5)? It's evident they don't 'need' a new principal for such a program because the program already operates under their current structure. And what is meant by them saying, in question #5, that "these accreditation thresholds might not be met? Is that because the program they are proposing is no different than the one currently running? Students already take courses through the Baccalaureate program and the running start program at the college and are already offered flexibility in learning. No need to have a separate charter that brings in more revenue for a program that is no different than what is currently in operation.
2. It appears in their response to question #5, 10.55.905 Demonstration of Achievement, that competency and outcomes would not be governed by standardized measures but by subjective "department-created competencies and proficiency scales." Does that not go outside of their current standard? If we are trying to prepare students for the real world, how does that help them to rise above when we don't expect more of them?

Thank you for your time in reviewing my letter and I ask that you **not** approve funding for these programs mentioned above, as it will put an undue burden on the taxpayers here in our valley, without improving the education levels of the students we currently serve. We already contribute a very large sum of money on our property taxes for public education and the additional funds required to support these programs would make it nearly unbearable.

4. Judy Territo

After reviewing the proposed **Kalispell Pace Academy**, I have numerous questions & concerns which I have discussed below.

1. There is a program already in place via Transformation Learning. This appears to be double-dipping. All of this is already in place under their current structure.
2. Variance to Standards:
 - a) They are required to have 1/4 of a FTE Principal for a population under 175 and 1/2 of a FTE Principal for a population under 250. The school is saying they "may not be able to do this." They are already doing it under the current structure so the school knows they don't need a leader.
 - b) Pace Academy wants a variance for 10.55.905 for achievement: "The flexible design of courses in the Flathead PACE Academy align with Montana ARM 10.55.905, adopted in July of 2023, where "students may demonstrate achievement through a flexible system of pupil-centered learning." With department-created competencies and proficiency scales, credit is awarded based on students demonstrating competency." So, in other words: competency/outcomes not by standardized measures but by subjective "department-created" competencies. Not the deal with a charter: Section 9(1) "performance framework that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics" + a) student academic proficiency and b) student academic growth. Thank you very much for your review of the issues above.

5. Kendra Espinoza
Kalispell, MT

I wish to submit concerns and comments that I have regarding the applications for the new charter schools proposed for the Kalispell area.

Regarding **Rising Wolf Charter School**, it seems it would be difficult to administer such a program within the same school structure they are currently running the regular programs. Again, they are wanting to operate a "school within a school" and get additional funding for a program that is not very well thought out.

1. What if a student wants to stay in one class for 3 periods but there is no teacher for all three periods, or other groups of students are coming in and out?
2. Who would administer this program, if they don't need any additional principal or teachers to run the program? Their application states that they will rely on an existing principal and existing teachers for the exact same students they would normally be serving.
3. This type of program requires a lot of thought and planning to make it work and I don't see it working well within the current school setting. Logistically, it would create too much confusion and could potentially leave students to fall through the cracks, both socially and academically. This is a potentially good program, if it were run as a separate school in a separate building, but not within a school that is already running a separate program.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my letter and I ask that you **not** approve funding for these programs mentioned above, as it will put an undue burden on the taxpayers here in our valley, without improving the education levels of the students we currently serve. We already contribute a very large sum of money on our property taxes for public education and the additional funds required to support these programs would make it nearly unbearable.

6. Judy Territo

Please review the numerous questions and concerns regarding the **Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter**.

1. Why hasn't the Advisory Board been chosen yet? Their resumes should have been included in their application. Build a board first, apply for a charter second in order to have true transparency. Plus, choosing the board does not seem to have made the Start-Up
2. No new principal is needed as the current principal has time for both? What does he/she do with down-time now, assuming he/she has time to add on being leader of this charter school? How exactly can "existing teachers" manage a schedule of a long block in the morning and/or afternoon while simultaneously keeping up with the 7-period for non-charter students? What's the impact on those teachers because though the applicant mentions hiring new staff it simultaneously relies on "existing teachers" and an unwillingness to be specific in its plans and instead rely on "application approval" before polling its current teachers to explore interest. They should line up their plan fully, then apply for a charter.
3. Though the Rising Wolf Academy charter proposal of offering classes based on the X1 format seems viable, the application is thin and not well thought out. There is no clear proposal as to how the additional money from an extra budget unit will be used since the application states the charter will rely on an existing principal and existing teachers for the exact same students they would normally be serving. No new leadership, board, superintendent, nor principal, means nothing will be different.

Thank you so much for your review of the Kalispell Rising Wolf Charter.

Missoula Public Charter Applications

1. Vanessa Gibson

Missoula, MT

I am writing in support of the online MCPS Charter School application. I have been a high school counselor in the Missoula area for 18 years and I can testify to how students' needs have changed in the last decade. Students are struggling with coming into our building and meeting the expectations of attendance and self-regulation. Our current online school, **Missoula Online Academy** has allowed students access to education in a way that we would've lost those students without it. I've had a number of students that MOA has been able to re-engage with in school and they have found success. Without an online option these students would have stopped attending school as soon as they could. I am in full support of an online Charter School that can fill this need in our community and fearful of what will come without it.

2. A'ine Franczyk

Missoula, MT

The **Missoula Online Academy** has been an excellent option to support families and help them find a pathway to earn a high school diploma. An educational experience is as unique as the individual and we need alternative (online) options for students. Each student has specific needs and the better we can meet their needs the more likely they are to earn a diploma. Allowing for an online experience works better for some families. This could be due to illnesses, mental health concerns, substance abuse, bullying, and or social concerns. Please, support the MCPS Charter school application and make sure there is lots of space for students who need it. We need to be able to serve many students. If space is limited and it requires a great deal of resources this is not the best use of State money.

3. **Carrie Brooks**

Missoula, MT

I wanted to say a few words about the **MCPS Online academy Charter School** and how much it has made a difference in our lives. My son has emotional problems that prevent him from going to a campus school. MCPS Online Academy has been extremely helpful and flexible with him to help him get the education he needs. I can't tell you how much this has meant to us. Ms. Kolzak has been very supportive and accommodating to his specific challenges and it has meant the world to us. I want to say thank you to her and the entire staff for being wonderful. This school fills a gap that is absolutely needed in today's world.

4. **Fran Aytes**

Missoula, MT

We wanted to give our support for funding **Missoula Online School** through the new Public Charter School process. As social workers at Provident St. Patrick Hospital in the Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program in Missoula, we work with adolescents who have a mental health issues. Many of these clients need an educational placement that is flexible. Since Covid, there has been in even greater number of clients who have not been able to successfully return to in person school. Missoula online school has been a great resource for our clients, and MOA has been great in collaborating with us on the students that we share.

5. **Stephen Roose**

Missoula, MT

I am writing to express my strong support for the establishment of an **MCPS Online Academy Charter School (OACS)** within our school district. As a concerned member of our community, I believe that providing an alternative educational setting for students who may not thrive in the traditional school environment is crucial for their academic success.

The proposed OACS, with its focus on flexibility, inclusivity, a diverse range of online courses, and being student-centered, can address the needs of students who struggle in the conventional classroom/school setting. I would like to highlight several key aspects that make the online academy a valuable addition to our educational offerings:

1. **Flexible Classes:** The flexibility of online classes would accommodate students with different learning styles and needs. It would enable them to manage their schedules more effectively and create an environment conducive to their individual learning preferences.
2. **Various Online Courses:** The online academy's commitment to offering a diverse range of courses caters to the varied interests and career aspirations of students. This diversity ensures that each student has the opportunity to explore subjects that resonate with their passions.
3. **Accommodating students/families in crisis:** Circumstances arise in families that are extremely difficult and often leave students feeling that school isn't important. Our community must demonstrate that in times of need, WE are capable of providing healthy creative alternatives that support each other.

The MCPS online academy has been detrimental to my daughter continuing her education. The opportunity provided her with a renewed sense of confidence, and the opportunity to work through some of her social/emotional issues while giving her hope. Without the accommodations of the MCPS online academy, my daughter and your community member, would have been in deeper crisis. By establishing an online academy, our school district has the opportunity to create an

inclusive and supportive educational environment that addresses the diverse needs of our student population. I believe that investing in alternative learning options is a progressive step toward ensuring that every student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

I urge the school board to carefully consider and support the implementation of the MCPS online academy, as it aligns with our commitment to providing quality education that meets the needs of all students. Thank you for your time and dedication to enhancing the educational experience within our community.

6. Michelle Burton

Missoula, MT

I am a parent of a current **MOA** student writing in support of their charter application. Thanks to this program, my daughter - who was struggling academically and with anxiety at her former high school - was able to enroll in classes that she found interesting and challenging in ways that supported her learning. This past summer, the flexible scheduling and the program's close work with both students and families, she was able to take summer courses and finish her schooling in December. The program's year-round opportunities allow students to pursue their personal goals in a setting that works for their unique learning needs. For my daughter, the variety of courses offered as well as the variety of ways to complete them (some are self-paced but need to be completed by the end of the semester while others pace students with what I would call "check points") helped her to find classes that were interesting to her, will help her in her career and were formatted so that she enjoyed them.

I believe the administrators of MOA have found innovative ways to help students who might not otherwise thrive in a traditional classroom setting to succeed by providing options-including different classroom formats as well as year-round options. Thank you for your consideration.

7. Suzanne Schwartz

Missoula, MT

I am writing to express my full support for **Connect Academy, MCPS Online Charter School** proposal, particularly regarding the needs of medically impacted students. As a parent of a student who suffered a traumatic brain injury a month before his Junior year of High School, I can attest to the incredible value of an online charter school that met his academic needs with a personalized response from staff, individualized coursework, and asynchronous learning that allowed him to take classes at his own pace.

When my son, Elijah, experienced a sudden TBI that left him unable to attend traditional, in-person schooling, we were at a loss over how to support him. His life as an honor roll student and varsity athlete at Hellgate High School ended abruptly. His medical condition impacted his junior and senior years. It took a toll on him emotionally and academically, and he was close to giving up on his graduation and plans for college.

Fortunately, we discovered MCPS Online Charter School, and it was a game-changer. The dynamic of a public, online school made it possible for Elijah to receive the individualized support he needed to continue his education despite his challenges.

The online academy's innovative approach consistently involved his guidance counselor, dean, educators, and administrative staff recalibrating and fine-tuning Elijah's needs based on multiple,

changing criteria. They understood his unique needs as a medically impacted student, provided the personalized support he needed to thrive, and were instrumental in Elijah's success. They also supported our family as we struggled with the short and long-term challenges. I am beyond grateful Elijah did not give up, and Connect Academy played a crucial role.

In conclusion, I strongly urge Montana BOPE to support MCPS Connect Academy's Online Charter School proposal and adjust the raw data scores, particularly regarding "community support" and "quality." They provided a high-quality, alternative framework that responds to the diverse educational needs of their student body. This school makes a difference in our community and is valued and supported. We need more schools like this to support students through their challenges and educational needs to help them achieve their full potential.

8. Jennifer Ellis

Missoula, MT

I am writing to express my strong support for the Connect Academy charter school application. I have taught at Missoula Online Academy (MOA) since its inception and have witnessed our program's profound impact and success. This charter school application is backed by MOA's proven success, a clear demonstration of need, and a commitment to innovation in education.

Currently, MOA serves 55 students, with over 30 students on the waitlist, highlighting the need for and success of our program.

During my time at MOA, I have seen firsthand the significant impact of our program on a diverse student body. I have had many students say, that MOA has "saved" them. Many students come to MOA after facing challenges in traditional school settings, including those who have made poor choices or face mental and physical health challenges. Our approach has been pivotal in helping these students reengage in their academics and achieve success. We also teach academically advanced and motivated students, many working towards early graduation. Regardless of their reasons for joining, we effectively serve a wide range of student needs.

At MOA, our success can be largely attributed to the blend of synchronous teacher-led classes and asynchronous learning opportunities. Through teacher-taught classes, we foster strong connections between teachers, students, and peers, creating a sense of community and belonging. This, in turn, has significantly improved student engagement, motivation, and academic performance.

Over the past four years at MOA, we have consistently improved and innovated our online teaching methods. This is another key factor in our success, ensuring that we meet the evolving needs of our students in the digital learning environment. Connect Academy will benefit from this experience and strong foundation.

I strongly urge the Board to support the charter application for Missoula Connect Academy. This school represents not just the continuation of MOA's work but an expansion of our commitment to meeting the diverse educational needs of our community.

Park City Montana Connections Academy

1. Carolyn Hall, Superintendent Polson, MT

I was fortunate to have been able to listen to the proposals and questions during the BPE Nov. 30 meeting pertaining to Public Charter School proposals (HB 549.) The proposals were varied, creative, and surprisingly well-planned considering the amount of time from the bill's approval to this presentation. I was very impressed and proud of our school districts and their work on these proposals.

There was only one applicant that caused me concern, that was **Montana Connections Academy from Park City**. If I understood all that I was hearing, this program will actually be a for profit online charter operated by Pearson. I don't believe that's what this bill was supposed to support.

As a County Superintendent of three rural schools in Lake County: Upper West Shore; Valley View; and Swan Lake-Salmon, I know that it is imperative that we guard every dollar that we receive because enrollment doesn't fund that many dollars. I also know that a charter such as this could have an adverse effect on the per-pupil funds that there would be for our little brick and mortar schools, that try to spend every dollar twice.

There are ample opportunities for online programs and services, that each district must decide upon using and whether they can fund their usage. Our small rural districts do not need to be in competition for dollars with a mega corporation like Pearson.

I would appreciate you looking at these circumstances closer if they truly are for the use of public charter dollars for an online, for-profit corporation of programs. Thank you for your consideration.

2. Elizabeth Halverson

Opposing the for-profit charter **Montana Connections Academy**. Please do not allocate public money for this for-profit, out of state, unaccountable, unregulated corporation. These "charters" harm rural schools which depend on per-pupil funding. Other states have seen their rural schools shrink to 4-day weeks. MT has already seen this along with consolidation or closure of rural schools.

Thank you for working and advocating for public funds to be dedicated to PUBLIC EDUCATION that serves all students, is accountable, has standards, and complies with curricular, staffing, and other standards to ensure our children's development and education.

3. Venus Dodson Cut Bank, MT

As a retired educator and lifelong Montanan, no public school should ever be for profit. **The Park City charter** is just that.

Growing up on the Blackfeet Reservation attending Browning and Cut Bank School and attending both MSU and UM, I cannot stress how important a free, appropriate, public education is to all the residents of our state. Stop for profit education from further ruining education in Montana.

**4. Barry Chandler
Janet Haarvig**

Please deny the pending application of the “[Montana Connections Academy, \[click.mlsend.com\]](http://click.mlsend.com)”

5. Cheri Bergeron

Please oppose the inclusion of the **Montana Connections academy**. This is an online, for-profit charter operated by Pearson. This will send our public tax dollars out of state and will have an adverse effect on rural schools in Montana. This school cannot serve pupils with disabilities or special education students. Please oppose this school.

6. Emilie Maule

I am writing to this board in opposition to the application recently submitted by the **Montana Connections Academy**. This private online for-profit charter takes money from public schools of all sizes but is especially harmful to smaller, rural communities! It cannot offer direct appropriate special education services to any students who need those programs. Are our schools to become for-profit, at the expense of all of our public education schools? Students in all of our communities can access the Montana Digital Academy for online programs. Please do not consider this application to be deserving of approval!

**7. Stephen Goheen
Corvallis, MT**

I would like the board to consider my public comments regarding Park City’s “**Montana Connections Academy**” application.

What concerns me most is that the company that will run their program is an online, for-profit charter. We should not be diverting our scarce public-school dollars to an out of state operation that has a profit motive. School districts, especially smaller ones, desperately need funding to keep their current operations running. If you bleed them dry, they will have a very hard time existing at all.

8. Dana West

I urge you to recognize the difference between good charter school and an out-of-state entity trying to profit off hard earned Montana tax dollars. **MT Connections Academy** is a farce and is not connected to Park City schools in any true sense. Don't allow well intentioned legislation to backfire on us.

**9. Glenda Bradshaw
Helena, MT**

I am writing to object to the application for public charter by **Montana Connections Academy**, Park City. My points:

- It is really an online, for-profit charter operated through Pearson as a private “Education Management Organization (EMO)”.
- It is a for-profit institution.

- Public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state, private corporation, which is not the intention of HB 549.
- This program cannot serve students with ALL types of disabilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

10. Tammy Dalling

Please oppose the **Montana Connections Academy Charter**.

- This charter operates as an EMO, which is a for-profit institution. This means that public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state, private corporation, which is not the intention of HB 549.
- This will have an adverse effect on all communities, especially smaller, rural Montana schools, where the loss of per-pupil funds can be particularly detrimental. As a teacher at Gardiner Public Schools, we absolutely cannot afford to lose any more students. Our school is already suffering from record low enrollment and have had almost half of our staff cut in the last 5 years.
- Per-pupil funding will go from a school that would use it for brick/mortar services to one without these overhead costs for an online student. Students in all communities already have ample access to expanded services through the Montana Digital Academy that can be facilitated through their home districts. Again, this will have a terrible impact on local rural schools who are already struggling to remain operational.
- This program cannot serve students with ALL types of disabilities. Can students come to campus for speech therapy or OT as needed if they qualify for those services?

11. Anita Beach

Whitefish, MT

The Park City **Montana Connections Academy** is not appropriate for compliance with HB 549. This type of virtual education is not an appropriate choice. It takes money away from brick-and-mortar schools, and worse, because of its out of state connections, it diverts Montana taxpayer education moneys out of state. This Academy is a part of an out of state FOR PROFIT organization. Loss of Montana public education funds to that corporation is bad for Montana. This Academy application should NOT be approved.

12. Elle Ruis

Kalispell, MT

I am writing to urge you to reject the Park City "**Montana Connections Academy**" as a Charter School. It claims to be operating through the Park City school district, but is really an online, for-profit charter operated through Pearson as a private "Education Management Organization (EMO)."

Reasons why this proposal should be rejected:

- This charter operates as an EMO, which is a for-profit institution. This means that public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state, private corporation, which is not the intention of HB 549.
- This will have an adverse effect on all communities, especially smaller, rural Montana schools, where the loss of per-pupil funds can be particularly detrimental. (Great if you can name YOUR community specifically).
- Per-pupil funding will go from a school that would use it for brick/mortar services to one without these overhead costs for an online student. Students in all communities already have ample access to

expanded services through the Montana Digital Academy that can be facilitated through their home districts.

- This program cannot serve students with ALL types of disabilities. Can students come to campus for speech therapy or OT as needed if they qualify for those services?

Thanks for your consideration.

13. Melissa Tassano

Before moving to Montana my kids were enrolled in **connections academy** after trying out many charter school options. This school changed my kids whole lives! We have yet to find a program like it since moving. I fully support their application!

14. Kim McLees

I am excited to see this email from Victor Wills from Pearson Schools for the application for **Montana Connections Academy**. I believe there is a need for better choices for families and their students regarding education in Montana. I am a Montana teacher, but I am transitioning to Arizona within the next two weeks. This move allows me to utilize my teaching degree for a greater purpose and also opens the door for my high school daughter to finish high school with more options. School has been SUCH a struggle for her, and Montana public schools have really let her down. Thank you for fighting for Montana students. I fully support this application.

15. Careylyn Hill

Kalispell, MT

Please pay extra careful attention to the charter school, **Montana Connections Academy**. Contrary to its name, it is an out-of-state charter school operated through Pearson for profit.

We do not want Montana education dollars to leave the state. Thank you for your time.

16. Rick Hays

Helena, MT

I'm writing in regard to your applications for charter schools. I applaud your efforts with one exception, **Montana Connections Academy**.

1) I don't know why the state of Montana should fund an educational program outside of our state, particularly one that is for-profit.

2) I don't understand why we'd fund a digital program when we offer an excellent digital academy already and have for several years now.

3) Considering the enthusiastic response to this charter school option from school districts across the state, it seems we should be prudent where we fund programs and ensure they are locally produced and monitored.

We should not be funding the Montana Connections Academy.

17. Lisa Schuma, LCPC

Helena, MT

I would like to express my support for **Connections Academy for Montana** as a public school option. As a former educator in a public high school, I know that different students and their families have different needs, and as a mother of four children I also understand that each child has different strengths, weaknesses, and needs academically as well.

Having a true, full-time digital alternative to public school would be a huge benefit to so many students and families in our state! When I investigated digital alternatives for one of my children who would have greatly benefited from that option, all that was available was Montana Digital Academy which was not (and I believe still is not, but please correct me if I'm wrong!) available as a full-time option. Connections Academy and a few other online schools were available at significant additional cost which at the time we determined we could not afford. In retrospect, it might have been better had we done so.

I am now a Clinical Mental Health Counselor, and I regularly work with adults who have not graduated from high school. Pursuing a Hi-Set/GED sounds simple, but actually can be an insurmountable barrier for some of my clients who already face socio-economic and mental/emotional difficulties. In turn, never graduating continues to create a wall between those clients and the new and different life they wish to achieve. I believe a true, public, full-time virtual school would help a significant number of students to graduate who might otherwise simply drop out of our schools entirely.

Having investigated available alternatives and spoken with parents in other states where Connections Academy is a public school option, I know they provide a complete, high quality educational product for students for whom online school is the best choice. Is a high quality in-person experience the best thing for most kids? Yes, I believe it is. But for those who need something different, it's time it was available in our state.

While I will be traveling and unable to attend the Zoom meeting to voice my support, I just wanted to let you know I fully support their application!

Thanks for considering my input.

18. Michael Sherman, Counselor

Kalispell, MT

Please oppose the charter school application for the **Montana Connections Academy**. As a public high school counselor in Kalispell, MT, I am philosophically opposed to an out-of-state, for profit, private corporation receiving public tax funds. This is not the intent of the law - HB 549! Public tax dollars should be used for the good of a community and obtainable for any student. NOT the bottom line of a private institution seeking to profit from public money. Furthermore, this arrangement is very unlikely to provide a quality education, because of its focus on making money instead of augmenting the academic understanding of students. Pupils being pulled from public schools to this for profit institution will decrease the funds received by their public school and will cause a degradation of the education their public school can offer. This effect will be especially pronounced in smaller, rural schools, which serve as the "backbone" of many Montana communities. Online courses are already offered to any public education student in Montana via the Montana Digital Academy. Therefore, the Montana

Connections Academy will be essentially a duplicate service siphoning public funds away from public schools.

As a high school teacher for five years and school counselor for 18 years, I know students gain so much more from in person public education. For those who struggle to attend in person, our public school system has devised alternative and innovative opportunities to meet these special needs and will continue to expand their offerings with our own version of charter school programs - the other 24 applications submitted. Please fund these efforts instead, so public funds stay with the public and academics are accessible to all with a wider variety of accommodations available for students.

19. Marybeth Toney Clark

Missoula, MT

Honestly, I am not a big fan of charter schools in general but schools that appear to be set up for the main purpose of syphoning off Montana school funds to an out of state corporation seems especially questionable.

Please do not approve the application for the **Park City Montana Connections Academy** [\[click.mlsend.com\]](http://click.mlsend.com) It does not uphold the spirit of HB 549. Montana is not a rich state and can not afford to allow needed school monies to go out of state.

20. Sas Weber

Belgrade, MT

I am writing to express my concern about the **Montana Connections Academy**. This is an online, for-profit charter operated as a private EMO. Public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state private corporation. That is not the intent of HB549 as I understand it.

I believe this will have an adverse effect on all communities, especially smaller, rural Montana schools, where the loss of per-pupil funds can be particularly detrimental.

I am in the rural district of Springhill School. Were MCA allowed to operate in Montana, per-pupil funding would leave Springhill, a vital brick and mortar school, to enrich a private company/school without such overhead costs.

Students in all communities already have ample access to expanded services through the Montana Digital Academy, rendering the addition of MCA superfluous. Their application seems to be an effort of an out-of-state entity to take our tax dollars.

Montana Connection Academy is unnecessary and costly to all of us, and I am opposed to the granting of their application.

21. Ashlie Fleming

As you prepare to discuss the Public Charter Applications on Thursday, I feel it important to express my concern for one of those applicants. **The Park City Montana Connections Academy** is my concern for these reasons:

- This charter operates as an EMO, which is a for-profit institution. This means that public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state, private corporation, which is not the intention of HB 549.

- This will have an adverse effect on all communities, especially smaller, rural Montana schools, where the loss of per-pupil funds can be particularly detrimental. (Great if you can name YOUR community specifically).
- Per-pupil funding will go from a school that would use it for brick/mortar services to one without these overhead costs for an online student. Students in all communities already have ample access to expanded services through the Montana Digital Academy that can be facilitated through their home districts.
- This program cannot serve students with ALL types of disabilities. Can students come to campus for speech therapy or OT as needed if they qualify for those services?

As a public school teacher in Montana, I am vested in the students of Montana and making sure that ALL students needs are met with the funding from this state. An out of state and for profit online school is NOT the best use of Montana funds.

22. Britten Postma

Thank you for allowing me to send public comment about the meeting reviewing public school charters. There is one charter that is very concerning to me- **Montana Connections Academy**. It is an online, for-profit charter operated by an education management organization. I do not want my tax dollars to go to an out of state private corporation! The loss of per-pupil funding going to this EMO instead of our rural public schools would be heartbreaking.

Thank you so much for taking the time to consider what's best for ALL of our Montana students.

23. Andrea Egge

Hello I would lie to show my support for the **Montana Connections Academy** application. I would also like to attend via zoom if possible.

24. Kristine Ellis

Please do not approve the **Montana Connections Academy** application. As a senior citizen living on a fixed income, I do not want any Montana tax dollars going to for-profit private out-of-state corporations.

25. Gordon Levin

Helena, MT

Park City Schools has proposed to host an on-line virtual Charter School to be made available to all Montana Students.

My read of the proposed application is that this Charter School proposal would not provide a unique learning environment, but rather is very similar to the Montana Digital Academy. The proposed plan is to replace the Public School Montana Digital Academy with a private for profit business that would be paid for by my tax dollars. No Thank You.

If the vision for the **Montana Connections Academy** was to offer a true alternative to the Montana Digital Academy, it should be executed as a not for profit, with all teachers living in Montana. There is no assurance that that the teachers will be from and living in our communities.

The Montana Connections Academy discusses that each student will have an assigned Learning Coach, a parent, family member, or trusted adult to provide in person help the student. Is this reliance on the at home learning coach really just the same thing as home schooling? Will actual teachers get to know the children and provide instruction on a daily basis?

I am not seeing how providing Pearson Schools with a business model in Montana is beneficial to the Montana Public and deserving of public funds.

26. Bob Funk

No to **Montana Connections Academy**. I don't want my tax dollars going to an out-of-state, private corporation. Support the Montana digital academy. Thanks for your service to Montana.

27. Kerry Krebill

Clancy, MT

I wish to write in opposition to the application for the **Park City "Montana Connections Academy."** Public funds should not be used to fund an online private, for-profit, out-of-state business. Bravo to the other applicants for their innovative ideas for diversifying educational opportunities in our local communities.

28. Sharon Patton-Griffin, EdD

Great Falls, MT

Please deny the **Park City Montana Connections Academy**. It is an example of a nonpublic school created, staffed, and run by a private, for-profit educational business. This is exactly what will pollute the purpose of the MT Charter School law.

Say NO to the Park City Montana Connections Academy Charter School proposal. Thank you.

29. Betsy Kohnstamm

Columbia Falls, MT

I'm a retired reading specialist for the Columbia Falls School District, and I served on the social studies standards advisory board and the language arts standards board for the State.

As for the **Montana Connections Academy**, this is not a good use of charter school funding. It will be in direct competition with the state digital offerings and will not serve the students with any special needs in that area of the state. There are many other for-profit digital schools around the country. Do not fund this one.

30. Judy Staigmiller

Bozeman, MT

I wish to let you know that I am strongly opposed to the formation of **Montana Connections Academy**. I am surprised every year by how much I pay in taxes, and I would like my education dollars to go to the public school system or at least to non-profit schools.

Montana Connections Academy appears to be a for-profit school, and I do not want my money going there. This especially affects rural school children. This strikes home as I grew up in a cattle ranching area (Eden) south of Great Falls, and all the school-age kids in the area attended one-room country school houses. Many of these schools are gone now, but rural kids still need access to no-nonsense quality public education.

Also, all areas need school that can serve students with all types of disabilities. This means a physical presence, not just on-line. Please, think of Montana students and disallow Montana Connections Academy.

31. Colleen Ambrose

Garrison, MT

I want to submit my objection to the application for approval submitted by the **Montana Connections Academy**. I object on the following grounds:

- This charter operates as an EMO, which is a for-profit institution. This means that public tax dollars would be going to an out-of-state, private corporation, which is not the intention of HB 549.
- This will have an adverse effect on all communities, especially smaller, rural Montana schools, where the loss of per-pupil funds can be particularly detrimental.
- Per-pupil funding will go from a school that would use it for brick/mortar services to one without these overhead costs for an online student. Students in all communities already have ample access to expanded services through the Montana Digital Academy that can be facilitated through their home districts.
- This program cannot serve students with ALL types of disabilities. Can students come to campus for speech therapy or OT as needed if they qualify for those services?

This issue was brought to my attention recently and I want to register my objections to this application. I hope that you take my concerns into consideration when you meet on January 18.

General Public Comments

1. Chip Lindenlaub

One of the problems with the Public Charter Schools Act is that the handful of legislators who pushed this bill through attempted to redefine the term “public charter school.” In 45 other states, public charter schools are new, innovative, and creative schools operated outside of the education establishment but under the general supervision of the Board of Public Education. Relief from some of the rules allows the charters to innovate, outperform, and meet the needs of students who desire something different or better. Because the “charters” created by HB549 are subject to the exact same laws, rules, policies, and bureaucracy which govern every traditional public school in Montana, and they fall under the exact same education establishment, they do not meet the definition of a charter school. In fact, the most accurate description would be that they are additional traditional public schools with, potentially, a different curriculum. The best feature of true charter schools is that they are the only public schools that shall be closed if they fail to meet the standards they commit to meet in the charters which they sign.

Now, unfortunately the already overburdened Board of Public Education, tasked with resolving this quagmire, is placed in the position of deciding which applications are legitimate innovations that don't

already exist in the traditional school and which newly created schools will truly be of the “highest academic quality,” as the new law requires. I will focus on two questions, primarily. Does the program already exist and how will the academic standards be measured? Although many of the applications suffer the same or similar problems, to illustrate my point, I have selected three examples: PACE Academy in Kalispell, Corvallis Distance Learning Charter, and Frenchtown’s Bronc Fast Track Public Charter School.

While I salute the Kalispell School District for its attempt to allow students to learn at their own pace, I ask the Board of Public Education, do the following excerpts from the PACE Academy application make the PACE Academy sound like the new, innovative, and creative school that the authors of HB549 intended to create?

1. It is a “School within a School.”
2. “We follow Kalispell Public Schools adopted curriculum.”
3. “Initial Staff will be recruited from current Flathead High School Staff.”
4. “The location of the school inside of Flathead High School is an area with 4 classrooms…”
5. We “received funding through the Transformational Learning Grant Program.”

From my perspective, these quotes demonstrate that this does not qualify as a new, creative, innovative school. As a matter of fact, it sounds like an existing program in search of additional funding which the school district’s taxpayers denied through their recent rejection of a levy increase. Just a few months ago, one school board member was quoted in the Flathead Beacon as saying that the district could use this bill to obtain funding that they did not receive when their proposed school levy was rejected. I should add, rejected by the same citizens whose students, presumably, would benefit the most from the program.

Do the following quotes meet the law’s requirement for a “framework that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics”, especially if they are given a seat time waiver?

6. “Our assessment system embraces student involvement in assessment and learning, and it goes beyond the traditional percentage-based grading system seen in most public schools.”
7. “...Students may demonstrate achievement through a flexible system of pupil-centered learning.” With department-created competencies and proficiency scales, credit is awarded based on students demonstrating competency.”
8. “On a case by case basis, a student’s academic program may warrant waiving of some graduation requirements.”

Page 3 of the Board of Public Education’s Sept. 27, 2023 letter to applicants states: “The proposed public charter school is of the highest academic quality.” And, “The proposed public charter school will provide an educational opportunity to students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend.” This application does not meet the law’s standard for clear academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics. And, it appears to me that the program is already available at the traditional school. Therefore, this application should not be approved.

The Corvallis Distance Learning Charter School application states, “In the past two months we have enrolled 114 students that were separated from our school community and are now benefiting from a distance learning platform that will be the foundation of our Distance Learning Charter.” Since the Distance Learning School is already operating and staffed, one wonders why the Corvallis School

District is applying for charter school status under the Public Charter Schools Act. Once again, The Board of Public Education instruction letter attached to the beginning of the application requires that the “public charter school will provide an educational opportunity to students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend.” Additionally, the applicant “does not anticipate needing or requesting any variances.” If so, then how is the charter program different from the traditional school? Clearly, the Distance Learning Program is already open to students in the Corvallis School District which should disqualify it from consideration as a public charter school.

According to the application, “The instructional design is almost entirely online.” Furthermore, “Because CDLC is almost entirely online and remote, transportation, food services are not required for these students.” Continuing from the Corvallis application, “The assessment process happens weekly when the on-line teacher reviews each student’s work and assigns a grade for each class. They promise additional testing but is that realistic when curriculum providers include, “Montana Digital Academy (MDA), [Harmony.edu \[harmony.edu\]](http://Harmony.edu), and other independent curriculum platforms including but not limited to Edmentum, Edgenuity and BYU”? Potentially, CDLC will have six, or more, different learning platforms used by 171 students who proceed at their own pace and time. Even if only one additional test per month is administered over a nine month period multiplied by six curriculums, 54 different tests per subject would be required. If each family chooses “their own route and curriculum, will the students have a core knowledge base for the next teacher to build upon? The flexibility looks great on paper but I think that with a complicated program like this, it will be impossible for the BPE to measure the standards and determine if they are of the “highest academic quality,” as required by law. This is especially important since BPE will now be responsible for overseeing and closing the school should it fail to meet the high academic quality standard in the future. Therefore, the application should be denied.

The Frenchtown School District’s Bronc Fast Track Public Charter School aims to “bridge the gap between high school and post-secondary education by offering students the opportunity to earn college credits during their high school years.” It sounds like a great idea and I think they should find a way to implement the program without making it a public charter school. The application reads, “Students will be selected based on GPA, attendance, and behavior.” The enrollment section of the the Public charter Schools Act reads, “A public charter school must be open to any student residing in the state.” I’m not an attorney but I’m relatively certain that this violates the law and probably Montana’s Constitution. If approved by the BPE, it would be the first charter school in the United States (that I’m aware of) that was allowed to “cherry pick” their students based on their GPA, attendance, and behavior. For this reason, sadly, the application should be denied.

Many of the applicants seek to create a school within a school. Some of the programs are already operational and staffed, with variances approved, so one wonders why they would go through the process of applying to be a charter school. Quite simply, I believe they want the funding. Using the measurement of academic standards proposed in the application, the Board of Public education will be responsible for deciding, now and in the future, whether or not each school meets the “highest academic quality” standard written in the law. Finally, the law states that the Board shall “only approve charters whose promise of improved educational outcomes outweighs potential increased costs to state and local taxpayers.”

In my opinion, this is what happens when politicians bastardize a system which in dozens of other state’s legitimate charter schools successfully complement traditional public schools and the educational outcomes of all students are improved.

Thank you for what you do everyday to improve the education of all students in Montana! Thank you for your time and consideration.

2. Bill and Sarah Towle

We believe that the legislative purpose was to encourage Public Schools to form and govern the Charter schools and those who truly conform with these objectives should be approved. Those who allow private for profit groups, whether in-state or out-of-state, to operate the Charter school should be denied.

3. Roger Sherman

Whitefish, MT

These schools operate as EMOs which are for profite. This means that public funds will go out of state to private corporations which is not the intention of HB 546.

4. P. Hatfield

Victor, MT

As long as NO Charter school, or Religious School gets PUBLIC funding..
They can operate... just not with my money~

5. Carlo Porteen

Beware of the rip off of taxpayers dollars in the state of Arizona. These profit making schools are bad for the State of Montana. Wake up taxpayers'

6. Linda Schmitt

Ravalli County

Support our public schools! Charter Schools are designed to funnel public moneys away from our fine public schools into who-knows-what agendas. Charter Schools are not regulated in the same way, are not staffed with qualified teachers, are not vetted to be truly public.

7. Patricia Doyle

As a retired public school teacher and tax payer I want to express my appreciation for the work and time the board has put into preparing information to address and evaluate the proposals from applicants for charter schools.

I'm aware of needs many students have to be provided alternative programs which would enable them to reach their potential and meet future life challenges.

Extensions of and additions to current public school programs are worth the dollars we tax payers provide.

My only concerns relate to funding on-line for- profit charters operating without oversight by local school boards. Thank you for your service to our students, their families, and our state.

January 18, 2024

Board of Public Education
46 N Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Montana Board of Public Education Members,

I watched the Board of Public Education meeting today and saw that the Billings Opportunity School was moved to the approved list. While we are excited about this decision, I wanted to provide information for clarification as some members of the Board had questions that came up during your discussion today.

- The Billings Career Center is not an alternative school. It provides CTE focused classes for the students of Billings Public Schools.
- The Opportunity School is new to Billings Public Schools and addresses a significant need in our district and community. We are the largest school district in the state and do not have an alternative school. Our previous alternative school closed over 15 years ago. We are not looking to replicate that school but rather bring a new and innovative pathway to graduation for our students. We will utilize project-based learning and proficiency-based education for students to meet the required state standards for graduation. Students will still be held to the rigorous graduation standards set by the state of Montana.
- This Fall we held a luncheon entitled Project Engage for students that have dropped out this year. At that luncheon we had almost a third of the 100 students that have already dropped out this year in attendance. Counselors and administrators worked with those in attendance to find a pathway to graduation or its' equivalency utilizing reenrollment, Adult Education and the HiSET, Montana Youth Challenge Academy and Job Corps. We listened to the reasons of why they had dropped out and the top reason was needing a smaller more personalized environment. This is exactly what the Opportunity School will provide.
- Through a survey of our stakeholders and community, an alternative pathway to graduation, increasing college, career and military opportunities for students and meeting the diverse needs of a large student population were priorities. These will all be addressed in the education a student receives at the Opportunity School.
- We have had an unfortunate string of serious crimes that have been committed by students that have dropped out. In community meetings that have followed these incidents there has been overwhelming support to find ways to keep students engaged in school and on track for graduation. The Opportunity School will provide this.

We are grateful for the inclusion on the approved list of charter schools. I hope this letter helps brings clarification and relieves any apprehension for the continued support of Billings Opportunity School as a Public Charter School.

Respectfully,

Gordon Klasna
Executive Director of Secondary Education
Billings Public Schools



2334 Lewis Avenue | Billings, MT 59102
O: 406.245.6539 | F: 406.245.9647

Empowering **Youth & Families**
for a **Brighter Tomorrow**

December 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: Jefferson County High School (JCHS) District application for charter school designation

For the past 15 years, JCHS District, has been a partner with Youth Dynamics in delivering the educational part of Day Treatment to children cared for on the Alternative Youth Adventures campus in Boulder. We are dependent on JCHS to support educational services for children that otherwise would not be available to treat and heal their trauma induced mental illness.

Over the years both JCHS and Jefferson County Elementary School (JCES) have provided nurturing individualized educational plans and pacing so our children can recover and stay on track with educational competencies in core curriculum. The core curriculum is critical to future success. In addition to the core subjects, math, science, English and social studies, our students will benefit from broader offerings through the charter school program.

In addition to the multitude of learning modalities, reading/writing, auditory, visual, and kinesthetic, our kids benefit from a larger selection of course work including, music, art, physical education, and the various topics presented in career and technical education (CTE). A charter school designation along with accompanying supportive resources will allow the delivery of an increased variety of opportunities through elective course work. Those elective courses will significantly impact the coping mechanisms necessary to overcoming mental illness related to trauma.

Youth dynamics is in full support of JCHS application for charter school designation. Youth Dynamics, as an active partner with the charter school program at JCHS, together we will make a greater impact not only on our kids' academic achievement, but more importantly the mental illness each of the Severe Emotional Diagnosed (SED) children are experiencing. Please do not hesitate to call me for follow-up conversations in your selection process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Dennis Sulser'.

Dennis Sulser, Ed. D.
CEO Youth Dynamics, Inc.



1200 Westwood Drive, Hamilton, MT 59840
(406) 363-2211 • bitterroothealth.org

November 28, 2023

McCall Flynn, Executive Director
Board of Public Education
46 N Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B
PO Box 200601
Helena, MT 59620

Re: In Support of Hamilton School District Public Charter School Application

Dear Executive Director Flynn:

This letter memorializes Bitterroot Health's ("BH") support of Hamilton School District's ("HSD") application for approval of a public charter school to be called the Bitterroot Polytechnical Center ("BPC"). BPC is intended to improve student and community outcomes by providing a transformational learning and proficiency-based program through which students may achieve their educational and career goals, while also providing community employers with access to a previously unavailable population of skilled, work-force ready potential employees.

Currently, BH lacks a sufficiently skilled local workforce to consistently meet its staffing needs. This challenge has been exacerbated by inflation and the Bitterroot Valley's housing shortage. In response to these conditions, BH is invested in developing a skilled local workforce through long term partnerships with Bitterroot Valley school districts. HSD's proposed BPC would provide an ideal framework through which students can gain valuable certifications that would improve BH's ability to hire employees from a workforce that possesses the skill and knowledge required by the healthcare industry. To that end, BH is engaged in continuing its conversation with HSD concerning the creation of flexible, enhanced opportunities for students and an improved BH employee pool throughs BPC.

Simply put, BPC has the potential to substantially improve student outcomes while positively benefiting BH, one of the area's most impactful community employers. For these reasons, BH fully supports HSD's application for approval of a public charter school.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Bishop", is written over a horizontal line.

John Bishop
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Conroy Bargfrede", is written over a horizontal line.

Rebecca Conroy Bargfrede
Chief Transformational Officer
Corp. Compliance & HIPAA Privacy Officer

December 18, 2023

To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a parent to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Mount Ascension Learning Academy Charter School** application. Mount Ascension would provide my student the opportunity to attend school in-person part-time, virtually part-time, or **virtually full-time**, providing her the flexibility and educational experiences she would benefit from. Additionally, Mount Ascension would provide me, as the parent, an avenue to obtain high quality educational services for my student. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Dana Meldrum

School Counselor at Capital High School

100 Valley Drive

406.324.2491

HELENA HIGH SCHOOL

1300 Billings Avenue

Helena, MT 59601-3981

~~December 18, 2023~~ 406-324-2201

<https://www.hhs.helenaschools.org>



To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a high school principal to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Mount Ascension Learning Academy Charter School** application. Mount Ascension would provide our student (s) the opportunity to attend school in-person part-time, virtually part-time, or virtually full-time, providing my student with the flexibility and educational experiences they would benefit from. Additionally, Mount Ascension would provide me, as the principal an avenue to obtain high quality educational services for my student(s). This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Thennis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Steve Thennis

Principal

Helena High School

1300 Billings Ave.

Helena, Montana 59601

406-324-2202

January 3rd, 2024

To: Montana Board of Public Education

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a parent of Liam Aagenes, to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's Project for Alternative Learning Charter School application.

My son has been a student at pal since 2020 and is now a senior at PAL. Since 3rd grade it became apparent to me that my son learned differently than other kids. He enjoyed things like math and science and really did not enjoy the normal school process. However, we kept pushing through the normal school programs and tried our best to be supportive. Once he hit middle school, I noticed a very abrupt change in my son's emotional stability and his extreme dislike for school. Freshman year of high school at Helena High School, he failed miserably due to COVID outbreak and learning being completed at home. It was then that PAL was recommended to me by a counselor at Helena High School. Over the last 3 years, I have watched my son's attitude toward school completely change. He went from hating school to loving it and never wanting to miss a day. He loves all of his teachers and really enjoys the atmosphere and classes offered. He is challenged and constantly learning something new at PAL. I believe my son would not be graduating high school this year if had not been for PAL and all of the educator's encouragement and time.

PAL is a wonderful learning environment and encourages kids in a completely different way to learn. I highly recommend them for this designation.

Sincerely,

Rachel Aagenes
Parent of Liam Aagenes, Student at PAL
1940 Seve Ave, Apt B
Helena, MT 59602
406-431-0368

January 17, 2024

To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a former PAL student and graduate to express my immense support for the Helena Public School District's **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. As a student who struggled with significant mental health issues throughout my lifetime, a traditional high school setting was never an option. At 15 I spent every school day planning for when I dropped out. Because of PAL, and support from teachers like Ryan Cooney, Wynn Randall, and Chuck McGurn, I not only graduated almost an entire year early, but I now work full time as a mental health professional and get to come back to PAL to help serve their students. Montana is one of the most rural states in the country and has one of the highest death by suicide rates in the country, and resources to support our population and especially youth are incredibly sparse. I have interacted with countless students who experienced similar issues and concerns as I did, and they don't have another option. They spend most of their days trying to survive, as did I. I firmly believe accessibility to alternative education options, such as PAL, is how we continue to help students in these situations grow and become functional and productive members of society. Having options such as PAL available for students when they need it is not only an integral part of our youth's mental wellness, but our communities wellness as a whole. I ask that you please consider PALs application as a charter school so we can continue to provide this incredible opportunity to students like I once was. I ask that as you conclude reading this letter of support, you think about a 15-year-old girl who wanted so badly to learn and have the best possible options for her future, but instead spent every day planning to drop out and trying to survive. I ask that you think about that because of PAL, that 15-year-old girl is now an educated, functional member of society who now gets to give back to her community. I would not be where I am without PAL, and I ask that you consider the amazing possibilities for other students who are accepted into this program . PAL's smaller class sizes, unique class offerings, and supportive team, gave the best gift I could've asked for, and one I had given up on, my education.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Bella Nyman
(406) 465-5552

December 20th 2023

To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a parent to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide my student the opportunity to attend school in-person in a small, personalized learning environment, providing my student the flexibility and educational experiences they would benefit from. Additionally, Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide me, as the parent an avenue to obtain high quality educational services. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Jessy and Brandon Beardslee

821 Hialeah Crt Apt A

Helena, MT 59601

406-570-4213

January 18th, 2024

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to express my support, both as a member of the community and as a member of last year's Leadership Helena class, for the Charter School application submitted by the Helena Public School District's Project for Alternate Learning (PAL). At Leadership Helena, I have worked closely with the staff and have met many of the students at PAL. Through these interactions, I have seen the massive impact PAL has on their students both inside and outside the classroom.

1. The Social/Emotional Growth of PAL Students: Talking to the students at PAL, I have had the opportunity to learn about the positive impact the school and the staff have. PAL creates a welcoming community for students who are disengaged and isolated at HHS or CHS, providing a safe environment for students to grow both socially and emotionally.
2. The Educational Success of PAL Students: Many PAL students also are at risk of dropping out of our normal public-school systems. PAL creates a flexible educational experience that is more tailored to each student and their goals, allowing students to learn in a way that suits their needs. These academic considerations push students to do their best, engage in class, and graduate!
3. The Future of PAL Students: PAL organized a meet/greet with Leadership Helena, where the students enthusiastically engaged with our Leadership Helena class, asking questions about how we are involved in the community, what they could do after they graduate, and the different career paths they could go down. With all of the resources and tools provided by PAL, students are motivated to plan for their future, whether they are making plans to attend college or enter the workforce.

In conclusion, PAL is an important educational opportunity that directly benefits our students and our community. I urge the board to consider these benefits and PAL's Charter School application. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Brus

Production Estimating Coordinator

Dick Anderson Construction

(406) 564-3039

December 18, 2023

To: The Montana Board of Public Education

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a parent to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School is providing my daughter the opportunity to attend school in-person in a small, personalized learning environment, providing my daughter the flexibility and educational experiences that she is greatly benefiting from. Additionally, Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide me, as a parent, with an avenue to obtain high quality educational services. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,



Dani McDonald

1502 Boston Rd.

Helena, MT 59602

406-465-4454



PUREVIEW | Health Center

1930 9th Ave, Helena, MT 59601 | 406.457.0000 | PureViewHealthCenter.org

December 18, 2023

To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a community partner, that provides services to students within the Helena School District, to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide the students we serve the opportunity to attend school in-person in a small, personalized learning environment, providing students the flexibility and educational experiences they would benefit from. The students we serve often require special needs and benefit from smaller, personalized, flexible environments for them to become successful and reach their goals. I have watched students that we serve grow and succeed while attending Project Alternative Learning. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would allow this to continue, as well as provide future students we serve the avenue to obtain high quality educational services. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Holly Mook, SWLC, LAC
School-based Behavioral Health Program Manager
PureView Health Center
1930 9th Avenue
Helena, MT 59601
406-457-0000



PUREVIEW | Health
Center

<https://pureviewhealthcenter.org/>

December 18, 2023

To: The Montana Board of Public Education at bpe@mt.gov

Dear Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you as a community partner to express my strong support for the Helena Public School District's **Project for Alternative Learning Charter School** application. A Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide students the opportunity to attend school in-person in a small, personalized learning environment, providing students the flexibility and educational experiences they would benefit from. Additionally, Project for Alternative Learning Charter School would provide the community an avenue to obtain high quality educational services. This is an educational opportunity our community, school district, and most importantly, our students need access to.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,

Justin Murgel
Chief Executive Officer
630 N Last Chance Gulch, Ste 2300
Helena MT 59601
Phone: 406-500-2050



Micah Hill, Superintendent
Missoula County Public Schools
909 South Ave. West
Missoula, MT 59801
(406) 728-2400

January 15, 2024

Dear Board of Public Education:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Missoula County Public Schools I am writing in response to the recent charter school application review process and recommendations that were posted on the Board of Public Education Agenda Packet. As a person whose position requires continual evaluation of programs and staff, I understand that giving an objective score to subjective criteria is challenging. Given the composite score for the Missoula Connect Academy, I believe this charter school warrants further consideration.

The Missoula Connect Academy received average scores of 5.5 on the application checklist and 3.25 on the criteria responses. Specifically, the Connect Academy application provides for an innovative and high-performing charter school – not a program. I noticed that compared to the other application we submitted, the TEACH Academy scored 4 out of 4 for governance, but the Connect Academy scored 3 out of 4 with a nearly identical governance structure. We believe we have clearly demonstrated the ability to operate a successful charter school, as evidenced by strong governance, academic, and operational plans. Additionally, the Connect Academy fills a need in our community for more progressive, non-traditional school options that promote real-world skills.

We wonder if the placement or underscored application reflects the fact that we stated in our application that the Connect Academy would be available to students statewide, and that this may be an area of concern. Our rationale for including that statement in the application is based off the language in HB 549, Section 8, Enrollment (1) (A) that states: **A public charter school must be open to any student residing in the state.** Our intent in providing this charter school was to serve the students and families of our district but did not think we could exclude students who were not residents of the district based on the language of HB 549.

While the Connect Academy may not have the highest scores, it meets or exceeds expectations across all major criteria. I believe the school has tremendous potential to provide an exceptional education model for students. Approving the Connect Academy would allow more families access to high-quality charter schools.

In summary, I recommend the Board consider approval of the Missoula Connect Academy based on the criteria provided. MCPS has the capacity to open and operate a successful charter school that fills a need in the local community. This application deserves the opportunity to open its doors to students seeking an innovative education.

Thank you for your consideration. I welcome the chance to discuss this application and my recommendation further.

Sincerely,

Micah Hill
Superintendent, Missoula County Public Schools

MOA support letter,

Dear Christine,

I want to express my gratitude to you and all the teachers at the Missoula Online Academy, that have helped my daughter through the first half of her Freshman year.

The need for MOA can not be expressed enough. I understand that I can only talk about my family's experience. That being said. My daughter entered her freshman year at Sentinel high school in Missoula. She came from Lolo MS. When she entered high school she was immediately preyed upon and manipulated into what we found out later to be an attempt of being trafficked by unknown security risks at the high school. She received death threats, for drugs and money, etc. Once I found we quickly started working with the school for her safety and getting her into MOA.

MOA quickly came to the rescue without any hesitation, nor scrutiny of any kind. We would have had to pull her out of school completely if they would not have been able to step in; even with an on going investigation.

If this is not an eye opener for MOA to continue doing what they do, I do not know what else there could be. I will always praise support for this program and advocated for them in anyway possible.

Thank you for all you help and support.

v/r,

Justin Moschelle

Dear Board of Public Education,

My journey to receiving my high school diploma has been a real success story. School has been a struggle for me; I've had to overcome difficult life obstacles and hardship, but I never wanted to give up on my goal to receive my high school diploma. In 2018, my father passed away. We all know how hard COVID-19 was on everyone, including me. Then after everything, we moved to Missoula, and I had to transition to meeting new people in a new school. I am an introvert and have trouble adapting to change. After seeing that I was struggling, my guidance counselor suggested some alternatives to Sentinel High School. The one option I took to was the online academy. This alternative sounded amazing to me and was exactly what I needed.

The online academy provided a comfortable learning environment and personalized learning to fit my needs. Their commitment to personalized learning not only accommodated my learning style but also empowered me to thrive academically. They believed in me and helped me pull through. The flexibility in scheduling courses throughout the year has been a game-changer. With adaptable start and end dates, the academy acknowledges life's unpredictability, allowing me to tailor my education to my unique circumstances. Another invaluable aspect is the ability to target specific courses for credit. This has been particularly beneficial for someone like me, addressing credit deficiencies on the path to graduation.

Recounting this journey, I am filled with gratitude for the support systems that guided me through the storms. The online academy, in particular, played a pivotal role in shaping my high school experience into one of triumph over adversity. Thank you for

taking the time to read my story. I look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead and the continued pursuit of my educational aspirations.

Sincerely,

Nakiyah Schreibeis

Heath Nordquist

Social Studies Teacher
Sentinel High School
Missoula, MT
(406) 546-7592
hnordquist@mcpsmt.org

To the Board of Public Education,

I would like to advocate for the reasons why the MOA should continue as a charter school serving alternative students within our district in an online capacity.

I am someone who has experience teaching at the Missoula Online Academy since its inception when COVID hit our population. Throughout the years MOA has existed, the program has been refined, and refined again, to fit the unique population of student MOA serves. The students and families who have chosen MOA have certain specific reasons; but, the single thing they have in common is, those students are/were not progressing academically at site schools for all sorts of reasons. Yet, most of those students succeed at MOA because of the unique supports the MOA staff has developed over the years. MOA, I believe, is an essential program to ensure that each and every MCPS student has an equal opportunity to succeed; and, the student population at MOA thrives because the program is there. If MOA were to cease to exist, that student population would have a more difficult time succeeding in the in-person environment.

I urge you to allow those students to continue their education in a manner that is best for them. MOA as an MCPS Charter School is a fantastic way to do that.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter,

Heath Nordquist

Dear Board of Public Education,

I am writing to express my appreciation for the Missoula Online Academy and to advocate for the pending approval of its funding application to ensure the continuation of the program.

I devoted most of my high school career to seeking an alternative to the traditional public high school experience. Some of my peers can effortlessly balance the social and academic aspects of high school, but I was not able to. Initially, I tried to go abroad, I found numerous small programs but the cost was comparable to most college tuition. So I stuck with normal high school. I couldn't do it; the constant social hour didn't give me the space to thrive academically, it was too much, and it resulted in many panic attacks. I was lucky enough that the online learning program in Missoula still had funding. I knew I couldn't be the only one that public high school didn't fit in, and it turns out 45% of students feel stressed during the school day. So I find myself asking: Why aren't there more educational routes for those who feel the same that I did?

Online learning programs are everywhere, but most are classes taken strictly online with little to no teacher guidance. The major contributor to the lack of online learning programs is a lack of funding. But there is also a stigma around online learning because a lot of people remember high school being fun, carefree, and mostly stress-free. They enjoyed the social aspect of school way more than the academic aspect. Lots of those people are my parent's age, generation X, who grew up without the influence of cell phones, social media, and popular media. If the school day was hard and kids were mean, it ended when they went home. For current generations it doesn't, the landscape of education has evolved. The social and academic stress of school follows us home, on our phones, on our laptops, and in our emails. For those who remember high school to be easy and carefree, it's hard to understand why younger generations are looking for alternatives. I credit most of this to a lack of understanding and knowledge of the benefits online learning has.

There is a misconception that online education is for lazy people or that it is easier than traditional high school, but my experience has proven otherwise. The skills that I have learned in my time at the MOA will benefit me far more in the "real world" than a lot of the skills I learned through my in-person classes at Sentinel. To succeed in online learning programs you have to be driven, you have to be dedicated to your classes, and manage your time well. The MOA mixes teacher-taught courses and remote courses, these two methods balance each other out extremely well. The teacher-led Zoom classes help with a sense of community, while the remote classes help with independence and time management, teach responsibility, and help students find what learning and study strategies work best.

I cannot express how valuable the MOA is and how much it has helped me and so many other students who faced the same challenges I did. I am eternally grateful to those who have kept this

program on its feet and who continue to fight for it. This program saved me, academically, emotionally, and socially.

With that, I urge you to think about the positive impact this program has and how more funding can allow more students to find a place where they flourish.

Sincerely,

Ella Saxton



Park City Schools

Active Learners, Active Leaders

P. O. Box 278 Park City, MT 59063

January 19, 2024

Montana Board of Public Education
46 N Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B
PO Box 200601
Helena, MT 59620

Chairman Tharp and Members of the Board,

Please accept this letter as the formal withdraw of Park City Schools' Application to create a Public Charter School.

Having listened to the discussion surrounding the application that took place on Thursday, January 18, 2024 I believe that the interests of Montana's students would be best served by withdrawing the application at this time.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. I know that this process required a great deal of work and diligence by all members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Grabowska', is written in a cursive style.

Dan Grabowska
Superintendent, Park City Schools

Matt Davidson
Superintendent

Maryanne Bischoff
District Secretary

307-548-2254



Richard Parker
Business Manager

Bret Savage
Bookkeeper

Fax: 307-548-7610

January 5, 2024

Dear Chairman Tharp and Members of the Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you in support of the application for Montana Connections Academy.

Big Horn County School District #1, located in North West Wyoming, has partnered with Connections Academy by Pearson to sponsor Wyoming Connections Academy since the 2011-12 school year, and we are currently working towards extending our partnership for another five years.

In my time as the Superintendent at Big Horn #1, I have been able to witness firsthand the partnership between our district and Connections Academy by Pearson. This partnership has provided benefits to the students and schools in Big Horn #1 and to students across Wyoming. While virtual education is not the answer for all students, for those who choose to utilize the virtual option, it is a tremendous benefit. It accommodates students and families who need an alternative to the traditional school approach for a variety of reasons.

Among the things that I have learned from our partnership with Connections Academy, one that stands out is their dedication to the students that they are serving. Parents of students who enroll at Wyoming Connections Academy are also very happy with the results that this partnership provides. 96% of the parents are satisfied with the helpfulness of their child's teachers, 97% agree that they have more involvement in their child's education, and 95% say that their child is making good progress in school.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the application for Montana Connections Academy. I believe that its approval could benefit the students of Montana.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matthew Davidson".

Matthew Davidson
Superintendent

Cc: Dan Grabowska, Superintendent Park City Schools



MONTANA STATE SENATE

Senator Forrest J. Mandeville
Senate District 29

DURING THE SESSION
State Capitol Building
PO Box 200500
Helena MT 59620-0500
Phone: (406) 444-4800
Web: leg.mt.gov

HOME ADDRESS
PO Box 337
Columbus, MT 59019
Phone: (406) 690-1933
Forrest.Mandeville@legmt.gov
forrestmandeville@gmail.com

November 30, 2023

Board of Public Education
State of Montana
PO Box 200601
Helena, Montana 59620-0601

Dear Members of the Board of Public Education –

We are members of the Montana Legislature who supported education innovation in the 68th Session by voting for legislation that authorizes the creation of charter schools in our state. This is a long overdue development, and something we should be proud of and celebrate. Our goal in supporting these bills was not to simply create charter schools for the sake of checking a box. Our intent was to bring real innovation into the classroom to benefit the students of Montana. They are our primary focus in this discussion.

To that end, we are supportive of the creation of a statewide online charter school as submitted by the Park City School District and partnered with a 20-year expert in online learning. Students need to be met where they are on their educational journey, and quite literally for some that means at their homes. For a variety of reasons, whether health, behavioral, or merely choice, some students learn most effectively in an online setting. It is important that any statewide virtual school not merely be the equivalent of any current offering in the state of Montana, but be unique, distinct, and feature courses and an individualized path that challenges students to reach personal excellence.

HB 549 specifically makes clear that enrollment is “open to any student residing in the state,” and that a “public charter school shall enroll all students who wish to attend the school unless the number of students exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building” (Sec. 8 (1)(a) and (e)). We believe this makes the Park City application uniquely likely to succeed, as the district’s application reported 800 organic requests for information on a statewide virtual school in the last five years from Montana families, and 82 statements of support from 21 counties for this specific proposal.

We urge you to support this kind of forward-thinking innovation that will benefit our Montana students and truly embody the spirit of the charter school legislation the Legislature passed.

MONTANA STATE SENATE

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Forrest Mandeville (SD-29)

Senator Ken Bogner (SD-19)

Senator Greg Hertz (SD-6)

Senator Tom McGillvray (SD-23)

Senator Daniel Zolnikov (SD-22)

Representative Larry Brewster (HD-44)

Representative Ed Buttrey (HD-21)

Representative Sherry Essmann (HD-52)

Representative Llew Jones (HD-18)

Representative Scot Kerns (HD-23)

Representative Rhonda Knudsen (HD-34)

Representative Terry Moore (HD-54)

Representative Sue Vinton (HD-56)

Representative Mike Yakawich (HD-51)

Representative Katie Zolnikov (HD-45)

Statements of Support Received for Montana Connections Academy

No.	First Initial	Last Name	County	State	Zip Code	Category
1.	M.	Piazzola	Beaverhead	MT	59725	Parent or Guardian
2.	J.	George	Beaverhead	MT	59725	Parent or Guardian
3.	C.	Huckabee	Blaine	MT	59523	Parent or Guardian
4.	K.	Tackett	Carbon	MT	59068	Parent or Guardian
5.	N.	Allen	Cascade	MT	59405	Parent or Guardian
6.	J.	W.	Cascade	MT	59405	Parent or Guardian
7.	N.	Salazar	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
8.	N.	Rempfer	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
9.	J.	Bass	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
10.	K.	Allen	Cascade	MT	50404	Parent or Guardian
11.	J.	Sullivan	Cascade	MT	59401	Parent or Guardian
12.	Y.	Cossins	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
13.	A.	Koehmstedt	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
14.	S.	Haynes	Cascade	MT	59405	Parent or Guardian
15.	B.	Perez	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
16.	J.	Bogan	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
17.	J.	Komeotis	Cascade	MT	59404	Community Member
18.	M.	Columbus	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
19.	K.	Cevera	Cascade	MT	59401	Parent or Guardian
20.	M.	Kness	Cascade	MT	59404	Parent or Guardian
21.	D.	Holley	Cascade	MT	59401	Parent or Guardian
22.	D.	Holley	Cascade	MT	59401	Parent or Guardian
23.	N.	Huston	Cascade	MT	59472	Parent or Guardian
24.	M.	Perry	Cascade	MT	59472	Parent or Guardian
25.	M.	Swan	Chouteau	MT	59521	Parent or Guardian
26.	T.	Capshaw	Custer	MT	59301	Parent or Guardian
27.	G.	Clauson	Custer	MT	59301	Parent or Guardian
28.	E.	Mackey	Custer	MT	59351	Parent or Guardian

29.	J.	Rickard	Custer	MT	59301	Parent or Guardian
30.	N.	Witcher	Custer	MT	59338	Parent or Guardian
31.	M.	Tassano	Deer Lodge	MT	59711	Parent or Guardian
32.	C.	Schwartz	Fallon	MT	59501	Parent or Guardian
33.	L.	Farmer-Vanek	Fergus	MT	59464	Parent or Guardian
34.	T.	Barthel	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
35.	T.	Holloway	Flathead	MT	59937	Parent or Guardian
36.	M.	Grangroth	Flathead	MT	59912	Parent or Guardian
37.	T.	Johnson	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
38.	K.	Krebs	Flathead	MT	59911	Community Member
39.	B.	Kiefer	Flathead	MT	59922	Teacher
40.	R.	Harris	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
41.	J.	Sevier	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
42.	S.	Shepherd	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
43.	W.	Rubertone	Flathead	MT	59912	Parent or Guardian
44.	C.	Bowers	Flathead	MT	59937	Parent or Guardian
45.	J.	Adams	Flathead	MT	59912	Parent or Guardian
46.	L.	Groats	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
47.	G.	Green	Flathead	MT	59912	Parent or Guardian
48.	C.	Cumbie	Flathead	MT	59932	Parent or Guardian
49.	J.	Wood	Flathead	MT	59911	Parent or Guardian
50.	M.	Voss	Flathead	MT	59937	Parent or Guardian
51.	M.	Michelle	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
52.	K.	Bare	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
53.	J.	McShea	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian
54.	T.	Thomson	Flathead	MT	59912	Community Member
55.	S.	Schlinger	Flathead	MT	59919	Parent or Guardian
56.	M.	D.	Flathead	MT	59912	Teacher
57.	J.	Hewitt	Flathead	MT	59901	Teacher
58.	C.	Codey	Flathead	MT	59913	Parent or Guardian
59.	C.	Walker	Flathead	MT	59901	Parent or Guardian

60.	K.	Ruddick	Gallatin	MT	59714	Parent or Guardian
61.	M.	McHann	Gallatin	MT	59718	Parent or Guardian
62.	J.	Matthews	Gallatin	MT	59741	Parent or Guardian
63.	A.	Drapes	Gallatin	MT	59715	Parent or Guardian
64.	J.	Dugas	Gallatin	MT	59718	Parent or Guardian
65.	S.	Ward	Gallatin	MT	59718	Parent or Guardian
66.	T.	Danno	Gallatin	MT	59715	Parent or Guardian
67.	R.	Castaldo	Gallatin	MT	59714	Parent or Guardian
68.	N.	Ruane	Gallatin	MT	59715	Student
69.	K.	Hamilton	Gallatin	MT	59714	Parent or Guardian
70.	M.	Winslow	Gallatin	MT	59714	Parent or Guardian
71.	H.	Foust	Gallatin	MT	59714	Parent or Guardian
72.	N.	Demontiney	Glacier	MT	59522	Parent or Guardian
73.	J.	Huffman	Glacier	MT	59427	Parent or Guardian
74.	C.	Smoking	Glacier	MT	59417	Parent or Guardian
75.	A.	Shafer	Golden Valley	MT	59046	Parent or Guardian
76.	J.	Kilgore	Hill	MT	59405	Parent or Guardian
77.	M.	Rider	Hill	MT	59521	Parent or Guardian
78.	A.	Goodvoice	Hill	MT	59521	Parent or Guardian
79.	C.	Bass	Hill	MT	59501	Parent or Guardian
80.	R.	Woods	Hill	MT	59501	Parent or Guardian
81.	J.	Brown	Jefferson	MT	59632	Parent or Guardian
82.	P.	Kish	Lake	MT	59911	Parent or Guardian
83.	J.	Blood	Lake	MT	59865	Parent or Guardian
84.	S.	Doll	Lake	MT	59865	Teacher
85.	A.	Miller	Lake	MT	59864	Parent or Guardian
86.	P.	Smith	Lake	MT	59910	Parent or Guardian
87.	W.	Willard	Lake County	MT	59860	Parent or Guardian
88.	L.	Michel	Lake County	MT	59914	Parent or Guardian
89.	S.	Hughes	Lake County	MT	59910	Community Member
90.	H.	Cutburth	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Parent or Guardian

91.	M.	Torgerson	Lewis and Clark	MT	59601	Parent or Guardian
92.	A.	Moniz	Lewis and Clark	MT	59601	Parent or Guardian
93.	K.	McLees	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Teacher
94.	N.	Mcgill	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Parent or Guardian
95.	L.	Smith	Lewis and Clark	MT	59635	Parent or Guardian
96.	K.	Howarth	Lewis and Clark	MT	59635	Parent or Guardian
97.	L.	Schuma	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Parent or Guardian
98.	M.	Pitts	Lewis and Clark	MT	59635	Community Member
99.	D.	Koon	Lewis and Clark	MT	59601	Parent or Guardian
100.	R.	Hieb	Lewis and Clark	MT	59620	Parent or Guardian
101.	J.	Randolph	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Parent or Guardian
102.	H.	Carlson	Lewis and Clark	MT	59635	Teacher
103.	A.	Richter	Lewis and Clark	MT	59602	Parent or Guardian
104.	J.	Vetter	Lincoln	MT	59923	Parent or Guardian
105.	L.	Haines	Lincoln	MT	59923	Parent or Guardian
106.	K.	Pillans	Lincoln	MT	59935	Parent or Guardian
107.	J.	Sitton	Madison	MT	59754	Parent or Guardian
108.	K.	Watson	Madison	MT	59729	Parent or Guardian
109.	P.	Bell-Thomson	Madison	MT	59720	Parent or Guardian
110.	M.	Reeve	Madison	MT	59740	Parent or Guardian
111.	A.	Valle	Meager	MT	59053	Parent or Guardian
112.	N.	Davis	Mineral	MT	59866	Community Member
113.	M.	Morris	Missoula	MT	59801	Parent or Guardian
114.	J.	Stagman	Missoula	MT	59531	Parent or Guardian
115.	D.	Kapor	Missoula	MT	59802	Parent or Guardian
116.	C.	Zier	Missoula	MT	59808	Parent or Guardian
117.	L.	Eggers	Missoula	MT	59802	Parent or Guardian
118.	J.	Harding	Missoula	MT	59802	Parent or Guardian
119.	A.	Cowen	Missoula	MT	59802	Parent or Guardian
120.	C.	Mallozzi	Missoula	MT	59808	Parent or Guardian
121.	L.	Hastings	Missoula	MT	59803	Parent or Guardian

122.	L.	Harvey	Missoula	MT	59808	Parent or Guardian
123.	J.	Lamb	Musselshell	MT	59072	Community Member
124.	J.	Roessner	Musselshell	MT	59072	Parent or Guardian
125.	T.	Easterbrooks	Park	MT	59047	Parent or Guardian
126.	A.	Behr	Park	MT	59047	Parent or Guardian
127.	C.	Kinamon	Pondera	MT	59425	Parent or Guardian
128.	A.	Rodriguez	Ravalli	MT	59870	Parent or Guardian
129.	J.	Heaney	Ravalli	MT	59701	Parent or Guardian
130.	N.	Feather	Ravalli	MT	59829	Parent or Guardian
131.	T.	Munly	Ravalli	MT	59828	Parent or Guardian
132.	P.	Short	Ravalli	MT	59870	Parent or Guardian
133.	J.	Kemry	Ravalli	MT	59875	Parent or Guardian
134.	S.	Patrick	Ravalli	MT	59870	Parent or Guardian
135.	A.	Weidow	Ravalli	MT	59840	Parent or Guardian
136.	A.	Esterby	Richland	MT	59270	Parent or Guardian
137.	S.	Campbell	Roosevelt	MT	59201	Parent or Guardian
138.	V.	White	Roosevelt	MT	59201	Parent or Guardian
139.	L.	Brown	Roosevelt	MT	59255	Parent or Guardian
140.	D.	Youngman	Roosevelt	MT	59201	Parent or Guardian
141.	A.	Weinberger	Roosevelt	MT	59201	Parent or Guardian
142.	J.	Renz	Roosevelt	MT	59255	Parent or Guardian
143.	R.	Felter	Rosebud	MT	59043	Parent or Guardian
144.	S.	McIntire	Sanders	MT	59853	Parent or Guardian
145.	K.	Mosher	Sanders	MT	59873	Parent or Guardian
146.	S.	Swatman	Sanders	MT	59873	Parent or Guardian
147.	D.	Cole	Sanders	MT	59831	Parent or Guardian
148.	A.	Ballard	Sanders	MT	59859	Parent or Guardian
149.	C.	Trafford	Silver Bow	MT	59701	Parent or Guardian
150.	K.	Koukoua	Silver Bow	MT	59701	Teacher
151.	J.	Rodriguez	Silver Bow	MT	59701	Parent or Guardian
152.	K.	Jones	Stillwater	MT	59019	Parent or Guardian

153.	C.	Bake	Teton	MT	59436	Teacher
154.	C.	McCurdy	Toole	MT	59474	Parent or Guardian
155.	W.	Vallejo	Valley	MT	59231	Student
156.	E.	Bethea	Valley	MT	59230	Community Member
157.	E.	Louison	Wheatland	MT	59036	Parent or Guardian
158.	A.	Fulton	Wibaux	MT	59353	Parent or Guardian
159.	A.	Ferguson	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
160.	J.	Rudolph	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
161.	C.	Viger	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
162.	E.	Brown	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
163.	D.	Shrinarine	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
164.	J.	Sarsfield	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
165.	M.	Limberhand	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
166.	A.	Bailey	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
167.	R.	Meech	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
168.	C.	LaFranier	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
169.	C.	Orth	Yellowstone	MT	59044	Parent or Guardian
170.	L.	Zent	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Teacher
171.	T.	Line	Yellowstone	MT	59079	Parent or Guardian
172.	A.	Hunter- Patterson	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
173.	M.	Rambo	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
174.	M.	Jawort	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
175.	G.	Hlavaty	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
176.	A.	DeLong	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
177.	S.	Burns	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
178.	P.	Raggl	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
179.	M.	Voss	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
180.	E.	Anderson	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Community Member
181.	L.	Balon	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
182.	M.	Grimes	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian

183.	S.	Rexford	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
184.	R.	Herzog	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
185.	S.	Fox	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
186.	H.	Couch	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
187.	C.	Green	Yellowstone	MT	59101	Parent or Guardian
188.	H.	Brown	Yellowstone	MT	59106	Parent or Guardian
189.	E.	McCulloch	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Community Member
190.	K.	Bryant	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
191.	J.	Meyer	Yellowstone	MT	59106	Parent or Guardian
192.	H.	Powers	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
193.	J.	Hopper	Yellowstone	MT	59103	Parent or Guardian
194.	N.	Casino	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
195.	D.	Akerley	Yellowstone	MT	59427	Parent or Guardian
196.	C.	Erickson	Yellowstone	MT	59102	Parent or Guardian
197.	J.	Riedesel	Yellowstone	MT	59044	Parent or Guardian
198.	A.	Prega	Yellowstone	MT	59106	Parent or Guardian
199.	K.	Rawden	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
200.	C.	Sanford	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian
201.	B.	Somers	Yellowstone	MT	59105	Parent or Guardian



January 3, 2024

Chairman Tharp and Members of the Montana Board of Public Education,

I would like to commend and support the state of Montana with its efforts to expand options for school choice. Upon hearing about the Board of Public Education's process for reviewing charter school applications, I would like to provide additional information on virtual education in Idaho, and specifically the application submitted by Park City Schools for Montana Connections Academy.

The Idaho Public Charter School Commission (IPCSC) has long recognized the unique population that virtual schools serve in the education system. The first virtual charter school in Idaho opened in 2002, and there are currently eight virtual or blended charter schools serving the students of Idaho. Inspire Connections Academy opened in the 2005-2006 school year. Since that time, the school has been in good standing with the IPCSC. Their charter has been continuously renewed, including a renewal last Fall that will continue until 2028. Their academic performance metrics have shown that they compare favorably to students in Idaho on a statewide level in English/Language Arts, Math and Science, with their performance often exceeding the statewide proficiency numbers in English/Language Arts.

Idaho's total student population for the beginning of the 2023-24 school year was approximately 313,000. Today Inspire Connections Academy serves over 1,300 Idaho students. Inspire serves students from every county, with the exception of Camas and Clark, Idaho's two least populated counties. A comparison of Inspire's student population against the counties where their students reside shows that Inspire Connections Academy does not disproportionately draw from rural counties. Rather, their student population percentage by county tracks closely to that of the overall population of Idaho.

From the perspective of the IPCSC, the benefits of charter schools partnering with an education service provider (ESP) are many, but specifically they provide schools with financial support and stability, office support services, and expertise in implementing charter school law and policy. In the case of Inspire Connections Academy, their ESP, Connections Academy by Pearson, has served its board and students in the state of Idaho in a manner that support program growth, student achievement, and alternative options for their student demographics. Additionally, the parents of

Inspire Connections Academy students report that they are highly satisfied with their program, their curriculum, their teachers.

Based on our nearly 20-year experience working with the Inspire Connections Academy Board, and our observations of their board governance, student academic data, and survey data, a virtual charter school in Montana supported by Connections Academy would serve a wide range of student demographics, locations, and learning styles and provide them with a positive learning experience.

Please contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jacob Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "S".

Jacob Smith
Director
Idaho Public Charter School Commission



Scio School District 95-C

38875 N.W. First Avenue
Scio, Oregon 97374

"Youth In Pursuit of Excellence"

1/3/2024

To: Chairman Tharp and Members of the Montana Board of Public Education,

I am writing to you in support of the application for Montana Connections Academy. Scio School District, a small rural school district in Northwestern Oregon, has been an authorizer of a virtual charter for many years. We chose to become an authorizer of statewide virtual charter schools because we wanted to find a way to foster innovation in Oregon while also providing a benefit to the students of our district. We were the first district in Oregon to sponsor a virtual charter and are so proud of the difference that we have made in the lives of Oregon children. As Superintendent I expressed our interest in, only sponsoring only the best online charter school in the state and that was their desire as well. From the Board of Willamette Connections Academy to the support staff I have been impressed with their desire to give students the best experience they possibly could.

We learned very quickly that our state system served the majority but there were students that needed something else. We became a resource for small districts that did not have the capacity for medically fragile students, students with parents that had to be in different parts of the state for long periods of time and students that needed to have a more flexible schedule because of their pursuits of music and athletics.

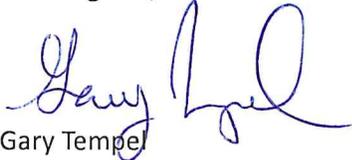
Scio School District has sponsored one of the two Connections Academy schools in Oregon since 2005 and is the current authorizer of Willamette Connections Academy. Of the many things that we have learned in the time that we have been an authorizer, one key is that partnering with a high-quality provider cannot be understated. In that regard, I cannot overstate how positive our relationship with Connections Academy by Pearson has been. Of the many ESP's that serve virtual schools, we firmly believe that they are the best partner and provide a high-quality option for parents and students. While Connections Academy by Pearson serves both Oregon Connections Academy and Willamette Connections Academy, they are ultimately Oregon schools that meet Oregon's standards and serves the best interests of Oregon's students. The school consists of Oregon based teachers, trained in online pedagogy, and ensure that Oregon students are served regardless of where they live in the state. Over the years, we have been pleased by the communication, the academic success, and the overall partnership.

During COVID our students had to go from Brick-and-Mortar schools to online education. Even with the extensive background that I had in online education from working with our partners, we were not able to even come close to the job they were doing educating their students.

I would be happy to talk with you more on how online education works for us and our state.

Thank you for your consideration and focus on options for students!

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gary Tempel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" and the last name "Tempel" clearly distinguishable.

Gary Tempel

Retired Scio Superintendent

Currently Director of Charter School for Scio School District

Cc: Dan Grabowska, Superintendent Park City Schools



Frontier Institute
PO Box 5104
Helena, MT 59604
406.924.9763
frontierinstitute.org

January 18th 2023
RE: Agenda Items #4 and #33

Dear Board Members,

Public charter school programs in other states are successful when authorizers hold charter schools to a higher standard than traditional public schools.¹ Public Charter Schools make a promise to the public that their program will deliver better results, with less funding, in return for flexibility to innovate with business models, staffing, and programming. When a charter school fails to meet financial, enrollment, or performance goals, their charter is revoked or nonrenewed. This dynamic ensures increased accountability, which in turn raises the quality of education provided.

We support enabling additional education options like public charter schools as an alternative to traditional public schools in Montana precisely because doing so adds more accountability to our public education system and demands higher quality performance.

In choosing to approve an application for a public charter school, your board recognizes the promise of an applicant to deliver higher quality performance than the status quo in Montana public schools. As the Board considers agenda Items #4 and #33, we ask this board to commit to ensuring any applicants that are approved see this promise through.

We remind this board that upon approving an application, Montana's Public Charter School Act requires a charter contract to be executed within 45 days that *"clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance expectations and measures by which the public charter school will be judged."*² At a minimum, this performance framework includes annual performance targets for key indicators such as academic proficiency and achievement, enrollment, attendance, postsecondary readiness, and financial performance.³ Per the Montana Public Charter School Act, if a public charter school has *"failed to meet or make sufficient progress toward the performance expectations"* their charter contract can and should be revoked or nonrenewed.⁴

At present, we are deeply concerned at the lack of detail available in most of the public charter school applications ranked in the highest tier of consideration by this board. If any applications are approved, we urge the board to at a minimum adopt a transparent standard practice of requiring all charter contracts to **establish a baseline** to measure increased performance. The adoption of standard practices such as this should have been completed before considering applications, as the law states *"In reviewing and evaluating charter proposals, the board shall employ procedures, practices, and criteria consistent*

¹ CREDO (Stanford University), As a Matter of Fact: The National Charter School Study III 2023.

² § 20-6-806, MCA

³ § 20-6-809, MCA

⁴ § 20-6-810, MCA



Frontier Institute
PO Box 5104
Helena, MT 59604
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frontierinstitute.org

with nationally recognized best practices, principles, and standards” for the authorization of Public Charter Schools.⁵

As of yet, there is ***no evidence*** of the Board having consulted or contracted with a nationally recognized membership organization or contractor to guide these best practices as the law demands. Nor, is there evidence of the Board adopting rules or policies to guide the performance framework before considering applications.

Nationally recognized best practices will ensure Public Charter Schools approved by this Board are held accountable for their promise to provide higher quality education to Montana students.

Lastly, the law also states that in deciding to approve charter proposals, the Board shall *“only approve charters whose promise of improved educational outcomes outweighs potential increased costs to the state and local taxpayers.”*⁶ Many of the Public Charter School applications are filed from districts where taxpayers denied levies and are very concerned about their property taxes. If the board fails to adopt nationally recognized standards for Public Charter Schools it approves, it would be an extreme disservice to our students and local taxpayers.

Promises made by public charter schools should be promises kept. Montanans are counting on you to get this right.

In Liberty,

Kendall Cotton
President & CEO

⁵ § 20-6-805, MCA

⁶ § 20-6-805(6)(e), MCA

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

February 28, 2024
Zoom

Wednesday, February 28, 2024
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 02:53

Chair Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation, and welcomed guests.

Board members present: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Ms. Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Dr. Ron Slinger; Ms. Jane Hamman; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan. Staff present: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Julie Balsam, Accounting Technician. Guest: Ms. Nancy Hall, Office of Budget and Program Planning.

Chair Tharp welcomed new member Lisa Schmidt to the Board and stated a more formal welcome would be done at the March 18, 2024 meeting.

ADOPT AGENDA – 05:33

Board member Slinger moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ MSDB LIAISON – Renee Rasmussen (Item 1)

Item 1 MSDB REPORT – 05:55 Renee Rasmussen

Board member Rasmussen explained the purpose for the trip pertaining to the out-of-state-travel request.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Out-of-State-Travel Request for the MSDB as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Slinger.

Chair Tharp noted the trip is of no cost to the school.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ CHARTER COMMITTEE – Jane Hamman (Item 2)

Item 2 ACTION ON PUBLIC CHARTER CONTRACTS – 07:35 Jane Hamman

Charter Committee Chair Hamman reviewed the statute that created public charter schools and the action taken by the Board at the January 2024 meeting approving nineteen public charter schools. Per statute the Board must approve the contracts to authorize opening the public charter schools effective July 1, 2024. Chair Hamman discussed the Board's work with SchoolWorks, who created the contract template, and commended Executive Director Flynn for her diligent work finalizing the contracts. Ms. Flynn discussed the collaboration with SchoolWorks and thanked local school districts for their work and quick turnaround to complete the project. Ms. Flynn reviewed next steps which include sending completed

contracts to each school, developing a timeline for submission of reports, working with school business officials to create forms, and completing the performance framework.

Chair Tharp discussed the legal obligation the Board has to enforce the contracts.

Board member Rasmussen noted the number of reports required and suggested creating a one page document listing each report and a timeline showing when each report is due. Ms. Flynn stated that is something she plans to create.

Board member Quinlan expressed her thanks for the work that went into the charter contracting process and how it is an exciting opportunity for school districts.

Board member Rasmussen questioned who would be reviewing reports and volunteered to be part of the group visiting each school in the first year. Ms. Flynn noted that she would appreciate Board members being part of the school visits and discussed expectations for the reporting process.

Chair Tharp noted that school visits would not be done by the full Board but by small groups, duos, or a single Board member, and that Ms. Flynn will be working with the Montana School Business Officials group to create report forms and streamline the reporting process.

Board member Rasmussen commented on the section in the contract pertaining to closing a public charter school and how funding would be handled.

Board member Hamman moved to approve the Public Charter School contracts as listed in the agenda packet on page #10. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 28:02

No public comment.

Chair Tharp reviewed the upcoming Board meeting on March 18, 2024 in room 152 at the Montana State Capitol.

ADJOURN

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 AM.

CONSENT AGENDA

FINANCIALS

**51010 Board of Public Education
ORG Budget Summary by OBPP Prog, Subclass, Fund**

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2024 through 09 (Mar)/2024

This report compares OBPP Budgets (OBPP Bud) to Actual Expenses (Actuals)

OBPP Program	Subclass	Fund	Org	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	A Accrual Amt	ORG Bud Balance
01 K-12 EDUCATION					591,923.00	265,364.67	0.00	326,558.33
	235F3	FY2023 CARRYFORWARD			9,721.00	0.00	0.00	9,721.00
		(blank)			9,721.00	0.00	0.00	9,721.00
			1	BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	9,721.00	0.00	0.00	9,721.00
				{62000 Operating Expenses	9,721.00	0.00	0.00	9,721.00
			ALL	All Organization Rollup	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{(blank)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	235H1	ADMINISTRATION			537,708.00	253,946.76	0.00	283,761.24
		(blank)			537,708.00	253,946.76	0.00	283,761.24
			1	BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	537,708.00	252,946.76	0.00	284,761.24
				{61000 Personal Services	264,488.00	168,264.08	0.00	96,223.92
				{62000 Operating Expenses	273,220.00	84,682.68	0.00	188,537.32
			20	Community Choice Schools	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	(1,000.00)
				{62000 Operating Expenses	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	(1,000.00)
			30	Advisory Council Program 01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{61000 Personal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			50	Research Program 01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{62000 Operating Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{68000 Transfers-out	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			ALL	All Organization Rollup	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{(blank)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	235H2	AUDIT (RST/BIEN)			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
		(blank)			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			1	BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{62000 Operating Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			ALL	All Organization Rollup	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{(blank)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	235H4	SITSD RST			44,480.00	11,417.91	0.00	33,062.09
		(blank)			44,480.00	11,417.91	0.00	33,062.09
			1	BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	44,480.00	11,417.91	0.00	33,062.09
				{62000 Operating Expenses	44,480.00	11,417.91	0.00	33,062.09
			ALL	All Organization Rollup	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{(blank)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	235Z1	WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION			14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00
		(blank)			14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00
			1	BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00
				{61000 Personal Services	14.00	0.00	0.00	14.00
			30	Advisory Council Program 01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{61000 Personal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
			ALL	All Organization Rollup	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
				{(blank)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grand Total					591,923.00	265,364.67	0.00	326,558.33

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-6)**

ITEM 1

CHAIRPERSON’S REPORT

- **Welcome New Board Member**
- **Board Committee Assignments**

Dr. Tim Tharp



Board of Public Education

Board of Public Education Committee Assignments

February 2024

STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Tim Tharp, Chair
Susie Hedalen, Vice Chair
McCall Flynn, Executive Director

Licensure Committee

Susie Hedalen, Chair
Ron Slinger, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Education Interim Committee

Jane Hamman, Chair
Lisa Schmidt, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

MSDB Committee

Renee Rasmussen, Chair
Tim Tharp, Member

Legislative Committee

Renee Rasmussen, Chair
Jane Hamman, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Ad Hoc Charter School Committee

*Jane Hamman, Chair
Madalyn Quinlan, Member
Tim Tharp, Member*

Accreditation Committee

Madalyn Quinlan, Chair
Ron Slinger, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Assessment Committee

Renee Rasmussen, Chair
Lisa Schmidt, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Ad Hoc Legal Complaint Committee

*Madalyn Quinlan, Chair
Susie Hedalen, Member
Tim Tharp, Member*

ADVISORY GROUP LIAISONS

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education – Susie Hedalen
Montana Early Childhood Advisory Council – McCall Flynn
Montana School Safety Advisory Committee – McCall Flynn

OTHER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Education and Workforce Data Governing Board – Susie Hedalen
Montana Digital Academy Governing Board – McCall Flynn

ITEM 2

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

McCall Flynn

ITEM 3

STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

State Superintendent Elsie Arntzen

- **Assessment Update**
 - **MAST Update**
 - **Federal Update**
- **Accreditation Report**
- **Annual School Food Services Report**
- **Content Standards Revision Update**
 - **Data Modernization Update**



Superintendent Arntzen's Report to the Board of Public Education as of March 1, 2024

Superintendent Arntzen's Message:



“Our children are the future of our great state. These student leadership workshops will create strong partnerships between our Montana students, parents, teachers, and school leaders to improve student well-being and teaching and learning.” – Superintendent Elsie Arntzen

The schedule for the workshops is:

- Hardin High School on January 31 – February 1, 2024
- Three Forks High School on February 5-6, 2024
- Billings Public Schools on February 12-14 and 21-22, 2024



- Fort Benton Public Schools on February 26-27, 2024
- Wolf Point High School on March 14-15, 2024

My office awarded Karen Grosz and Canvass Creek Team Building a contract to facilitate these workshops.

Karen Grosz started her career with a daycare business, so she knows how hard it can be, and she misses the hugs and sticky fingers that make it an amazing career. She believes that your voice matters, that you can and should be a leader, and that you can change your life, and the world, with a whisper. Karen is a five-time author, both an award-winning and TEDx Speaker, founder of Canvas Creek Team Building, and recipient of the Montana Governor’s Award for volunteerism. Her mission is to inspire others to be their best, and to try the next thing.

Please watch [this great video](#) from the Three Forks workshop.

Assessment Update:



Please see the March 2024 Assessment Update attached at the end of this report.

Cedar Rose, Assessment Director, is standing by for questions.

Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) Program Update:



Remember the **next testing** windows are:

- Testing Window #4: March 11 - April 5, 2024 (performance tasks)
- Testing Window #5: April 15 - May 10, 2024 *MAST Form B Testing Window*

The first Montana MAST Through-Year Assessment Summit was held on February 27, 2024. Hosted virtually, this event is tailored to Montana school personnel involved in grades 3-8 assessment in preparation for MAST statewide implementation in the 2024-2025 school year. Over 250 Montanans participated in the summit.

The event covered:

- Discussions with keynote speakers from Education First, the Center for Assessment, and New Meridian.
- Topics range from the foundations of through-year assessments to Montana's MAST implementation.
- Participation-based sessions, role-alike discussions, and a panel on family engagement.
- Insights into educator engagement, score report development, accommodations, and instructional utility.

For more information, contact [Tressa Graveley](#), Assessment Specialist.

Please see the MAST Update attached at the end of this report.

Krystal Smith, Education Innovation Manager, is standing by for questions.

Accreditation Process Update:



Please see the Accreditation Update attached at the end of this report.

Crystal Andrews, Accreditation and Licensure Director, is standing by for questions.

School Nutrition Programs Annual Report



Please see the Annual School Food Services Report attached at the end of this report.

Alie Wolf, Business Analyst, is standing by for questions.

State Content Standards Revision Update



Please see the March 2024 K-12 Content Standards Revisions Update attached at the end of this report.

Marie Judisch, Teaching and Learning Senior Manager, is standing by for questions.

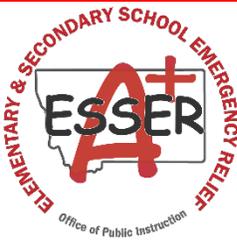
Data Modernization Update



Please see the Data Modernization Project Status and Overview Update at the end of this report.

Ashley Perez, Senior Data Operations Manager, is standing by for questions.

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER) Update:



The ESSER team holds open office hours 6 days a week via Zoom, phone, email, text, and in person to offer support to school districts.

Remember ESSER III deadline is on September 30, 2024.

The state-wide ESSER allocation through February 22, 2024, is:

Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER)
February 2024 Status Report

State Level ESSER Activity

<u>Program</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>Percentage Expended</u>
ESSER I	\$ 41,295,230	\$ 41,295,230	\$ -	100%
ESSER II	\$ 170,099,465	\$ 170,099,465	\$ -	100%
ESSER III	\$ 382,019,236	\$ 213,617,031	\$ 168,402,205	56%
Totals	\$ 593,413,931	\$ 425,011,726	\$ 168,402,205	72%

For more information on ESSER please click [here](#) or contact Wendi Fawns at wendi.fawns@mt.gov.

2024-25 Teacher Residency Program



Year Three

The [recruitment form](#) for the 2024-2025 [Teacher Residency Program](#) is now open. Any districts interested in hosting a teacher resident for the 2024-25 school year should complete the form.

Open House

On Thursday, February 29th at 5:30pm OPI held an open house event for students, teachers, and districts to learn more about the Montana Teacher Residency Program. The Residency Program is a year-long alternative to student teaching that Montana college students seeking an education degree can join to gain more experience in the classroom while being paid to student teach!

We are excited to connect with anyone who would like to learn about what it is and how they can participate. The open house is for college students in an education program, EPPs and their education-related faculty, and districts that are interested in learning more. During the open house the Residency Program will be highlighted as well as its benefits for the different parties involved and how to become connected with the Residency Program Coordinator.

Learning Lab

The next Residency Learning Lab will be March 7-8, 2024. This meeting will take place virtually and include a Job Fair on March 8. Learn more about professionalism, resume building, and interviewing skills/techniques.

For more information, please contact [Krystal Smith](#), Operations Manager.

Early Literacy Targeted Interventions Program



Superintendent Arntzen is actively implementing HB 352, Early Literacy Targeted Intervention Program, 20-7-1803, MCA. This program enhances early literacy learning in Montana schools by offering optional classroom-based, home-based, and jumpstart programs for eligible students. The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is working with the Board of Public Education's Early Literacy Advisory Council to ensure successful program implementation, aiming to improve reading proficiency by the end of third grade. The Early Literacy Collaborative provides guidance to engage stakeholders and offers clear directives for local districts.

The evaluation methodology, a guidance document, and a District Implementation Interest Survey are available on the OPI's Early Literacy Targeted Interventions page.

Please contact Christy Mock-Stutz, Assistant Superintendent, for more information.

OPI Telework and Building Update



Superintendent Arntzen has consolidated the Office of Public Instruction's (OPI) office buildings from two to one. In November 2022, the Superintendent announced that she was vacating the second of four previously rented office spaces. This was made possible through the implementation of an agency-wide telework policy. Currently, about 70% of the agency employees are teleworking.

Between September 21 and October 20, 2023, the OPI conducted a Fall Work Survey of both on-site and teleworking employees. The results showed:

- 93% of respondents agree that their work location allows them to serve our students and schools efficiently
- 92% of respondents' productivity has increased by teleworking
- 92% of respondents feel informed and engaged with their unit's activities and co-workers while teleworking
- 80% of respondents' stress levels decreased by choosing to telework
- 47% of respondents choose to telework for a better work/life balance

Montana Youth Challenge Academy Class 50



I had the honor of attending the installation ceremony for the cadets in the 50th class of the Montana Youth Challenge Academy on February 28, 2024.



Montana

Office of Public Instruction

Assessment

March 2024 Update

Prepared by Cedar Rose, Assessment Director
Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning

	ACCESS for ELLs	Multi-State Alternate	Alternate Science	Science	Smarter Balanced	ACT with Writing	MAST
Required Subjects	English Language Proficiency (ELP)	Math and ELA	Science	Science	Math and ELA	Math, ELA, and Science	Math and ELA
	English Learners	SwSCDs	SwSCDs	General	General	General	General
	Grades K-12	Grades 3-8, 11	Grades 5, 8, 11	Grades 5, 8	Grades 3-8	Grade 11	Grades 3-8
	12 weeks	7 weeks	7 weeks	12 weeks	12 weeks	6 weeks Tues/Wed/Thurs	5 windows 3-4 weeks each
	December 4 - February 23	March 11 - April 26	March 11 - April 26	March 4 - May 24	March 4 - May 24	Window 1: March 26 - April 5	October 23 - November 10 November 23 - December 15
SY2023-24 Test Windows						Window 2: April 9-19	January 29 - February 16
						Window 3: April 23-May 3	March 11 - March 29 April 15 - May 3

Upcoming Assessment Monthly Webinars

- April 10: *Gearing-Up for MAST*
- May 8: *Meaningful Score Reports*
- June 12: *Wrapping Up and Looking Forward*

March 18, 2024



MONTANA ALIGNED TO STANDARDS THROUGH-YEAR

MAST SUMMIT

Review & Next Steps

OVERVIEW

MAST Summit Schedule

Keynote

Year 2 Pilot

Form B

New to MAST

Teachers

STC/IT

SPED

Leadership

Panel & Family Engagement

HIGHLIGHTS

"We are excited that the State is trying to do something different for assessment."

"I feel much more prepared for Form B and now understand the vision behind why we're changing our assessment model."

ENGAGEMENT

VISION

WHY

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

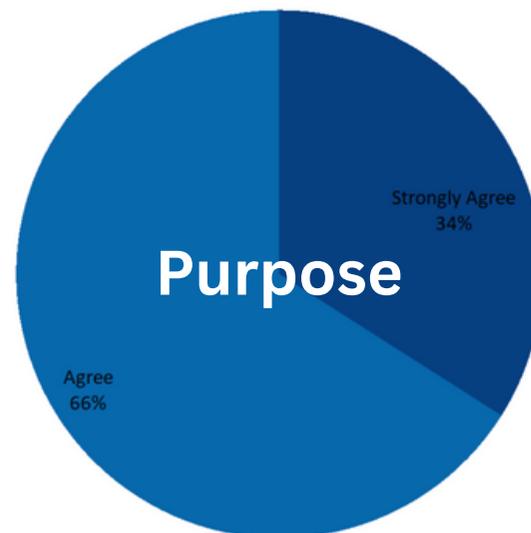
"Thank you for listening to the feedback from through-year participants and making adjustments accordingly."

"Having sessions developed specifically for my role provided a relevant and comfortable learning environment."



Outcomes & Survey

- understand why Montana moved to a through-year model for statewide accountability
- understand the structure and purpose of a through-year assessment model, including how to align math testlets to local scope and sequence
- obtain the technical knowledge to administer MAST regardless of the current level of participation
- acquire strategies to engage all district stakeholders including teachers, families, leadership, and students
- plan for ongoing MAST engagement and training opportunities



DISTRICT SUPPORT & IMPLEMENTATION



LINKS FOR BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

- **MAST Summit Keynote Recording**
- **MAST Summit Panel Recording**
- **MAST Summit Survey Results**
- **Map of MAST Communications
(coming soon)**

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

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Helena, MT 59620-2501
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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

MAST UPDATE: March 2024

I am pleased to provide you with an update on the recently concluded MAST (Montana Aligned to Standards Through-year) Assessment Summit, which proved to be a resounding success. The summit, held Tuesday, February 27, 2024, brought together key stakeholders from across the state to delve into the critical aspects of Montana's transition to a through-year model for statewide accountability.

Outcomes of the MAST Summit:

1. Understanding the Transition to a Through-Year Model:

Participants gained valuable insights into the reasons behind Montana's move to a through-year model for statewide accountability. The discussions helped elucidate the benefits and nuances of this approach, fostering a deeper understanding among attendees.

2. Comprehending the Structure and Purpose of Through-Year Assessment:

The summit communicated the structure and purpose of the through-year assessment model. Attendees received comprehensive information on how to align math testlets with local scope and sequence, supporting a seamless integration within individual district curricula.

3. Technical Knowledge for MAST Administration:

A key focus of the summit was to empower participants with the technical knowledge required for administering MAST, irrespective of their current level of participation. Workshops and training sessions began to equip attendees with the necessary skills to navigate the assessment system effectively.

4. Strategies for Engaging District Stakeholders:

The summit underscored the significance of engaging all district stakeholders, including teachers, families, leadership, and students. Attendees gained practical strategies to foster collaboration and active participation from these key groups, creating a holistic and inclusive approach to MAST implementation.

Summit Overview:

The MAST Summit began with a keynote session, featuring distinguished keynote speakers from Education First, the Center for Assessment, and New Meridian. Their expertise provided valuable perspectives and insights, enriching the overall discussions and contributing to the depth of understanding surrounding through-year assessment while also sharing federal requirements and the support for Montana's movement to a through-year model. Recognizing the diverse needs of attendees, the summit offered personalized breakout sessions based on their current level of MAST participation and role in school districts. These tailored sessions ensured that each participant received targeted information and guidance relevant to their specific context.

The feedback we've received from the field regarding the summit has been exceptionally positive. Attendees have expressed appreciation for the valuable information, engaging discussions, and the high caliber of keynote speakers. Many have highlighted the summit as a pivotal moment in understanding and preparing for the implementation of the through-year assessment model.

Next Steps:

In response to the questions and discussions provoked by the summit, we have been diligently following up with attendees. This ongoing engagement is crucial in addressing queries, providing additional resources, and ensuring that the momentum generated during the summit translates into actionable steps for all participants. The OPI MAST team is preparing for a Road Show in April to visit face-to-face with stakeholders across the state and support their transition to this innovative assessment.

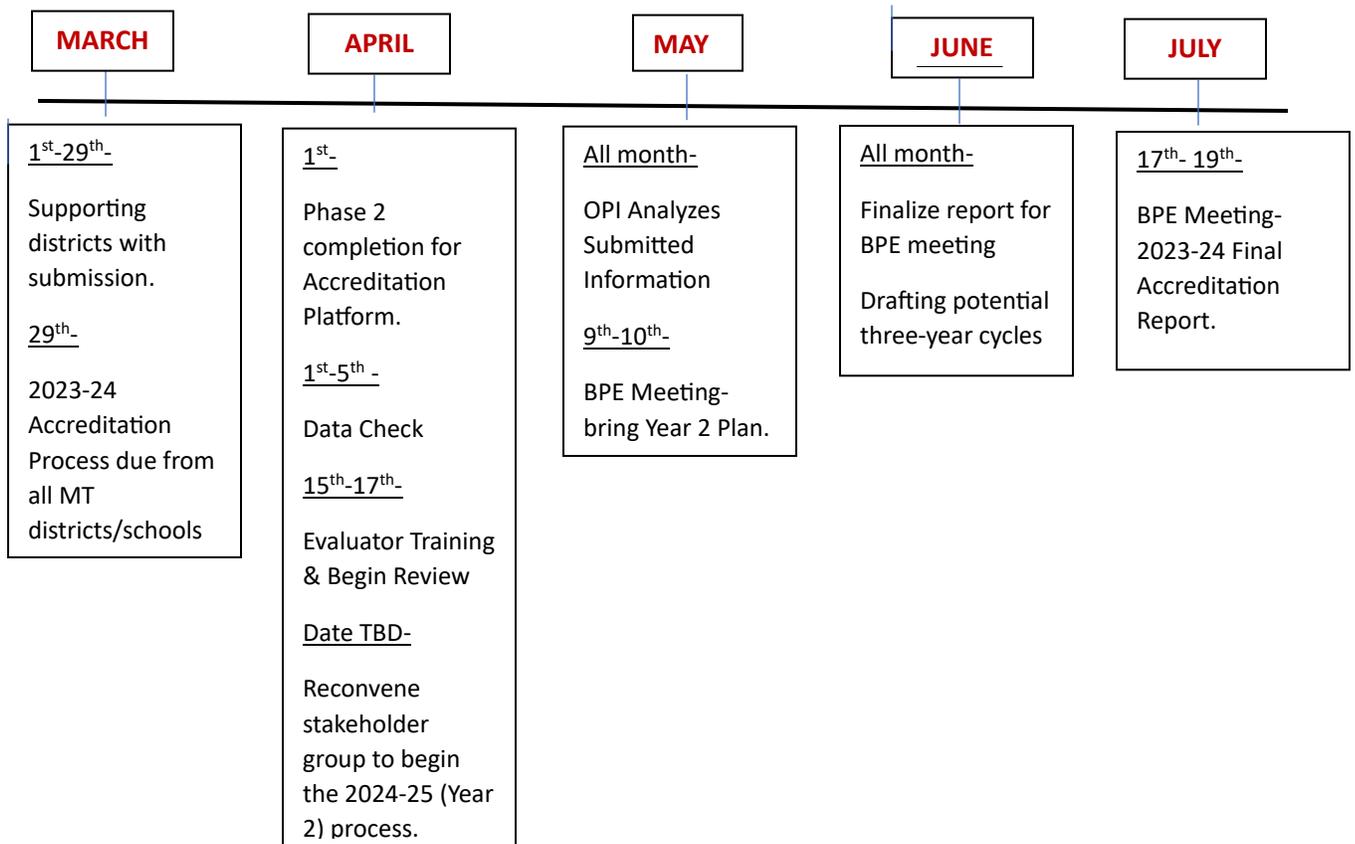
As we move forward, the positive feedback from the field and the ongoing engagement with attendees further underscore the success and impact of the MAST Summit. The commitment and enthusiasm demonstrated by most participants are indicative of a shared dedication to enhancing statewide accountability and educational outcomes through assessment.

We look forward to updating you on the progress of MAST implementation and further collaborative efforts in the coming months. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to advancing education in Montana.



Accreditation Process 2023-24 Board of Public Education- March Update

Timeline



District/School Checklist:

1. Complete a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) with stakeholders.
2. Analyze CNA Results/Find Root Causes.
3. Create SMART Goals (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Bound).
4. Create Action Plans based on SMART Goals.
5. Gather Current Student Performance Information (ELA/Math- ES&MS, CCR- HS)
6. Indian Education for All programming district-wide
7. Family and Community Engagement district plan
8. Start Graduate Profile (start the process and show progress)
9. Assurance Standards

District/School Work Sessions:

Feb 20-22: Virtual Work Sessions

Feb 26: Billings Work Session

Feb 28: Missoula Work Session

Feb 29: Havre Work Session

Mar 5-7: Virtual Work Sessions

Financial Literacy:

From OPI Website:

Financial Literacy in Montana

The Office of Public Instruction has developed this webpage to support local school districts concerning financial literacy instruction for K-12 schools.

- [Graduation Requirements - ARM 10.55.904](#)
 - *Goes into effect for the 2026 graduating class*
- [Financial Literacy - Legislation - HB535](#)
- Financial Literacy Standards Crosswalk
 - [Economics-Financial Literacy throughout the Montana Content Standards](#)
- [Financial Literacy Course Codes](#)
 - Montana financial literacy and economics courses are a subset of NCES (National Center for Education Statistics) standard codes. Along with the course code, a content description for each course is provided where financial literacy or economics is embedded within the course:
- [Financial Literacy Curricular Resources](#)
- Professional Development Optional Opportunities -*More coming soon!*
 - [Next Gen Personal Finance Certification](#)
- Frequently Asked Questions - *Coming soon!*
- [Economics and Financial Literacy Steering Committee](#)
- [Presentation on Research Behind Financial Education in Montana Schools](#)
- [Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement Press Release - January 2023](#)

Indian Education for All (IEFA) Accreditation Components:

District Level

J. Indian Education For All

Provide evidence of how your district's education program recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritages of American Indians.

Written response

 Upload File

 Upload File (Optional)

 Upload File (Optional)

 Upload File (Optional)

 Upload File (Optional)

Max file size 10MB.

K. Indian Education For All

Required for All Schools

As the authorized representative,

, on behalf of the above district(s).

I am hereby providing assurances that our District is committed to the successful implementation of the Montana Indian Education for All (IEFA) as outlined in the [OPI IEFA Framework](#). We recognize the significance of incorporating American Indian content, perspectives, and cultural understanding into our curriculum and school community and are committed to compliance with [MCA 20-1-501](#) AND 20-1-503 as amended by [HB 338 in the 2023 Montana Legislature](#).

I assure that:

- IEFA instruction provided to certified personnel and students meets the requirements of MCA 20-1-501.
- IEFA instruction was developed cooperatively with the advice and assistance of Montana Tribes as pursuant to Title 20, Chapter 1, part 5 (HB 338).

Electronic Signature Required

Sign Here

School Level

K. Indian Education For All

Required for All Schools

In the, school year,

Select your school... ▼

has allocated our IEFA funds for the following IEFA supports:

To find more information about your districts IEFA funding and expenditure report from the previous year: [Click here](#).

The Montana Legislature provides IEFA funding to school districts and requires school districts to report IEFA expenditures to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

MCA 20-9-329 (4) (a) states, "A public school district that receives an Indian education for all payment may not divert the funds to any purpose other than curriculum development of an American Indian studies program, providing curriculum and materials to students for the program, and providing training to teachers about the program's curriculum and materials." Districts can determine their annual IEFA amount through the OPI School Finance Website under State School Payments. In addition, OPI's IEFA unit has resources and guidance for districts to implement IEFA

(Check all that apply)

Curriculum Materials

- Purchasing quality instructional materials that are tribally specific, culturally authentic, and historically accurate. Curriculum materials on OPI's website meet this requirement. Refer to the OPI's [Evaluating American Indian Materials and Resources for the Classroom](#) guide when purchasing materials.
- Expenses associated with consultation and/or training with a qualified IEFA specialist, or a qualified IEFA initiative, event, or field trip.
- Staff time devoted to development of inquiry-based depth-of-study cooperatively with the advice and assistance of Montana tribes.

Providing training to teachers

- Expenses associated with staff professional development opportunities that will enhance their knowledge of the [Essential Understandings](#), include IEFA into their teaching, and building background IEFA knowledge.

Curriculum development and instruction of American Indian studies program

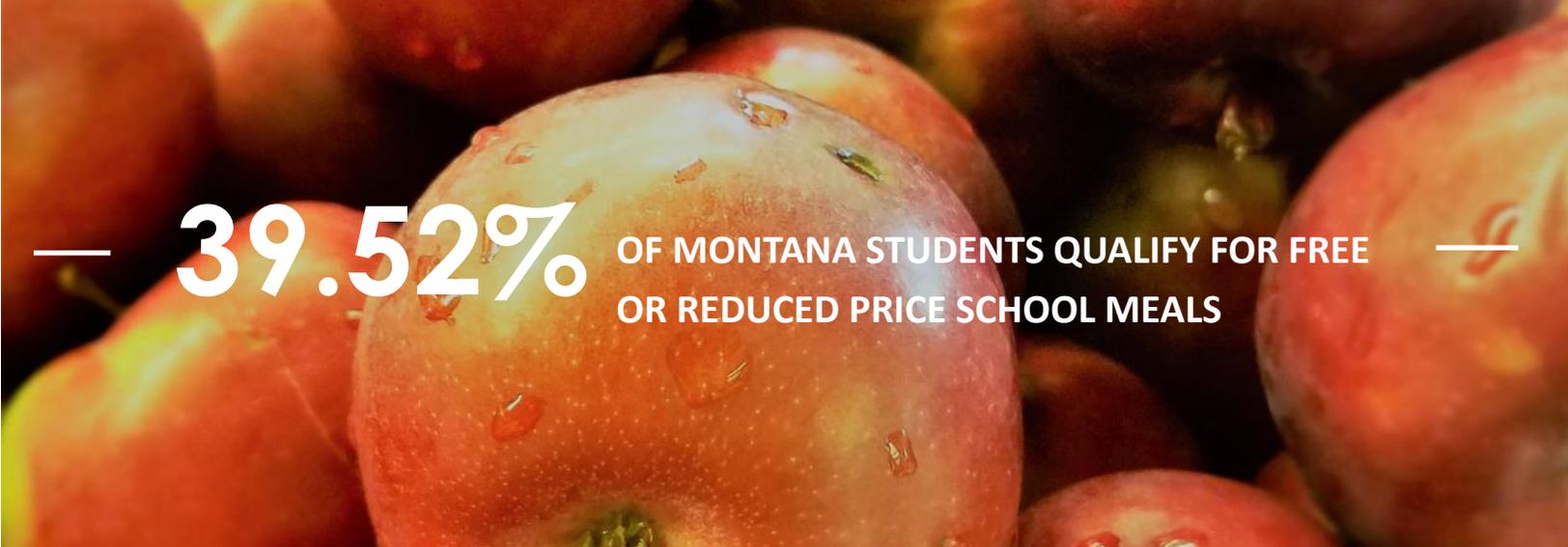
- Providing resources that bring tribal presence to the school environment, i.e., tribal flags, art supplies to paint tribal seals, tribally produced artwork or mural, posters, etc.
- Compensation for a guest lecture, lesson, or learning activity provided by a tribal education specialist, knowledge keeper, elder, or other tribal member.
- Compensation for staff time specifically devoted to school or district IEFA coordination and planning efforts. i.e., the amount of FTE dedicated to an IEFA coordinator or instructor.

MONTANA
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS
School Year 2022-2023



Photo courtesy of Power Public Schools

Fueling Montana Students



— **39.52%** —

OF MONTANA STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE
OR REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS



19.5 MILLION
MEALS IN 2023



94%

of schools that offer lunch
also **OFFER BREAKFAST**



167

SCHOOLS OFFER FREE MEALS
TO ALL STUDENTS THROUGH
THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY
PROVISION (CEP)



\$57,997,439

REVENUE TO MONTANA
SCHOOLS

In school year 2022-2023, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) School Nutrition Programs (SNP) administered U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)
- Special Milk Program (SMP)
- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)
- USDA Food Distribution Program (USDA Foods)
- DOD Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (DOD Fresh)
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)
- Montana Team Nutrition Program, including Farm to School

School Nutrition Programs reimburses schools, distributes USDA Foods for meals served to children, teaches workshops for school personnel, ensures that schools implement federal regulations, and provides nutrition education for students.

VISION

Local school nutrition program professionals are empowered as community leaders to provide equitable access to healthy food and environments that support the success of Montana’s children.

MISSION

OPI’s School Nutrition Programs collaborate with the child nutrition community to provide high-quality training, support, and resources to ensure program integrity and access to nourishing meals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- We develop and maintain strong partnerships to collaborate on realistic, community driven solutions.
- We value self-efficacy as a desired outcome of all training and technical assistance activities.
- We empower and recognize the vital role of Montana's child nutrition professionals in ensuring children’s health and academic success.
- We are committed to ensuring all communities have the resources they need to succeed.
- We are committed to creating a strong and inclusive culture of school wellness to support academic success and wellbeing.
- We are invested in promoting local and sustainable food sources, procurement, and practices.
- We are dedicated to providing exceptional customer service to schools, sponsors, and community partners.
- We are responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances.
- We value continuous learning and invest in ongoing professional development.
- We use data and evidence-based practices in decision making and operations management.
- We operate transparently and effectively as stewards of public resources.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Montana Office of Public Instruction
School Nutrition Programs
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501
406-444-2501

Montana Team Nutrition Program
Montana State University
PO Box 173370
Bozeman, MT 59717-3360
406-994-5641

STAFF

School Nutrition Programs

DIRECTOR	CHRISTINE EMERSON, MS, RD
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR	ERIN TURNER, DTR, SNS
SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM SPECIALIST	BRITTA BINDE, BS
PROGRAM SPECIALIST/FFVP MANAGER — MISSOULA	KELLI JOHNSON, RD
PROGRAM SPECIALIST — BILLINGS	ROCHELLE DAVIES, RD
PROGRAM SPECIALIST — HELENA	LAUREN DONITHAN, RD
PROGRAM SPECIALIST — BUTTE	STEPHANIE MOODRY, RD
PROGRAM SPECIALIST — MISSOULA	EMILY MADSEN, RD
PROGRAM SPECIALIST — MISSOULA	RACHEL ARIAZ, BS
FOOD DISTRIBUTION MANAGER	ERIN BENSON
FARM TO SCHOOL SPECIALIST	AMBER LYMAN, BS
DATA ANALYST	ALIE WOLF
DATA PROCESSOR	ASHLEY BODLE
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT	TARREN ERICKSON
PROJECT MANAGER	BITSEY DRAUR
SOFTWARE DEVELOPER	KELLEY LARSEN

CONTACT Phone: 406.444.2501 Email: cemerson@mt.gov

Montana Team Nutrition

TEAM NUTRITION CO-DIRECTOR	MOLLY STENBERG, RDN, LN
TEAM NUTRITION CO-DIRECTOR / FARM TO SCHOOL COORDINATOR	JAY STAGG
PROGRAM LEAD	HAYLEY SCOTT, MPH
ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR	KYLIE CASSIDY, BA

CONTACT Phone: 406.994.5641 Email: stenberg@montana.edu

— Training —

REGIONAL OPI AND TEAM NUTRITION STAFF

OPI School Nutrition Programs and Team Nutrition have staff located around the state to better serve Montana's rural areas.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

80 hours of continuing education provided by OPI School Nutrition Programs

- MT School Nutrition Association Conference (MTSNA)
- SNP Fall Workshops (in-person and online)
- Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)
- Webinars

59 hours of continuing education provided by MT Team Nutrition Program

- Montana School Meals Certificate
- Webinars

REGIONAL OPI AND TEAM NUTRITION STAFF

OPI School Nutrition Programs and Team Nutrition have staff located around the state to better serve Montana's rural areas.

MT TEAM NUTRITION

Montana School Meals Certificate training provided 40 hours of comprehensive professional development training in-person and virtually. Topics included meal pattern components, weekly dietary specifications, and strategies to achieve compliance with USDA rules through training on food preparation techniques, recipe standardization and crediting, school food forecasting, and procurement. Substantial mini-grant funds (ranging from \$5000 to \$7500) to support staff bonuses, staff or substitute pay, travel costs, food for student taste tests, equipment, supplies, and marketing materials



— Grants —

\$6,464,345 Total Grant Funds to Montana Schools

EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS

\$190,945 (\$60,153 Consolidated Appropriations Act and \$130,792 additional ARPA)

- **27 capital equipment grants totaling \$190,945 were awarded to local schools by the OPI**

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022, distributed \$30 million to state agencies to competitively award Equipment Assistance Grants to eligible school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Montana was awarded \$60,153. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to recognize the challenges facing schools nationwide of higher food prices and supply chain disruptions. To further mitigate these challenges and support schools, the USDA provided an additional \$50 million in Equipment Assistance Grant funding provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Montana was awarded \$130,792. The additional funding will support school food authorities (SFAs) in providing healthy and appealing meals by meeting vital food service equipment needs.

SUPPLY CHAIN ASSISTANCE GRANTS

\$5,170,419

- **Round 2 SCA Funds \$3,141,432 Distributed to 249 Districts December 2022**
- **Round 3 SCA Funds \$2,028,987 Distributed to 249 Districts March 2023**

To assist school districts experiencing supply chain disruptions, Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) Charter Act [15 U.S.C. 714] funds were distributed to State agencies to distribute to eligible School Food Authorities (SFAs) for the purchase of unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food product. SCA funds will help SFAs deal with supply chain challenges, increased food prices, and help strengthen local food supply chains.

LOCAL FOOD FOR SCHOOLS COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

November 2022—July 2024

\$727,981 Funds Distributed to 41 Districts

Section 5(c) of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 USC 714c(c)) Funds provided for the purpose of purchasing domestic, locally grown foods from local producers, small businesses, and socially disadvantaged farmers/producers for distribution to schools.



— Grants —

FARM TO SCHOOL STATE FORMULA GRANT

September 2022—September 2026

\$682,693

Section 1001 of the American Rescue Plan Act (Public Law 117-2)

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to State agencies administering the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency (supply chain resiliency). The funds support State agency efforts to coordinate and provide technical assistance to build and increase the capacity of participating institutions to procure and use local foods in program meals as well as provide agricultural education opportunities for participating children.

FY 2023 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION GRANT (nTIG)

September 2023—September 2025

\$373,134

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103)

Funds provided to State agencies for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems used to operate and manage all Child Nutrition (CN) Programs.

FY 2021 TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION GRANT

September 2021—September 2024

\$1,890,997

Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94) and Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116-260)

State funding for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems use to operate and manage all Child Nutrition (CN) Programs.

FY 2022 Team Nutrition Training Grant

\$925,585

Public Law 111–296, which amended Section 19 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966

As authorized under Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1755(a)(3), FNS provides Team Nutrition Training Grants to support training and technical assistance for School Nutrition Professionals, nutrition education for students and their caregivers, and activities to build a healthy school nutrition environment.

MT School Meals Certificate (MSMC) Training Program Subgrants

50 subgrants totaling \$375,000 awarded to local schools

MSMC Training Program Track A \$172,500 distributed to 23 districts March 2023

MSMC Training Program Track B \$202,500 distributed to 27 districts May 2023

Federal Meal Reimbursement Rates

The 2022-2023 School Year reimbursement rates included an additional 40 cents per school lunch and 15 cents per school breakfast meal provided under the Keep Kids Fed Act of 2022 (Pub. L. 117-158). The reimbursement rates shown in the chart below include the additional adjustment to the base rate for School Year 2022-2023. Overall the base rate either remained the same or increased 7.40% from the previous year.

**SY 2022-2023 School Nutrition Programs Reimbursement Rates
Effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023**

School Breakfast Program	Non-severe Need		Severe Need	
Paid	0.50		0.50	
Reduced Price	1.96		2.37	
Free	2.26		2.67	
National School Lunch Program	Less than 60%	Less than 60% + 8 cents	60% or more	60% or more
Paid	0.77	0.85	0.79	0.87
Reduced Price	3.93	4.01	3.95	4.03
Free	4.33	4.41	4.35	4.43
Afterschool Snack Program				
Paid	0.09			
Reduced Price	0.54			
Free	1.08			
Special Milk Program	All Milk	Paid Milk	Free Milk	
Pricing Programs without Free Option	0.2700	N/A	N/A	
Pricing Programs with Free Option	N/A	0.2700	Average cost per ½ pint of milk	
Non-pricing Programs	0.2700	N/A	N/A	

The 2023 Summer Food Service Program reimbursement rates shown in the chart below include an overall adjustment to the base rate which increased 8.5% from the previous year.

Summer 2023 Reimbursement Rates		
Meal Type	Rural or Self-Prep	Urban or Vended
Breakfast	2.8250	2.7725
Lunch or Dinner	4.9500	4.8700
Snack	1.1675	1.1400

SY 2022-23 PROGRAMS

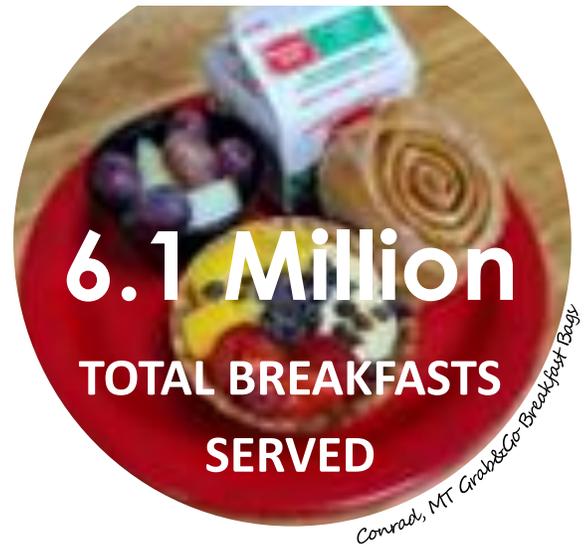
	MEALS/SNACKS	REIMBURSEMENT / ENTITLEMENT
School Breakfast Program	6,128,427	\$11,912,582
National School Lunch Program	12,100,295	\$33,620,527
Afterschool Snack Program	282,217	\$266,249
Special Milk Program	36,782	\$10,250
Summer Food Service Program	951,303	\$3,784,674
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	—	\$3,199,911
USDA Foods Entitlement & DOD Fresh	—	\$5,203,247
Total Grant Funds to MT Districts	—	\$6,464,345
Totals	19,499,024	64,461,784



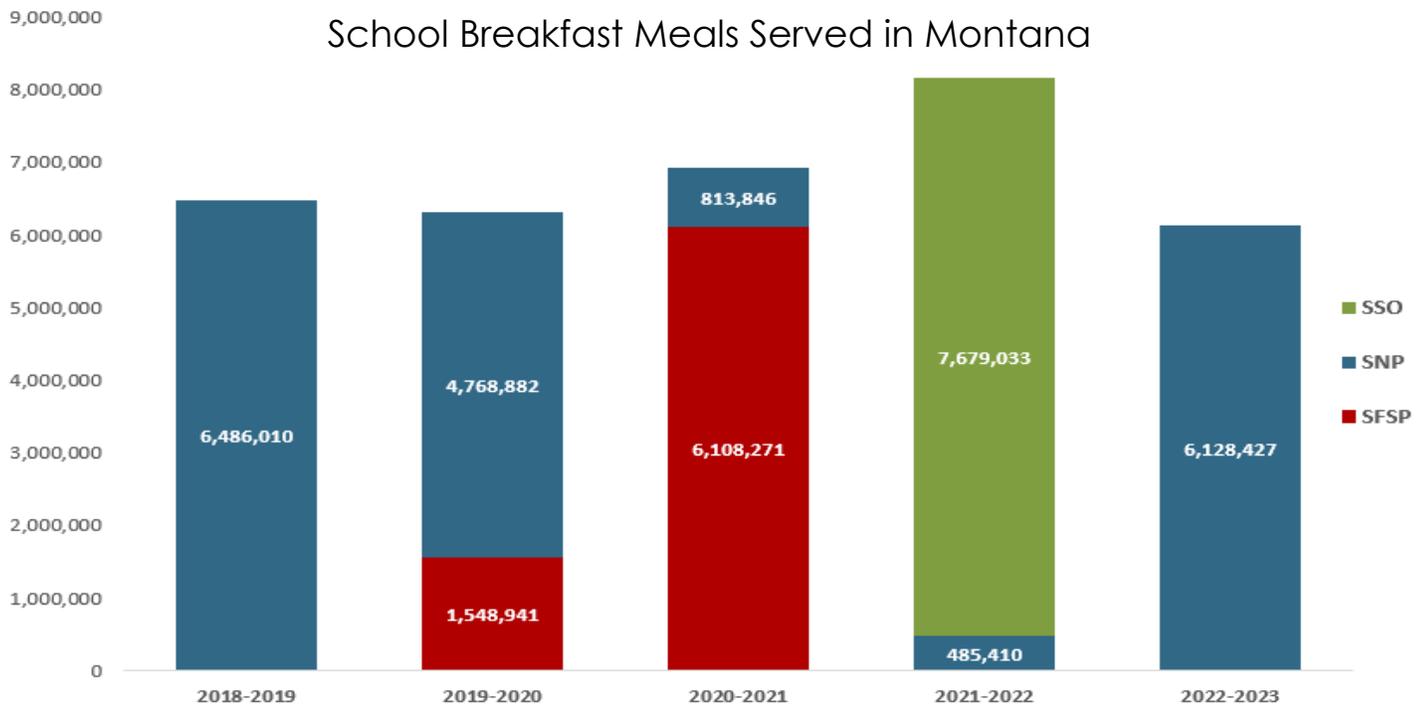
SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides low-cost or free breakfasts to children to help start the school day right with a healthy breakfast.

The School Breakfast Program provides reimbursement to states to operate nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential childcare institutions. The Food and Nutrition Service administers the SBP at the federal level. State education agencies administer the SBP at the state level, and local school food authorities operate the program in schools.



68%
of Breakfast Meals
are Served to Free
& Reduced Eligible
Students



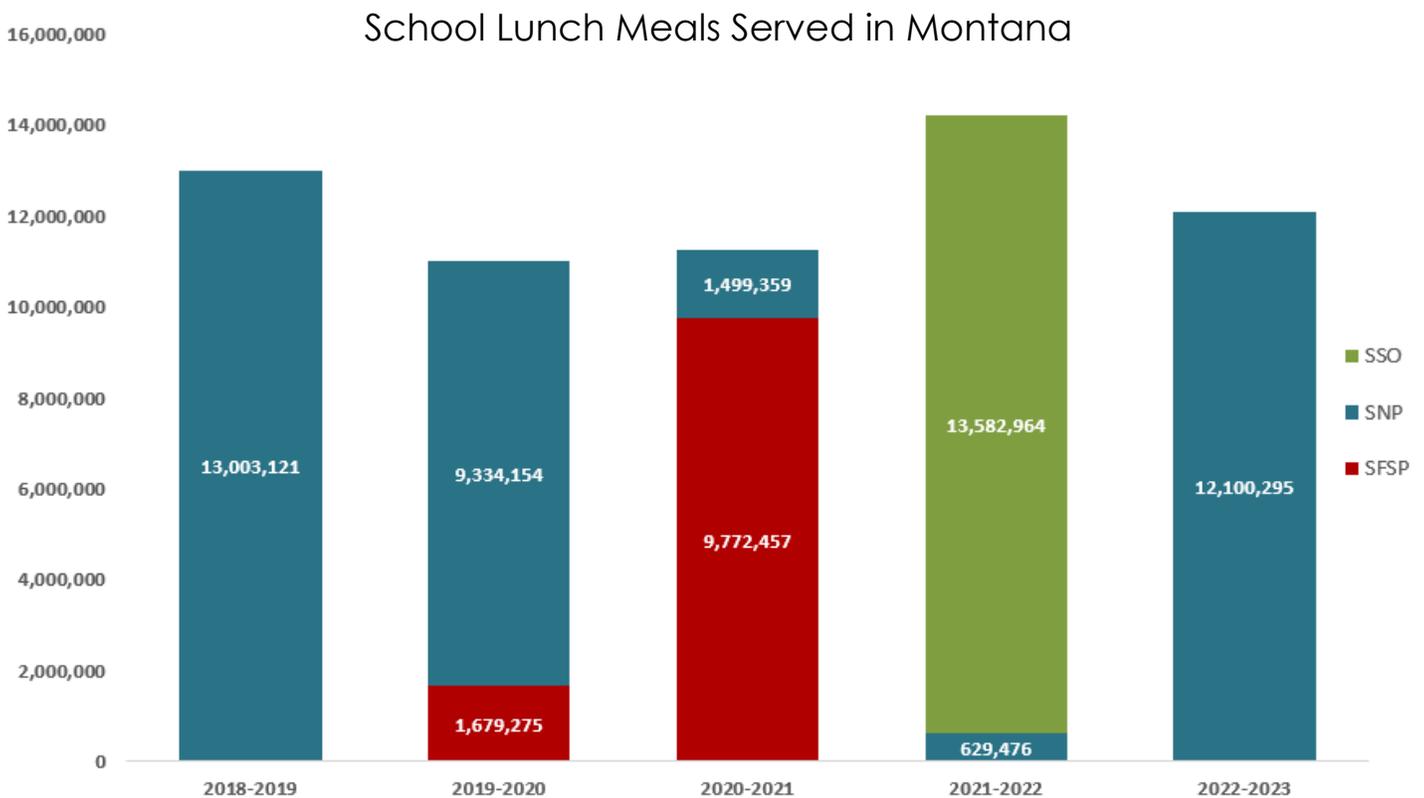
35,040

STUDENTS EAT BREAKFAST AT SCHOOL EACH DAY

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946.

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Program at the Federal level. At the State level, the NSLP is administered by State agencies, which operate the Program through agreements with school food authorities.



69,420

STUDENTS EAT LUNCH AT SCHOOL EACH DAY

FRESH FRUIT & VEGETABLE PROGRAM

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) provides funds to elementary schools for fresh fruit and vegetable snacks during the school day.

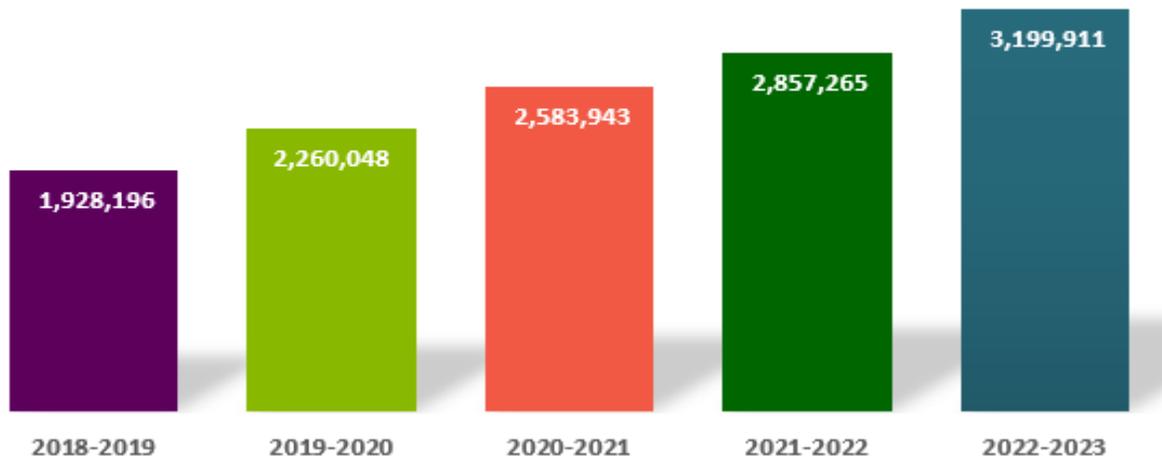


\$80.35
ALLOTMENT PER STUDENT

167

Schools Participated in FFVP

FFVP Allocation by School Year



31,295

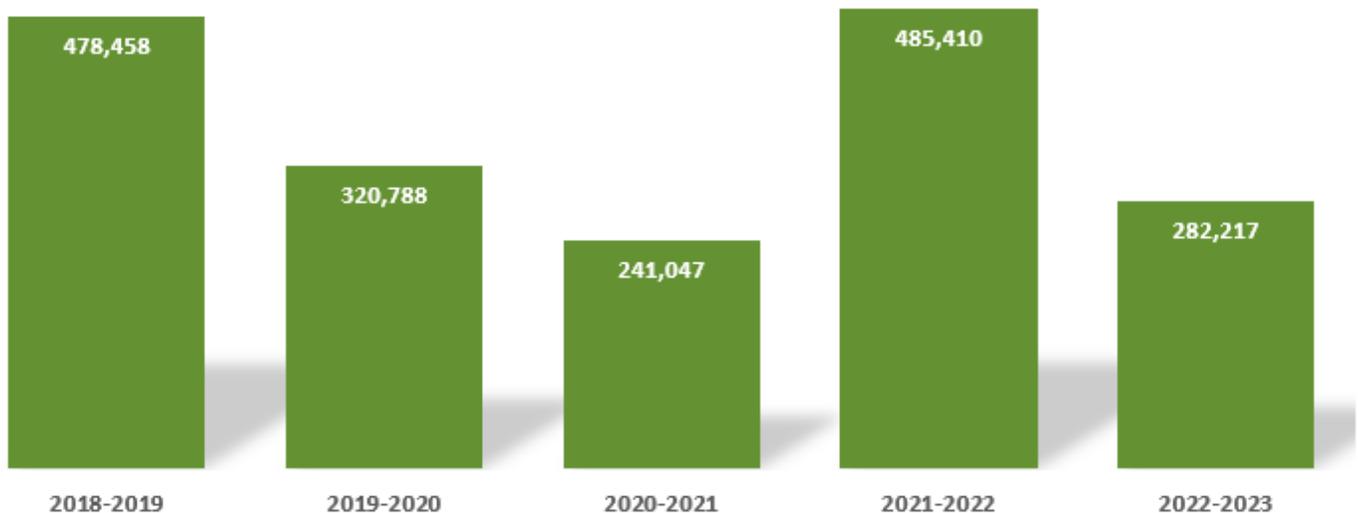
STUDENTS HAD ACCESS TO FFVP

AFTERSCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM

The Afterschool Snack Program provides snacks to students in education and enrichment activities after school.



Total Snacks Served



1,893

STUDENTS EAT A SNACK AFTER SCHOOL EACH DAY

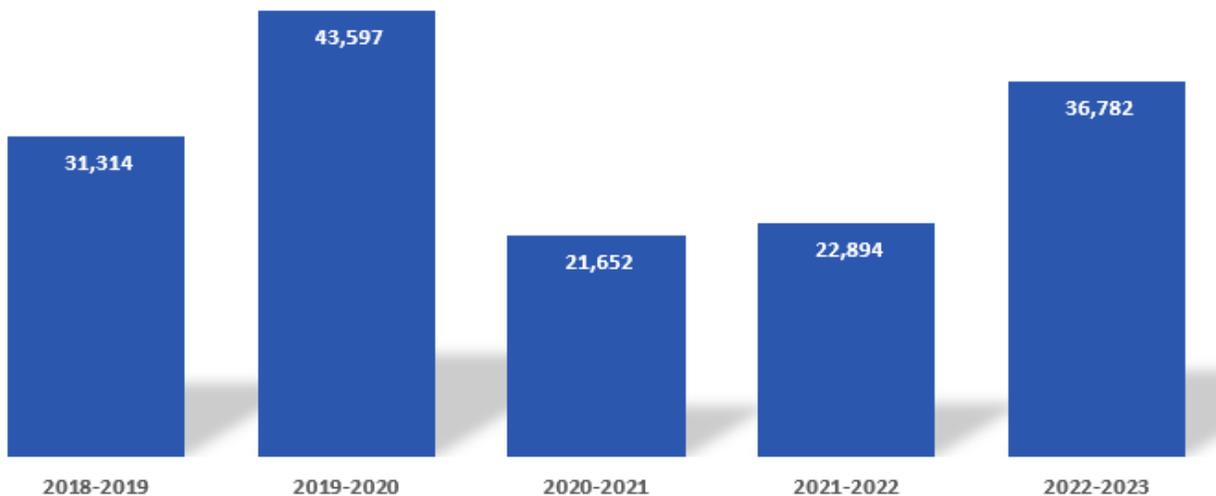
SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

The Special Milk Program provides reimbursement for milk served at schools that do not offer the National School Lunch Program or Summer Food Service Program.



The Special Milk Program operates at 11 small schools/summer camps that do NOT offer breakfast or lunch to students.

Total Pints of Milk Served



143

STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM EACH DAY

USDA FOODS and DOD FRESH

The USDA provides schools with USDA Foods and Department of Defense (DOD) Fresh Fruits and Vegetables for use in preparing school meals.

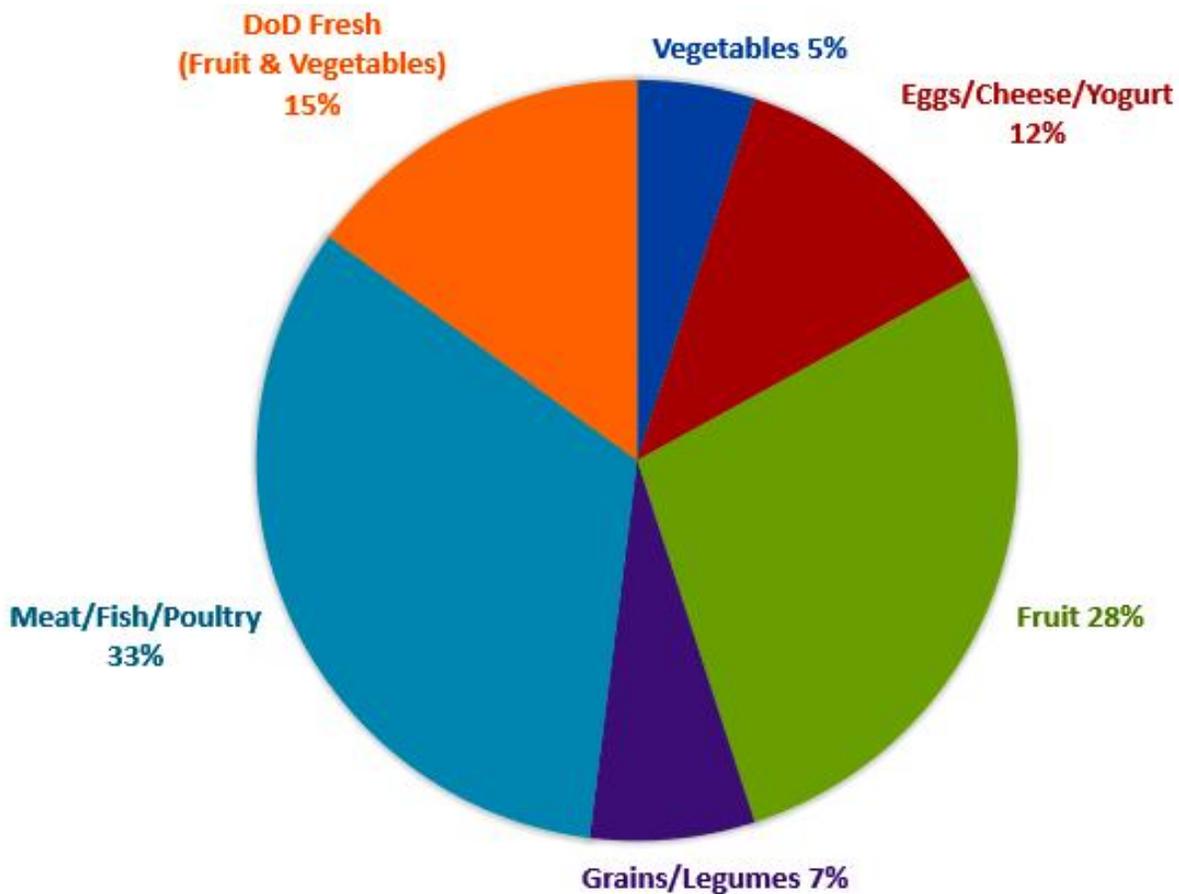
100%
of foods offered through
USDA Foods/DOD Fresh are
AMERICAN GROWN

\$5.2 MILLION
ASSISTANCE TO SCHOOLS

Veggie Cups @ Great Falls Public Schools

Did You Know....
On an average school day, USDA Foods make up between 15 and 20 percent of the total products served

Schools Received **\$784,850** in fresh produce through USDA DoD Fresh.



MONTANA MARINARA



**BUILDING COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR
HEALTHY AND LOCAL MONTANA LUNCHES**

**MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
MISSION WEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS
NORTHWEST FOOD HUB NETWORK**

WHAT IS MONTANA MARINARA?

Montana Marinara is the first in a line of locally sourced value-added products designed with schools in mind. By working together, we leverage each other's strengths, support hard-working Montana farmers, and expand access to affordable local food for schools.



MT OPI diverts USDA Foods canned diced tomatoes to Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center (MMFEC) in Ronan, MT.

MMFEC sources Montana-grown carrots, onions, squash, and safflower oil from the Western Montana Growers Cooperative and the Northwest Food Hub Network.



MMFEC processing staff combine USDA tomatoes and local veggies to create a veggie-packed, cost-conscious marinara sauce!

Montana Marinara is packaged and shipped to MT OPI in Helena, where it is staged to ship with USDA Foods deliveries.



MT OPI delivers Montana Marinara to schools all over the state, where it is served to students in all kinds of dishes! Meatball subs, tomato soups, chili, pasta, and so many other delicious creations have been made by talented food service staff with Montana Marinara.

BY THE NUMBERS

In SY 2022-2023 and SY 2023-2024:

2406

Number of Montana Marinara cases distributed to schools

181

Number of SFAs that ordered Montana Marinara

182,851

Number of Montana Marinara servings distributed

22,426

Pounds of local ingredients used

134

Average miles traveled from MT source farm to processing facility

\$24,538

Dollar value of local ingredients

"I believe combining both local products and USDA Commodities is a very exciting opportunity for our state to potentially offer more locally sourced and processed items for school food service programs...The marinara is a really great product!"

-Ed Christensen, Food Services Supervisor, Missoula County Public Schools

Project funding provided by USDA Patrick Leahy Farm to School Grant Program, Share Our Strength No Kid Hungry Campaign, and Montana Office of Public Instruction. For more information: anne.hamey@missionwestcdp.org

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Summer Food Service Program provides free meals to all kids, age 18 and under, during the summer months.



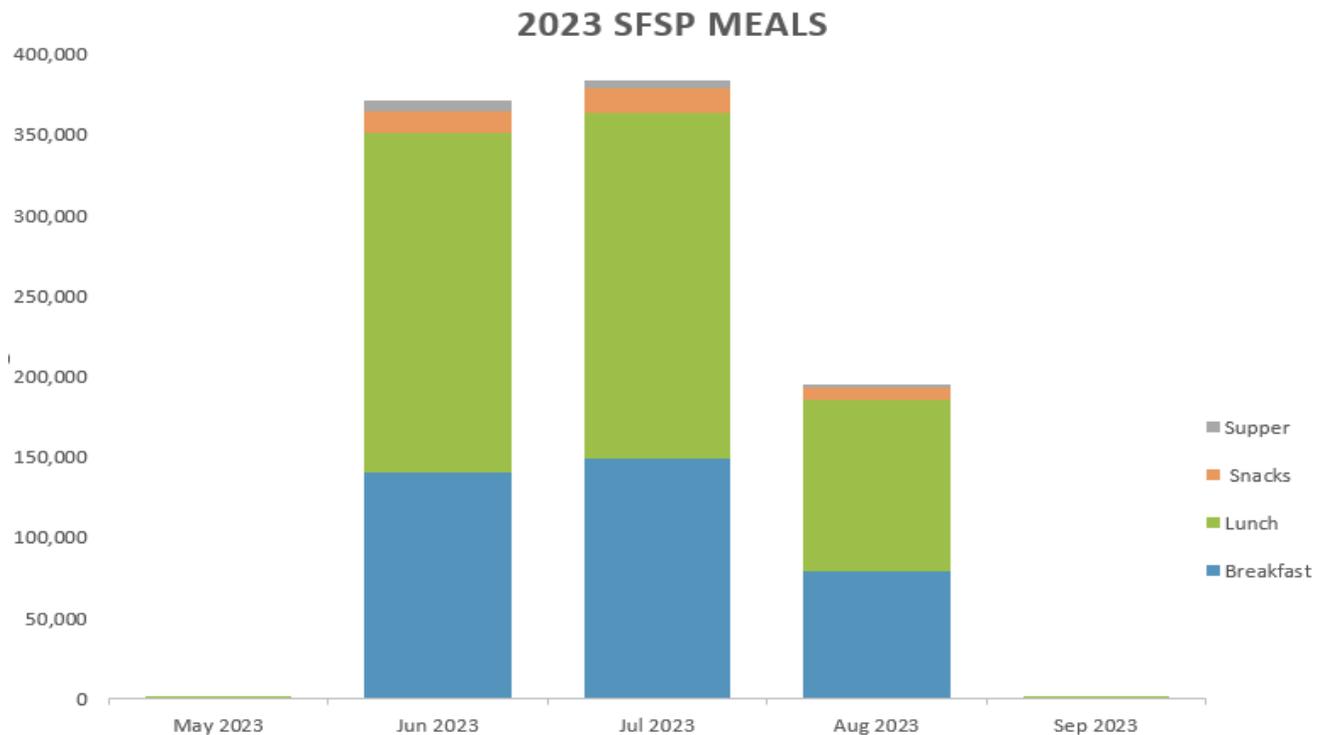
27% Increase
from Prior Year

24,139
Meals Served Daily

2023 NEW RURAL NON-CONGREGATE MEAL SERVICE

105 Non-Congregate Sites

461,413 Non-Congregate Meals Served (48.5% of Total Meals)



99 Sponsors at 253 Sites



Montana Team Nutrition Annual Report: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Annual Report for School Year 2022 - 2023

The 2022–2023 school year began with over half of Montana schools seeing a significant turnover in School Food Director positions and staff shortages. Team Nutrition provided essential basic training on school meals and extra support to schools which: 1) had a new School Food Service Director in the previous 3 years; 2) are in rural areas; 3) serve a 40% or higher free/reduced eligibility student enrollment; and 4) are on/near American Indian Reservations. Montana Team Nutrition (MTN), with support from the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) School Nutrition Programs and Montana State University, is proud to support school food service directors and their staff across this large state.

MONTANA TEAM NUTRITION OUTREACH OUTCOMES

59

Hours of training offered to school nutrition professionals

123

Number of school districts reached

31

Number of training opportunities offered

49%

Percent of School Food Authorities in Montana reached

Montana School Meals Certificate Program

The 2022 Team Nutrition Grant supported the development of the Montana School Meals Certificate (MSMC) Program. A total of 140 school nutrition professionals from 50 school districts enrolled in this free, easy to access, comprehensive professional development training. MTN-affiliated trainings reached 123 school districts through 10 in-person trainings, 18 webinar-based trainings and 4 online courses. MSMC schools received a \$7500 subgrant to purchase needed equipment for their school meals program. Participants built knowledge and confidence towards managing an effective program and serving fresh, nutritious, tasty meals.



Knife skills training at Sun River Valley School District

Learn More

WEB

www.montana.edu/teamnutrition

FACEBOOK

www.facebook.com/MontanaTeamNutrition

CONTACT

Molly Stenberg Program Co-Director

Jay Stagg

Program Co-Director F2S Coordinator

Haley Scott

Program Lead

Kylie Cassidy

Admin Coordinator

325 Reid Hall

PO Box 173370 Montana State University Bozeman MT 59717-3370

The Montana Team Nutrition Program works in close collaboration with the Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs and is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Team Nutrition Training Grant Program. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Supporting From-Scratch Cooking

Schools received state-wide support to enhance from-scratch cooking through targeted training topics which build scratch cooking skills (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Standardized Recipes, Forecasting and Inventory, Menu Planning, Meeting the USDA Meal Patterns, Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice, Sensational Salad Bars, Reducing Sodium and Serving More Whole Grains); identifying purchasing avenues for local foods; and referrals to Montana School Food Service peer educators who offer individualized technical assistance. Professional Chefs provided engaging hands-on knife skills trainings to schools, boosting motivation to cook from scratch.



Kate Huston, Food Service Director at Anderson School, serves lasagna made with Montana Marinara.

Montana Farm to School

Montana Team Nutrition and the Office of Public Instruction provide farm to school leadership across Montana. MTN recently hired a new Co-Director and Farm to School Coordinator, Jay Stagg. Jay facilitates the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team, sponsored by the Office of Public Instruction. Connecting schools with local food producers to make direct purchases is an ongoing priority. Montana schools, early education and childcare centers, hospitals, food banks and grocery stores can use the Montana Harvest of the Month Program to help kids eat healthy, connect with agriculture and nutrition through education, support Montana farms and food producers, augment local economies, and strengthen communities.

Better Together

We are proud to work with Child Nutrition Professionals throughout our state to improve the health of Montana students through access to healthy school meals and nutrition education. The work we do would not be possible without the willingness of Montana School Food Service staff to try new programs. We learn from them, then pass that knowledge on to others. Thank you to all the schools and groups that partner with us!

A look at the difference Team Nutrition is making (left to right): Montana food producers and School Nutrition Professionals network at the Montana Food for Montana Schools event in Hardin, Montana. A taste test of Montana Marinara, a product made in state with local ingredients, is offered at Anderson School, Bozeman, MT.



WHAT

What is farm to school?

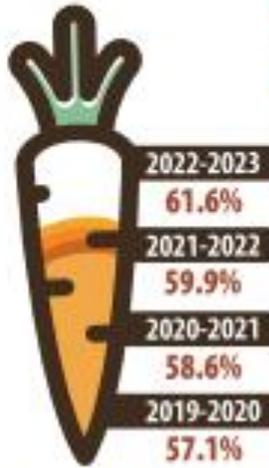
Farm to school enriches the connection communities have with fresh, healthy food and local food producers by influencing food purchasing and education practices at K-12 schools and preschools. Students gain access to healthy, local foods as well as education opportunities through such avenues as school gardening, cooking lessons, and farm field trips. Through community-driven approaches, farm to school implementation differs by location but always includes one or more of the following core elements: procurement, education, and school gardens.

WHY

Why does farm to school matter?

Farm to school not only connects kids with locally grown food and food and nutrition education, but it helps foster resilient food systems. COVID-19 has highlighted the need for farm to school to solve food supply issues and support the local economy.

Farm to School Participation Rates



OVERALL PARTICIPATION

Sites participating in at least one F2S activity

53.1%
PROCUREMENT

Serving local products in school meals

21.7%
SCHOOL GARDENS

Creating and tending school gardens

24.4%
EDUCATION

Conducting educational activities



68%

of students ate vegetables one or more times per day in the past seven days, according to the 2022 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

28,410

An estimated **12%** of Montana children faced food insecurity in 2022, meaning they may not know how they will get their next meal.

56%

of Montana students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Data is a 5-year average for most recent and available school years.



Agriculture remains the leading industry sector in Montana's economy, with a value of

\$4.0 billion

in 2021. By connecting children with agriculture and exposing them to agricultural careers, farm to school initiatives are helping to prepare the next generation of farmers.

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team

The Montana Farm to School Leadership Team works through partnerships across the state to build farm to school initiatives that help kids eat healthy, connect with agriculture and nutrition through education, support Montana farmers and food producers, foster economic vitality, and strengthen communities.

The Leadership Team consists of 15 member organizations with statewide focus and influence that are key to the success of farm to school in

Montana. The team has 7 working groups, 5 of which are open to the public. These meetings are a way for the Leadership Team to share updates, facilitate connections, gather input, and uplift local farm to school stories. To get involved, register for an upcoming meeting and/or contact the working group chair listed on the Leadership Team webpage. The Office of Public Instruction sponsors the Montana Farm to School Leadership Team. The team is facilitated by the Montana Farm to School Coordinator at Montana Team Nutrition Program.

2023 Member Organizations

- AERO
- Mission West Community Development Partners
- Montana Agriculture in the Classroom
- Montana Department of Agriculture
- Montana Department of Livestock
- Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Montana Farmers Union
- Montana No Kid Hungry
- Montana Office of Public Instruction
- Montana School Nutrition Association
- Montana Team Nutrition Program, Montana State University
- Montana State University Extension
- National Center for Appropriate Technology
- Northern Plains Resource Council
- USDA Office of Community Food Systems, Mountain Plains Region

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Montana Harvest of the Month

Each month, participating sites focus on promoting one locally grown item (e.g., lentils) by serving it in at least one meal or snack, offering taste tests, conducting educational activities, and displaying or distributing Harvest of the Month (HOM) materials.

Herbs were featured as the newest Harvest of the Month item with Potatoes coming up next! Bison was a popular topic featured in past HOM handouts. A special team was formed to create the Buffalo materials which include Native knowledge, cultural information, and languages in order to be as inclusive as possible when promoting it in our outreach to schools.



In school year 2022-2023



87 registered schools and afterschool programs

21,721 children reached at K-12 and Early Care + Education sites

31 registered early care and education sites



130 local food producers sold to sites



\$304,721 local foods purchased (not including fluid milk for K-12)



12 Trainings in 2022-2023

Training + Resources

There are many ways to learn about farm to school and access resources! Montana Farm to School hosts farm to school webinars and in-person trainings as well as an archive of previous trainings on the Montana Farm to School website.

This year, The Montana Farm to School Summit is being held in conjunction with the MT School Nutrition Association conference. This event, June 25 – 27, will include focus topics like Local Procurement, School Gardens, and F2S Education in the classroom. There will also be a focus on Local Producers at the Vendor show.



28+ Hours of events

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

@montanafarmtoschool
1,500 followers

@mtfarmtoschool
1,438 followers

Montana Harvest of the Month
2,892 views

Celebrating Farm to School Month

Montana Crunch Time is a statewide event to celebrate National Farm to School Month and 'buy local' initiatives in Montana by crunching into locally and regionally grown apples on a designated day in October.



23,933 people participated in Montana Crunch Time 2023

MAKING MONTANA MARINARA

Montana Marinara is a new product developed in partnership with Montana Office of Public Instruction, Mission West Community Development Partners, and Northwest Food Hub. It enhances USDA Foods tomatoes with local veggies and herbs to create a kid-friendly, versatile, and affordable product. Schools across Montana sampled the sauce with their students in delicious meals from meatball subs to manicotti and beyond!



Mission West Community Development Partners

GET INVOLVED + CONTACT

Website

Find resources and information at:
www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool

Contact Us

Jay Stagg, Montana Farm to School Coordinator
Montana Team Nutrition Program,
Montana State University

jay.stagg@montana.edu
(406) 994-5996

SOURCES

National School Lunch Program Annual Sponsor Agreement Form 2022-2023, Montana Office of Public Instruction

2021 Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Montana Office of Public Instruction

Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2022, Feeding America

Montana Agriculture Statistics, 2022

Montana Farm to School Leadership Team Participation 2022, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Harvest of the Month Participation 2022-2023, Montana Team Nutrition Program

Montana Farm to School Professional Development and Technical Assistance Tracker 2022-2023, Montana Team Nutrition

Montana Crunch Time Participation 2023, Montana Team Nutrition





AND JUSTICE

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Want to learn more about
School Nutrition Programs
in Montana?

VISIT:

opi.mt.gov/schoolnutrition





Montana

Office of Public Instruction

K-12 Content Standards Revisions

March 2024 Update

Prepared by Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning

Current Standards Revisions

OPI Homepage

The purpose of the content standards revision process is to ensure Montana public schools are setting high academic standards for our great state. Find important information, ways to participate in task forces or negotiated rulemaking committees, and find opportunities for public comment.

[STANDARDS REVISION INFORMATION](#)

MT Content Standards Revision

2022 - 2026

The purpose of the standards review process is to ensure that Montana public schools are setting high academic standards for all children of our great state. Our goal is to serve our Montana students and educators with the best possible standards to guide instruction and prepare our students for their lives beyond the classroom.

Here you will find a variety of resources in regard to the current standards revisions including:

- Current Standards in Revision
- Legacy Documents
- Agendas and Minutes
- Meeting Recordings
- Working Documents
- Task Force Members

[Montana Content Standards Task Force Landing Page](#)

Standards in Revision

- › English Language Arts (ELA)
- › English Language Proficiency
- › Mathematics
- › World Languages



World Languages Content Standards

- Summary Ready for Review, Pending Return of Economic Impact Survey and resulting Economic Impact Statement.
- Anticipated information Item for May's Board of Public Education Meeting
- Summary of Proposed Rules:
 - Move from Chapter 54 to Chapter 53
 - Alignment with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Standards
 - Authentic inclusion of Montana Indigenous Peoples throughout proposed standards



Mathematics Content Standards

- Rulemaking on Math Content Standards has been completed. drafted summary document of revisions can be found on the Content Standards Revision page.
- Summary of Revisions pending return of Economic Impact Survey and subsequent Economic Impact Statement.
- Anticipated Information item for the May 2024 Board of Public Education Meeting.
- Summary of Proposals
 - Update of the Mathematical Practices, including the introduction of Cultural Connections to Mathematics
 - Cleaning up language for clarity and moving examples from content standards to guidance documents
 - Condensing of content standards where possible
 - Reworking the structure of the 9-12 standards for clarity, creating Core and Core Plus Standards



English Language Arts/Literacy Content Standards

- Currently in the Research and Review Phase
 - Research is being conducted by the Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest
 - Facilitation of the Task Force is conducted by the Region 17 Comprehensive Center at Education Northwest
- By the time of this meeting the Task Force for revisions will be posted for publication. Meetings with this team including orientation, research review, IEFA and other relevant professional learning will run from April to June. In-person writing days are scheduled for July.



English Language Proficiency Standards

- This item has been passed on the BPE for their adoption phase.
- Summary of Amendments:
 - Updated language to match the WIDA English Language Development 2020 Framework
 - Maintained language for both proficiency standards and performance level descriptors



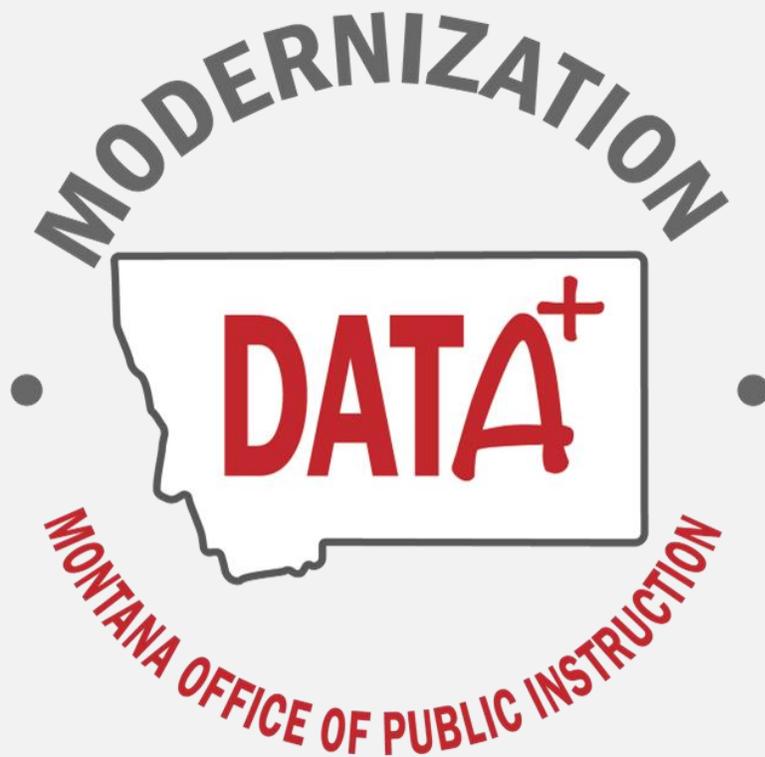
English Language Proficiency Standards

Thank you to the Content Standards Team who have worked diligently in ensuring this work includes Montana Educators' voices and is completed with a high level of professionalism.

Content Standards Revision Team

- Michelle McCarthy - Science Instructional Coordinator
- Stephanie Swigart - ELA & Literacy Instructional Coordinator
- Katrina Engeldrum - Math Instructional Coordinator
- Aimee Konzen - Professional Learning Manager
- Sheri Harlow - Administrative Specialist
- Marie Judisch - Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning

If you have any questions about ongoing Content Standards Revisions, please contact marie.judisch@mt.gov.



DATA MODERNIZATION PROJECT STATUS AND OVERVIEW

Ashley Perez, Senior Data Manager, OPI



March 2024

Putting Montana Students First **A+**

OPI DATA MODERNIZATION PROJECT OVERVIEW

HB 367 OPI Data Modernization Status and Overview Report

Activities

- Communication/engagement plan and vision deck finalized
- OPI stakeholders were given Unified Insights and Connected Intelligence demonstrations
- Connection between the OPI State Edition Infinite Campus (IC) to Connected Intelligence (data lake) has been made and data is being replicated
- Work and analysis of the custom connector for power School Student Information System is being conducted
- 6 VPNS are needed to PowerSchool Districts with on premise databases

MILESTONE 4A DELIVERABLES

- Deploy a secure Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) Connection between Infinite Campus and PowerSchool's network
- Replicate historical data into Connected Intelligence
- Collaborate to provision single sign-on (SSO)
- Provision customer admin account and read and write access
- Provision standard data governance for personal identifiable information (PII) and sensitive data
- Project management
- Up to 50 hours of technical training

PROJECT MILESTONES

Milestone #	Milestone Name	Delivery Date	Completed
1	AWS (Amazon Web Services) Data Assessment, Environment Maturity Assessment & Recommended Approach Draft Delivery	OCT 2023	✓
2	OPI Iterative Feedback	OCT 2023	✓
3	Final Delivery of AWS Assessment and Recommended Approach	OCT 2023	✓
4	Organizational Change Management	Nov-Dec 2023	✓
4a	Infinite Campus Connector to Data Lake	Feb 20, 2024	✓
4a	PowerSchool Connector to Data Lake	March 2024	
4	Connected Intelligence Deployment	JUNE 2024	
5	Unified Insights Deployment	JUNE 2024	
6	Post Deployment & Analysis	NOV 2024	
7	Formal Signoff & Acceptance of Deployment Solution by Montana	FEB 2025	
	Project Milestone Reference		



- Dashboards
 - Essentials
 - Risk Analysis
 - Student Readiness
 - Talent Analytics
 - Classroom
 - State Specific
 - Usage and Statistics
 - Custom Dashboards
- Utility Apps
- Developer Tools

- District-State**
 - Performance Indicators
- Enrollment**
 - Overview
 - Admissions
 - Withdrawals

- Attendance**
 - Overview
 - Chronic Absences
 - School Comparison
 - Classroom Absences

- Behavior**
 - Overview
 - Suspension Usage
 - Severe Incidents
 - Analysis
 - Ethnicity Analysis

- Programs**
 - Programs Overview
 - Programs Student List
 - Special Education (Advanced)
 - ELL

- Academics**
 - Achievement
 - Teacher Analysis
 - Core Subjects Summary
 - Academic Skills
 - AP

- Assessments**
 - State Assessment
 - Progress Monitoring
 - ELL
 - SAT
 - Score Roster
 - Score Search

- Digital Learning Analytics**
 - Access
 - Engagement
 - Outcomes
 - Scheduling

- Social Emotional Learning (add-on)**
 - Social Emotional Learning Results
 - Social Emotional Learning School Comparison
 - Focus Students

- Reporting**
 - Attendance and Behavior
 - Absence Reduction (PowerBI Example)
 - Reporting Listing

- Students**
 - Digital Data Wall

Integrated PD

ation

EMALE	MALE	ASIAN	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC AMERICAN
,232	6,642	4,310	309	4,029
IATIVE MERICAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	UNKNOWN	WHITE	ELL
3	438	14	2,831	4,732

Average Suspension Days

1.7



- Essentials
- Report Card
- District KPI's
- Performance Indicators
- Readiness
- Gap Analysis

Essentials
District-State

Report Card | District KPI's | **Performance Indicators** | Readiness | Gap Analysis

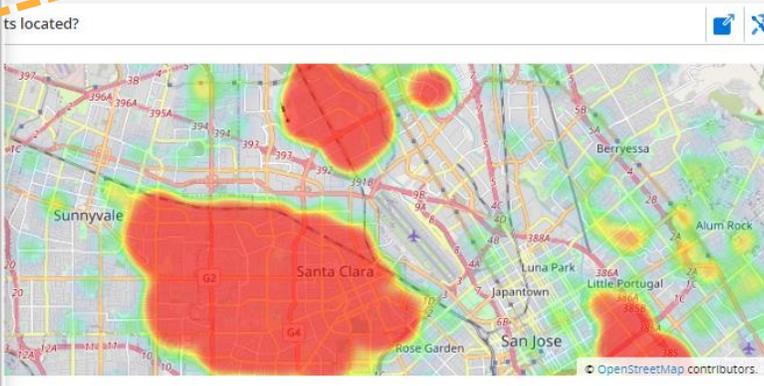
Integrated PD

Easy filtering

Filter Data

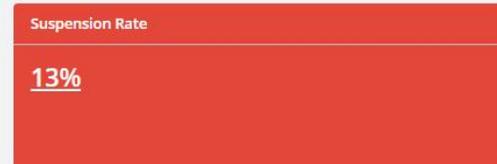
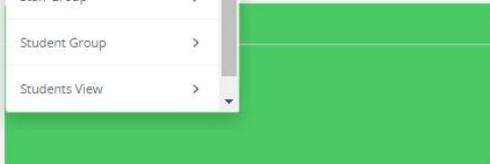
Currently Enrolled in this School

- School
- Grade
- Staff
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- SPED
- SPED Type
- ELL
- F&RL
- Staff Group
- Student Group
- Students View

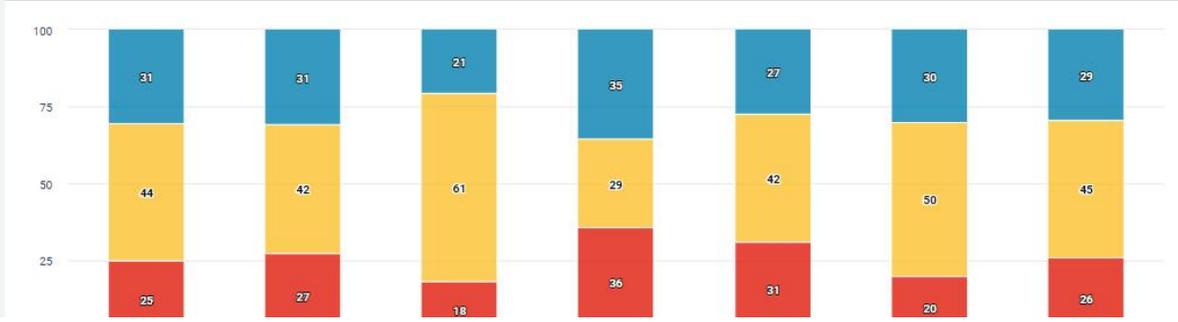


Demographic Information

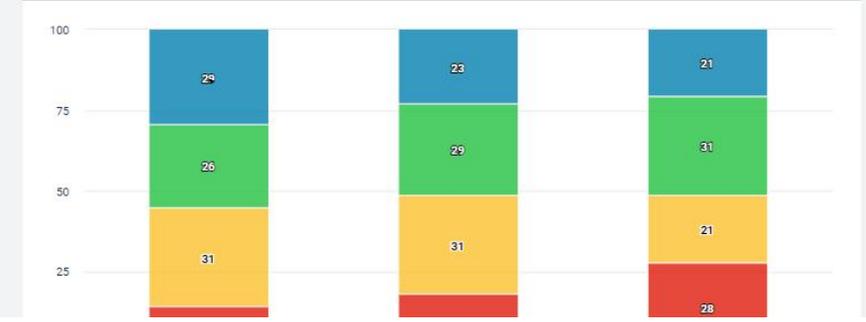
TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE	ASIAN	BLACK/AFRICAN AMERICAN	HISPANIC
12,874	6,232	6,642	4,310	309	4,029
MULTIPLE	NATIVE AMERICAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	UNKNOWN	WHITE	ELL
910	33	438	14	2,831	4,732
SPED					
1,214					



How are students performing on the ELA assessment by content area?

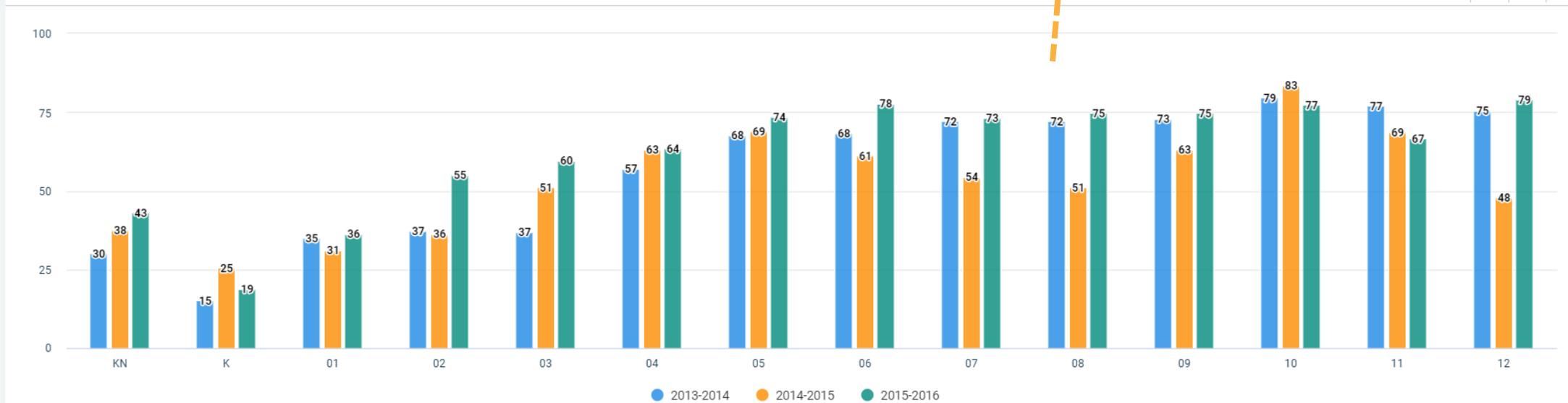


How are students performing on the ELA assessment?



Longitudinal Analysis

Passing Rate by Grade





Each visualization is drillable to the student or school level (assuming appropriate permissions)

Actions ▾

Total of 1069 row(s) with a row limit of 5000

PHOTO	STUDENT ID	NAME ↑	GRADE	RACE	GENDER	ELL	FRL	HOMELESS	504	SPED	YEAR	TEST PERFORMANCE
	1587935936	ABELLA_Maurice E.	08	Hispanic	Male	Yes	Paid	No	No	Yes	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	2056081735	Abonce_Kenya S.	03	Hispanic	Female	Yes	Paid	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	91497989	Abundiz_Tatiana A.	12	White	Female	Yes	Paid	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	1881695885	Acuna_Jenna	02	White	Female	Yes	Paid	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	1583785455	Adan_Rex	07	Hispanic	Male	Yes	Paid	No	No	Yes	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	398799701	Adkins_Quincy M.	06	Hispanic	Male	Yes	Free	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	508586109	AGUIAR_Kristina	01	Hispanic	Female	No	Paid	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	1881906183	Aguilar_Germain B.	02	Hispanic	Male	Yes	Free	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet
	1011776363	Aguilar_MARTHA	02	White	Female	Yes	Paid	No	No	No	2015-2016	Did Not Meet



QUESTIONS?



ITEM 4

COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REPORT

Dr. Angela McLean

ITEM 5

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORT

Dylan Klapmeier

ITEM 6

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Gavin Mow

❖ MSDB LIAISON – (Item 7)

Renee Rasmussen

ITEM 7

MSDB REPORT

Paul Furthmyre

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Out of State Travel Request**
 - **Personnel Action**
 - **MSDB School Calendar**
- **2nd Reading MSDB Policies (1513, 1700)**

**Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind
Board of Public Education Report
March 2024**

Agenda Action Items:

1. **[Personnel Action Report](#)**
 - 1 Retirement
 - 2 Resignations
 - 5 Hires

2. **Out of State Travel**
 - [National Association of the Deaf Conference](#)
 - [Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired \(AER\) International Conference](#)

3. **[Final Reading of 2023 - 2024 School Calendar](#)**
 - [Calendar Process](#)
 - [Final Calendar Results](#)

4. **Final Approval for Policy Changes**
 - [1513 Management Rights Policy Proposal](#)
 - [1700 Uniform Grievance Procedure Policy Proposal](#)

5. **First Reading for Policy Changes**
 - None This Meeting

Attached Documents:

- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Portrait of a Graduate Meeting 1 Agenda](#)
- [Portrait of a Graduate Meeting 2 Agenda](#)
- [December Financial Statement](#)
- [Student Numbers](#) + 3 LEAP

**MSDB Personnel Action for BOPE Meeting
March Meeting 2024**

MSDB asks that the board please approves the following personnel actions:

Retirement

Carol Clayton-Bye – Outreach Director

Resignation

Cathy Jury - DHH Outreach

Samantha Zimmerman - FT Paraprofessional

Probationary Layoff

Nonrenewal of Nontenure Teacher

Hire

Shawn Erickson - VI Outreach

Leah Buska - Paraprofessional

Kaelyn Forward - Substitute Paraprofessional

Lace Lesofski – DHH Outreach Consultant

Kacie Wilmot – VI Outreach Consultant

Positions currently advertised

DHH Outreach Consultant - Billings Area

VI Teacher

1 FT Interpreter

Cottage Resident Advisor

DHH Teacher

Positions to be advertised

Positions on hold as a result of bargaining

LEAP Resident Advisor

School Psychologist

STATE OF MONTANA

**REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL**

1) Agency Number/Name School for the Deaf and the Blind		2) Division Student Life - Student Services	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# AMANDA TAYLOR #081882		

5) Justification

Travel to Chicago for conference for the National Association for the Deaf Conference. The dates are July 1 - 5, 2024. Have yet to receive any information on the registration cost and what topics will be covered.

6) Itinerary

Destination: Chicago, IL

Travel Dates: June 31, 2024 - July 5 or 6, 2024

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 750.00 Meals \$ 500 Lodging \$ 650 Other \$ 300

Total estimated cost \$ 2300 est.

Provide details to support estimated costs:
(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

Registration cost is estimated to be about \$300.

Disclaimer - the request was sent to Jim K in Dec of 2023 and at the first of the year. I (Jim) was waiting for information from NAD to proceed further - which I still do not have.

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Jim Kelly 99</i>	Director of Student Life	1/10/2024

Approval of Authorized Agency Personnel per Department Policy

Supervisor	Date	Administrator	Date
Dept. Head/Designee	Date		

NOTE: A travel expense voucher form must be filed within three months after incurring the travel expenses, otherwise the right to reimbursement will be waived.

STATE OF MONTANA

**REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL**

1) Agency Number/Name School for the Deaf and the Blind		2) Division
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Paul Furthmyre, Julie-Dee Alt, Geri Darko, Miche Jarvey	

5) Justification
 AER Bi-annual conference will take place in July. AER is the organization that provides MSDB with Visual Impaired Education Accreditation. It is this conference where administrators learn about the standards required for MSDB. MSDB has applied for accreditation with the management standards and will continue to seek accreditation with specific programs. Our teachers have submitted proposals to present. This would be a great way to promote MSDB on a global level.

6) Itinerary
Destination: Charlotte, N.C.
Travel Dates: July 23 - 29, 2024

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 4800	Meals \$ 1296	Lodging \$ 4410	Other \$ 3180
Total estimated cost \$ 13686			

Provide details to support estimated costs:
 (Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)
 Rooms \$245 / Night -- Per Diem \$54 / Person
 Other include registration (\$2980) and ground transportation \$200

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
	Superintendent	1/29/2024

Approval of Authorized Agency Personnel per Department Policy			
Supervisor	Date	Administrator	Date
Dept. Head/Designee	Date		

NOTE: A travel expense voucher form must be filed within three months after incurring the travel expenses, otherwise the right to reimbursement will be waived.

2024-2025 MSDB SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR



www.msdbmustangs.org
3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59405
Phone: 406-771-6000

Yellow—PIR Orientation
Green—Travel
Blue—MSDB event
Orange—End of Quarter
Striped—Travel/No School
Pink—Break
Plum—Holiday
Teal—Family Learning Weekends
Red—Camps

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

NOVEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

JANUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

FEBRUARY 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

MARCH 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

APRIL 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

MAY 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JUNE 2025						
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

AUGUST

19-20 New Staff Orientation
20-23 PIR Orientation
26 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER

2 Labor Day - No School
(Cottages Open)
13 Travel Home
16 Travel Return

OCTOBER

16 Travel Home
17-19 Teacher Convention

OCTOBER cont.

20 Travel Return
21 Classes Resume
*30 End of 1st Quarter

NOVEMBER

26 Travel Home
27-30 Thanksgiving Break
No School

DECEMBER

1 Travel Return
10 Gallaudet Day
19 Winter Program
20 Travel Home
Dec 23-Jan 4 Winter Break

JANUARY

5 Travel Return
6 Classes resume
20 MLK Jr Day No School
(Cottages Open)/ PIR
21 Classes Resume/
*End of 2nd Quarter

FEBRUARY

14 Travel Home
17 Travel Return
School not in session
18 Classes Resume

MARCH

6 Travel Home
9 Travel Return
*27 End of 3rd Quarter

APRIL

17 Travel Home
18-21 Spring Break
22 Travel Return/PIR
23 Classes resume

MAY

9 Travel Home
12 Travel Return/
Classes in session

MAY cont.

26 Memorial Day
No School
30 Graduation 2:00PM

JUNE

4 Last Day of School/
*End of 4th Quarter
6-8 Deaf FLW
13-15 VI FLW
15-21 Deaf Camp
22-28 VI Camp

Approved:

Updated: 2/2/2024

MSDB Calendar Creation Process

- Director of Student Life is an active participant with the GFPS calendar committee and helps develop the calendar for the public schools.
- Director of Student Life and MSDB principal meet to develop variations of possible MSDB calendars that meet Policy 2100.
- Variations of calendars are presented to the MFPE Labor Management Committee for discussion.
- Labor Management Committee presents calendars to all stakeholders.
- All staff, all school parents, and high school students can vote on their top choice.
- The calendar receiving the most votes will be brought forward to the BPE for consideration.
- BPE will have two readings with the school calendar before adopting.

If more than two calendars are presented to the stakeholders, two rounds of voting will take place.

- First round of voting will narrow all the options down to two choices.
- Final round of voting will narrow the two options down to one option.

2024-2025 Final School Calendar Survey

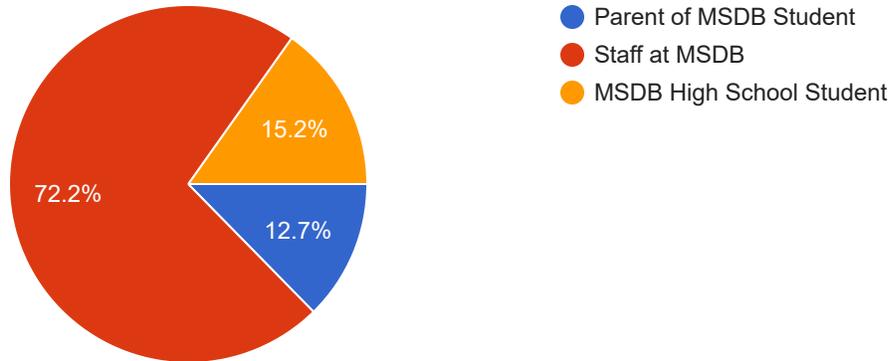
79 responses

[Publish analytics](#)

Please tell us who you represent:

 Copy

79 responses



Great Falls Public Schools Adopted Calendar

MSDB Draft "A" Proposed Calendar

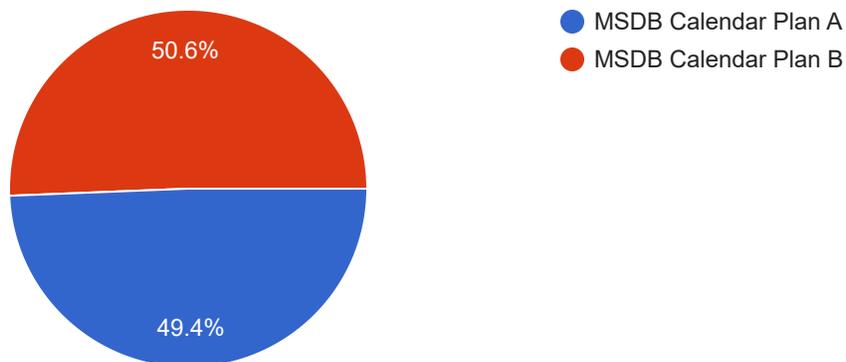
MSDB Draft "B" Proposed Calendar

Select Your Top Choice With This Initial Survey

Select Your Top Choice!! Thank You!!

 Copy

79 responses



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THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 1513

Management Rights

The Board retains the right to operate and manage its affairs in such areas as but not limited to:

1. Direct employees;
2. Employ, dismiss, promote, transfer, assign, and retain employees;
3. Relieve employees from duties because of lack of work or funds under conditions where continuation of such work would be inefficient and nonproductive;
4. Maintain the efficiency of District operations;
5. Determine the methods, means, job classifications, and personnel by which District operations are to be conducted;
6. Take whatever actions may be necessary to carry out the missions of the District in situations of emergency;
7. Establish the methods and processes by which work is performed.

The Board reserves all other rights, statutory and inherent, as provided by state law.

The Board also reserves the right to delegate authority to the Superintendent for the ongoing direction of all District programs.

Cross Reference: 6110 Superintendent

Legal Reference: § 20-3-324, MCA Powers and duties
§ 39-31-303, MCA Management rights of public employers
Bonner School District No. 14 v. Bonner Education Association,
MEA-MFT, NEA, AFT, AFL-CIO, (2008), 2008 MT 9

Policy History:

Adopted on:

Reviewed on:

Revised on:

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES 1700

Page 1 of 3

Uniform Complaint Procedure

The Board establishes this Uniform Complaint Procedure as a means to address complaints arising within the District. This Uniform Complaint Procedure is intended to be used for all complaints except those governed by a specific process in state or federal law that supersedes this process or collective bargaining agreement. Matters covered by a collective bargaining agreement will be reviewed in accordance with the terms of the applicable agreement.

The District requests all individuals to use this complaint procedure, when the individual believes the Board or its employees or agents have violated the individual's rights under state or federal law or Board policy. Complaints against a building administrator shall be filed with the Superintendent. Complaints against the Superintendent or District administrator shall be filed with the Board.

The District will endeavor to respond to and resolve complaints without resorting to this formal complaint procedure and, when a complaint is filed, to address the complaint promptly and equitably. The right of a person to prompt and equitable resolution of a complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by a person's pursuit of other remedies. Use of this complaint procedure is not a prerequisite to pursue other remedies and use of this complaint procedure does not extend any filing deadline related to pursuit of other remedies.

Deadlines requiring District action in this procedure may be extended for reasons related but not limited to the District's retention of legal counsel and District investigatory procedures.

Level 1: Informal

An individual with a complaint is first encouraged to discuss it with the appropriate employee or building administrator with the objective of resolving the matter promptly and informally. An exception is that a complaint of sexual harassment should be discussed directly with an administrator not involved in the alleged harassment.

Level 2: Building Administrator

When a complaint has not been or cannot be resolved at Level 1, an individual may file a signed and dated written complaint stating: (1) the nature of the complaint; (2) a description of the event or incident giving rise to the complaint, including any school personnel involved; and (3) the remedy or resolution requested. The written complaint must be filed within thirty (30) calendar days of the event or incident or from the date an individual could reasonably become aware of such event or incident. The applicability of the deadline is subject to review by the Superintendent to ensure the intent of this uniform complaint procedure is honored.

When a complaint alleges violation of Board policy or procedure, the building administrator will investigate and attempt to resolve the complaint. The administrator will respond in writing to the complaint, within thirty (30) calendar days of the administrator's receipt of the complaint.

If the complainant has reason to believe the administrator's decision was made in error, the complainant may request, in writing, that the Superintendent review the administrator's decision. (See Level 3.) This request must be submitted to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) calendar days of the administrator's decision.

When a complaint alleges sexual harassment or a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (the Civil Rights Act), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Administrator shall turn the complaint over to the applicable District nondiscrimination coordinator. The coordinator shall ensure an investigation is completed in accordance with the applicable procedure. In the case of a sexual harassment or Title IX complaint the applicable investigation and appeal procedure is Policy 3225P or 5012P. In the case of a disability complaint, the coordinator shall complete an investigation and file a report and recommendation with the Administrator for decision. Appeal of a decision in a disability complaint will be handled in accordance with this policy.

Level 3: Superintendent

If the complainant appeals the administrator's decision provided for in Level 2, the Superintendent will review the complaint and the administrator's decision. The Superintendent will respond in writing to the appeal, within thirty (30) calendar days of the Superintendent's receipt of the written appeal. In responding to the appeal, the Superintendent may: (1) meet with the parties involved in the complaint; (2) conduct a separate or supplementary investigation; (3) engage an outside investigator or other District employees to assist with the appeal; and/or (4) take other steps appropriate or helpful in resolving the complaint.

If the complainant has reason to believe the Superintendent's decision was made in error, the complainant may request, in writing, that the Board consider an appeal of the Superintendent's decision. (See Level 4.) This request must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent, within fifteen (15) calendar days of the Superintendent's written response to the complaint, for transmission to the Board.

Level 4: The Board

Upon written appeal of a complaint alleging a violation the individual's rights under state or federal law or Board policy upon which the Board of Trustees has authority to remedy, the Board may consider the Superintendent's decision in Level 2 or 3. Upon receipt of written request for appeal, the Chair will either: (1) place the appeal on the agenda of a regular or special Board meeting, (2) appoint an appeals panel of not less than three trustees to hear the appeal and make a recommendation to the Board, or (3) respond to the complaint with an explanation of why the appeal will not be heard by the Board of Trustees in accordance with this policy. If the Chair appoints a panel to consider the appeal, the panel will meet to consider the appeal and then make written recommendation to the full Board. The Board will report its decision on the appeal, in

writing, to all parties, within thirty (30) calendar days of the Board meeting at which the Board considered the appeal or the recommendation of the panel. A decision of the Board is final, unless it is appealed pursuant to Montana law within the period provided by law.

Cross Reference: 3210 - Equal Educational Opportunity and Nondiscrimination
5010 - Equal Employment Opportunity and Nondiscrimination
3225-3225P – Sexual Harassment of Students
5012-5012P – Sexual Harassment of Employees

Legal Reference: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Civil Rights Act)
Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
§ 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Policy History:

Adoption on:

Revised on:

Revised on:

❖ **MACIE LIAISON – (Item 8)**

Susie Hedalen

ITEM 8

MACIE REPORT

ACTION ITEM:

- **Action on Chippewa Cree Tribal Representative**

Jordann Lankford Forster



MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN EDUCATION
ADVISORY TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Montana Board of Public Education
MACIE Summary
March 2024

Presentation	MACIE Report
Presenter	Jordann Lankford Forster
Position Title	MACIE Chair
Overview	The purpose of MACIE is to provide recommendations and guidance to the Board of Public Education and the Office of Public Instruction on initiatives and actions aimed at increasing American Indian student achievement. As your advisory board, and partner in American Indian education improvement, we offer the following report:
Requested Decision	Approve Chippewa Cree Tribal Representative
Related Issue(s)	March MACIE Meeting IEFA Funding Guidance Discussion Update of Goals
Recommendations	Approve the Chippewa Cree Tribal Representative (information below)

ACTION ITEM
Chippewa Cree Tribal Representative
Jeremy MacDonald
Box Elder, MT

Jeremy J. MacDonald is the superintendent at Box Elder School District in Box Elder, Montana. Superintendent MacDonald previously served three years as junior high/high school principal at Box Elder. He is a 1997 graduate of Box Elder High School. His higher education includes Bachelor's degrees in Elementary Education and Native American Studies in 2002 from the

University of Montana, a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 2004 from Arizona State University, Educational Leadership Principal internship from the University of Montana in 2017, and Educational Leadership Superintendent Internship from UM in 2018. He previously worked at Rocky Boy Elementary for five years, teaching 5th grade for four years and served as the Dean of Students for one year. Prior to that he was a teacher in the Cartwright School District in Phoenix, Arizona teaching six years of 3rd grade and one year of 5th grade at Sunset Elementary.

Superintendent MacDonald is currently a Board Member for Stone Child College and a member of the National Indian Education Study Technical Review Panel, a branch of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. He was recognized in 2013 by the University of Montana Native American Studies Department with a Distinguished Alumni Award. In 2000 he became part of the inaugural class of Gates Millennium Scholars after a nomination from UM professor, Henrietta Mann. He also serves on the Montana Technical Advisory Committee on assessment, the Montana State University Northern's Education Advisory Board, and is vice-chair of the Hi-Line Region of Montana Association of School Superintendents.

Superintendent MacDonald is an advocate for educational opportunity, particularly for the American Indian youth of his community. Using his background, experiences, and education, he works to provide a positive example within the community, working with students, families, colleagues, and the community to open doors through education. He believes education is a key component is finding solutions to overcome challenges and develop the potential of the students and the educators with whom he works.



MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN EDUCATION
ADVISORY TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Please fill out this form and return to:

Joan Franke
Administrative Assistant
jfranke@mt.gov



Yes, our tribe/organization wishes to appoint the person listed below as our representative to Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE).

Name: Jeremy MacDonald
Address: PO Box 63
City, ZIP: Box Elder, MT 59521
Phone: 406 399-3340
Cell Phone: 406 399-1463
Email: jmacdonald@boxelder.k12.mt.us

Please provide a brief bio articulating the nominee's qualifications for membership on MACIE.



Yes, I have contacted our nominee who has agreed to represent our tribe/organization as an active member of MACIE.

No, our tribe/organization does not wish to be represented on the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education.

Tribe/Organization: Chippewa Cree Tribe

President/Chairperson/Director signature: [Signature]

Date: 1-26-24

❖ **CHARTER COMMITTEE – (Items 9-10)**

Jane Hamman

ITEM 9

**UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE
SCHOOLS COMMISSION**

Trish Schreiber

ITEM 10

UPDATE ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS

Jane Hamman

*****TIME CERTAIN AT 12:30PM*****

❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE – (Items 11-17)

Susie Hedalen

ITEM 11

NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE
CASE #2024-01

Rick Wooten, OPI Legal Counsel

ITEM 12

NOTICE OF THE SURRENDER OF BPE
CASE #2024-02

Rick Wooten, OPI Legal Counsel

ITEM 13

ACTION ON HEARING OF BPE CASE
#2023-08, RAUSCH

Chad Vanisko, ALSB Legal Counsel

ITEM 14

ACTION ON MOTION TO DISMISS BPE
CASE 2022-13, HARNING

Brenton Craggs, OPI Legal Counsel

ITEM 15

**ACTION ON AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC
COMMENTS SUBMITTED ON REVISIONS
TO ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57,
EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS**

Susie Hedalen

**Board of Public Education
Chapter 57 Educator Licensure Standards
Public Comment-Compiled**

Key:

LDA: Learning Disability Association
MASP: Montana Association of School Psychologists
MCASE: Montana Council of Administrators of Special Education
MPA: Montana Psychological Association
MSCA: Montana School Counselor Association
NASP: National Association of School Psychologists
NCLD: National Center for Learning Disabilities
SAM: School Administrators of Montana

Note: The number of comments may not match the number of commenters, as many made comments on multiple sections, and comments are compiled based on “like themes” as indicated below.

10.57.102 DEFINITIONS – Pages 175-176

COMMENT 1: One commenter opposed the revisions to 10.57.102(2) and stated that the “a state board of public education or state agency” language is unclear on how this constitutes an accrediting body for higher education that is equivalent to CHEA or other similar institutions and has requested the Board maintain licensing criteria that aligns to nationally recognized standards.

10.57.425 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE ENDORSEMENT – Page 181

COMMENT 2: Two commenters and MSCA opposed the removal of “school counseling K-12” in 10.57.425(4) and stated that the Montana State University Counseling Department is currently working on a hybrid school counseling endorsement that would fulfill these licensure requirements and would allow vested and licensed educators to stay in their home communities, receive school counseling training, and increase the amount of prepared, professional school counselors in the field, and decrease the need for emergency authorizations.

**10.57.432 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – SPECIALIST
ENDORSEMENT – Page 182**

COMMENT 3: Seven commenters, LDA, MASP, MPA, MSCA, NASP, and NCLD opposed the revisions to 10.57.432 and stated it is unclear how OPI would determine whether people who have a degree in another field but taking courses concurrently would have sufficient course content and experience to be successful, and encourages the Board to consider modifying or revising the proposal to ensure that school psychologists have affiliated school psychologist

training, and has requested that the Board maintain the requirement for verification from an accredited specialist-level program in school psychology and maintain the requirement to be within 4 course deficiencies of completion.

COMMENT 4: The MCASE Board and SAM Board supported the revisions and stated that the revisions allow for more flexibility for recruitment into the field and that the proposal would not allow for individuals to become licensed who do not have the appropriate education or experience.

10.57.434 CLASS 6 SPECIALIST LICENSE – SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST –
Pages 182-183

COMMENT 5: Seven commenters, LDA, MASP, MSCA, NASP, and NCLD opposed the revisions to 10.57.434 and stated that due to the reduction in hours, Montana would no longer meet the standard requirements set forth by the National Association of School Psychologists. This reduction could potentially harm the ability to negotiate the opportunity to participate in an interstate compact, which they're currently working on, receive federal funding and grants, and support recruitment in the profession. The commenters have requested the Board maintain the 1200-hour requirement.

COMMENT 6: The MCASE Board and SAM Board supported the revisions and stated that the revisions allow for more flexibility for recruitment into the field and that the proposal would not allow for individuals to become licensed who do not have the appropriate education or experience.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of)	NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
ARM 10.57.102, 10.57.114,)	PROPOSED AMENDMENT
10.57.215, 10.57.410, 10.57.411,)	
10.57.412, 10.57.414, 10.57.415,)	
10.57.418, 10.57.419, 10.57.420,)	
10.57.421, 10.57.424, 10.57.425,)	
10.57.427, 10.57.428, 10.57.431,)	
10.57.432, 10.57.434, 10.57.435, and)	
10.57.437 pertaining to Educator)	
Licensure Standards)	

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On March 5, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., the Board of Public Education (board) will hold a public hearing in Room 152 of the Montana State Capitol in Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed amendment of the above-stated rules.

2. The board will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the board no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 23, 2024, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0300; or email bpe@mt.gov.

3. The rules as proposed to be amended provide as follows, deleted matter interlined, new matter underlined:

10.57.102 DEFINITIONS The following definitions apply to this chapter.

(1) remains the same.

(2) "Accredited specialist program" means:

(a) for school psychologists, a program for the preparation of specialists approved or accredited by:

(i) the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP); and or

(ii) a state board of public education or a state agency;

(b) for school counselors, a program for the preparation of specialists approved or accredited by:

(i) the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP); or

(ii) a state board of public education or a state agency.

(3) and (4) remain the same.

(5) "Approved preparation program" means:

(a) An educator preparation program accredited by the ~~National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)~~ or the Council for the Accreditation

of Educator Preparation (CAEP), the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), or the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE). A MACTE educator preparation program is subject to the following restrictions:

(i) Completion of a MACTE accredited program may only be used by an applicant for licensure who has also completed at least a bachelor's degree; and

(ii) The resulting license granted to an applicant for licensure who has completed a MACTE accredited program shall be limited to early grades or middle grades licensure and only for the grade levels covered by the MACTE accredited program completed by the applicant; or

(b) An educator preparation program at a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university approved or accredited by a state board of education or state education agency; or

(c) An educator preparation program approved by a state board of education or state education agency that leads to licensure in the state of preparation.

(6) remains the same.

(7) "College credit" means credit received for completion of a course from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university.

(8) "Course work GPA" means the weighted average of teacher education program course grades, weighted by credit hours, and calculated over the defined period of study at a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university. The weights reflect the relative contributions of teacher education program course requirements, including content area coursework, based on contact hours or credits earned. The weighted average is calculated as follows:

(a) through (10) remain the same.

(11) "Institutionally accredited" means a college or university accredited by one of the following:

(a) Higher Learning Commission;

(b) Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges;

(c) New England Association of Schools and Colleges;

(d) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities;

(e) Southern Association of Schools and Colleges; or

(f) Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

(11) through (13) remain the same, but are renumbered (12) through (14).

~~(14) "Regionally accredited" means a college or university accredited by one of the following:-~~

~~(a) Higher Learning Commission;-~~

~~(b) Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges;~~

~~(c) New England Association of Schools and Colleges;~~

~~(d) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities;~~

~~(e) Southern Association of Schools and Colleges; or~~

~~(f) Western Association of Schools and Colleges.~~

(15) and (16) remain the same.

(17) "Unrestricted license" means a current ~~renewable~~ license that is not an emergency or provisional license.

(18) and (19) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, MCA

10.57.114 INTERNSHIPS (1) and (2) remain the same.

(3) If entering into internship agreements:

(a) the accredited Montana educator preparation program must report each enrolled intern to the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than November 15 of each year; and

(b) the district must approve internship applications.

(i) Superintendent applications must be approved by the district board chair or county superintendent.

(ii) All other internship applications must be approved by the district superintendent.

(4) through (7) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-2-121, 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-3-106, 20-7-101, MCA

10.57.215 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS (1) through (3) remain the same.

(4) Activities acceptable to renew or obtain licenses are professional development, training, workshops, or coursework consistent with P-12 public school curriculum and may include:

(a) credits earned from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university;

(b) through (5) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.410 CLASS 2 STANDARD TEACHER'S LICENSE (1) and (2) remain the same.

(3) To obtain a Class 2 standard teacher's license an applicant must submit verification of all of the following:

(a) a bachelor's or master's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university, or a completed evaluation of foreign transcripts that demonstrates equivalency to a bachelor's degree through a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) agency;

(b) through (5) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, 20-4-103, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.411 CLASS 1 PROFESSIONAL TEACHER'S LICENSE (1) through (2)(b) remain the same.

(c) a master's degree in education or an endorsable teaching area(s) from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university or certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

(3) and (4) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.412 CLASS 1 AND 2 ENDORSEMENTS (1) remains the same

(2) Areas approved for endorsement on Class 1 and 2 licenses include the following: agriculture, art K-12, biology, business education, chemistry, communication, computer science, early childhood (P-3), earth science, economics, elementary education (K-8), English, English as a second language K-12, family and consumer sciences, geography, health, health and physical education K-12, history, industrial trades and technology education, journalism, library K-12, mathematics, ~~middle grades (4-8)~~, music K-12, physical education K-12, physics, political science, psychology, reading K-12, ~~school counseling K-12~~, science (broadfield), social studies (broadfield), sociology, special education P-12, special education P-12 hearing impairment, special education P-12 vision impairment, theater, traffic education, and world languages K-12.

(3) and (4) remain the same.

(5) To obtain an early childhood (P-3), elementary (K-8), middle grades (4-8 content-specific), secondary (5-12 content-specific), K-12, or P-12 (special education) endorsement, an applicant must provide verification of completion of an approved educator preparation program at the grade level(s) identified by the program, including supervised teaching experience or a waiver of this requirement if the applicant has previously had supervised teaching experience.

(6) through (8) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.414 CLASS 3 ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSE - SUPERINTENDENT ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

(a) an education specialist, master's, or doctoral degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university in education, ~~or~~ education leadership, or a P-12 education related area of study;

(b) remains the same.

(c) completion of ~~courses~~ coursework covering Montana School Finance, Montana School Law, and Montana Collective Bargaining and Employment Law. In order to qualify, such ~~courses~~ coursework must have been provided either by:

(i) through (g) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.415 CLASS 3 ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSE - PRINCIPAL ENDORSEMENTS (1) remains the same.

(a) a minimum of three years of teaching or school counseling experience with a ~~standard, unrestricted~~ license as defined in ARM 10.57.102(19) at the level of the requested endorsement;

(b) ~~a an education specialist, master's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university in education, or education leadership, or a P-12 education related area of study;~~

(c) remains the same.

(d) ~~completion of three semester credits of a~~ college courses in school law, including special education law; and

(e) remains the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.418 CLASS 3 ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSE - SUPERVISOR ENDORSEMENT (1) and (1)(a) remain the same.

(b) completion of a master's degree in the area requested for endorsement at a ~~an regionally~~ institutionally accredited college or university;

(c) through (f) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.419 CLASS 3 ADMINISTRATIVE LICENSE - SPECIAL EDUCATION SUPERVISOR ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

(a) completion, at a ~~an regionally~~ institutionally accredited college or university, of a master's degree in special education or a master's degree in the following special education-related service fields: school psychologist, speech-language pathologist, audiologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, registered nurse, clinical social worker, or clinical professional counselor;

(b) through (g) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.420 CLASS 4 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION LICENSE

(1) through (2)(a) remain the same.

(b) A Class 4B license issued to individuals with a certificate of completion from an apprenticeship program or associate or bachelor's degree from a ~~an regionally~~ institutionally accredited college or university, but who do not hold a valid Montana teaching license with the appropriate career and technical education endorsement; and

(c) through (5) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.421 CLASS 4 ENDORSEMENTS (1) Recognized occupations eligible for a Class 4 license shall be evaluated on an annual basis by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Appropriate career and technical education areas acceptable for endorsement on the Class 4 license include but are not limited to the following: agriculture business, agriculture mechanics, auto body, automotive technology, aviation, building maintenance, building trades, business marketing, computer coding, computer information systems, culinary arts, diesel mechanics, drafting, electronics, emergency medical technician (EMT), engineering, fire and disaster services, graphic arts, health science education, heavy equipment operations, horticulture, industrial mechanics, livestock production, machining, metals, plant and soil sciences, Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) instruction, small engines, stagecraft, teacher education, traffic education, videography, and welding.

(2) through (4)(g) remain the same.

(h) For traffic education:

(i) meet the requirements of ARM 10.13.310; or

~~(5)~~(ii) A Class 4A, 4B, or 4C career and technical education license may be approved to teach traffic education if the license meets the requirements of ARM 10.13.310.

(6) remains the same but is renumbered (5).

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.424 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE (1) through (3) remain the same.

(4) A Class 5B provisional license is valid for a term of three years, is not renewable, and may not be reinstated. A Class 5B provisional license will be issued to those individuals who hold a bachelor's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university but have not completed an approved educator preparation program.

(a) through (6) remain the same.

(a) a bachelor's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university; and

(b) through (7) remain the same.

(8) Extension may be granted to a Class 5B or 5C provisional license at the discretion of the Superintendent of Public Instruction as authorized in ARM 10.57.109. Requests for extension must be submitted by the licensee and supported by the accredited educator preparation program. A request for extension must demonstrate evidence of extreme hardship or other circumstances beyond the control of the licensee which prevented timely completion of the agreed upon plan of study.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.425 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – ENDORSEMENTS

(1) remains the same.

(2) Areas approved for endorsement on Class 5 provisional license include the following: agriculture, art K-12, biology, business education, chemistry, communication, computer science, early childhood (P-3), earth science, economics, elementary education (K-8), English, English as a second language K-12, family and consumer sciences, geography, health, health and physical education K-12, history, industrial trades and technology education, journalism, library K-12, mathematics, ~~middle grades (4-8)~~, music K-12, physical education K-12, physics, political science, psychology, reading K-12, ~~school counseling K-12~~, science (broadfield), social studies (broadfield), sociology, special education P-12, special education P-12 hearing impairment, special education P-12 vision impairment, theater, traffic education, and world languages K-12.

(3) remains the same.

(4) To obtain an early childhood (P-3), elementary (K-8), middle grades (4-8 content-specific), secondary (5-12 content-specific), K-12 (as delineated in ARM 10.57.412), or P-12 (special education and school psychologist) endorsement, an applicant must provide verification of:

(a) a bachelor's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university; and

(b) remains the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.427 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – SUPERINTENDENT ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

(a) a an education specialist, master's, or doctoral degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university in education, ~~or~~ education leadership, or a P-12 education related area of study;

(b) through (e) remain the same.

(f) for those applicants who have not completed ~~the courses~~ coursework covering Montana School Finance, Montana School Law, and Montana Collective Bargaining and Employment Law, in order to qualify, such ~~courses~~ coursework must have been provided either by:

(i) through (2) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.428 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – PRINCIPAL ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

(a) a an education specialist, master's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university in education, ~~or~~ education leadership, or a P-12 education related area of study;

(b) through (2) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.431 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – SUPERVISOR
ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

- (a) a master's degree from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university in the area requested for supervisory endorsement; and
- (b) and (c) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.432 CLASS 5 PROVISIONAL LICENSE – SPECIALIST
ENDORSEMENT (1) remains the same.

- (a) verification of a master's degree or greater in school psychology or related field from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university; and or
- (b) ~~for those applicants who have not completed an approved specialist preparation program, verification from an approved specialist program, of being within four course deficiencies of completing full requirements as outlined in ARM 10.57.434.~~ verification from the approved specialist program of current enrollment and must sign and file with the Superintendent of Public Instruction a plan of professional intent and evidence of enrollment leading, within three years of the date of validity of the provisional license, to an appropriately endorsed Class 6 license as provided in ARM 10.57.434.
- (2) remains the same.
- (a) verification of a bachelor's degree from an institutionally accredited college or university; and or
- (b) ~~verification from the approved specialist program, of being within four course deficiencies of completing full requirements as outlined in ARM 10.57.435.~~ verification from the approved specialist program of current enrollment and must sign and file with the Superintendent of Public Instruction a plan of professional intent and evidence of enrollment leading, within three years of the date of validity of the provisional license, to an appropriately endorsed Class 6 license as provided in ARM 10.57.435.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.434 CLASS 6 SPECIALIST LICENSE – SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

- (1) To obtain a Class 6 specialist license with a school psychologist endorsement an applicant must provide verification of one of the following:
 - (a) through (c) remain the same.
 - (i) a master's degree or higher in school psychology or a related field from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university; and
 - (ii) recommendation from a ~~NASP accredited~~ an approved specialist program defined in ARM 10.57.102, ~~attesting to the applicant's qualifications being equivalent~~

~~to NASP training standards, which included a 1200-hour internship experience of which 600 hours were in a P-12 school setting an internship in a P-12 school setting of 600 hours.~~

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.435 CLASS 6 SPECIALIST LICENSE – SCHOOL COUNSELOR

(1) remains the same.

(a) a master's degree from a an regionally institutionally college or university;
and

(b) and (c) remain the same.

(i) a master's degree in school counseling from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university; and

(ii) remains the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

10.57.437 CLASS 8 DUAL CREDIT POSTSECONDARY FACULTY LICENSE (1) through (3) remain the same.

(a) verification of faculty employment from the Chief Academic Officer or an appropriate official of the employing regionally institutionally accredited college or university;

(b) remains the same.

(c) recommendation from the Chief Academic Officer from a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university verifying the applicant plans to teach in a subject covered by the K-12 endorsement areas in ARM 10.57.438, and will teach a subject in which the applicant has a major or minor; and

(d) remains the same.

~~(4) Class 8 dual credit license applications will be reviewed by the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council for recommendation regarding issuance of the license by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Denial of an application for licensure shall be appealable to the Board of Public Education pursuant to ARM 10.57.607.~~

(5) remains the same but is renumbered (4).

~~(6)~~(5) A Class 8 license shall not be valid unless the licensee is in an employment relationship with a an regionally institutionally accredited college or university.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

REASON: The board proposes to update the current Educator Licensure Standards in ARM Title 10, chapter 57, based on a review by the Office of Public Instruction and P-20 education stakeholders. The proposed amended rules are necessary to provide clarification and required modifications, based on research-based practice

and improvements in Montana and the nation. Proposed revisions include, but are not limited to, updated definitions, changes to the internship requirements, an addition of content-specific middle school endorsements, an increased flexibility for educator preparation programs, a new traffic education endorsement, and updated requirements for school psychologists and school counselors.

4. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed action in writing to: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620; telephone (406) 444-0300; or email bpe@mt.gov, and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., March 8, 2024.

5. McCall Flynn, executive director of the Board of Public Education, has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

6. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by the board. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, email, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by email unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Written requests may be mailed or delivered to the contact person in paragraph 4 or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the board.

7. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's website at <http://sosmt.gov/ARM/Register>.

8. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

9. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the board has determined that the amendment of the above-referenced rules will not significantly and directly impact small businesses.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State January 30, 2024.

ITEM 16

**REVIEW DRAFT COUNCIL FOR THE
ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATOR
PREPARATION MEMORANDUM OF
UNDERSTANDING**

Dr. Julie Murgel

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) Agreement
Presenter(s)	Julie Murgel and Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Chief Program Officer and Director of Accreditation and Licensure at the Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>The Partnership Agreement is between three parties: the Montana Board of Public Education, the Montana State Superintendent of Public Education, and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).</p> <p>CAEP is a nongovernment, voluntary association that is a nationally recognized accreditor by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Through an Accreditation Council, CAEP accredits Educator Preparation Programs EPP).</p> <p>The purpose of this partnership agreement is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline preferences about program review options,• Review team compositions for accreditation site review conducted by CAEP of the Montana EPPs, and• Establish the responsibilities that each party has in supporting CAEP Accreditation activities for EPPS voluntarily requesting joint reviews. <p>This partnership agreement is for MT EPPs that elect to have a joint accreditation for the State and CAEP. The agreement is for 1 year, from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Information Item
Related Issue(s)	None
Recommendation(s)	None



**Montana Board of Public Education,
the Montana State Superintendent of Education
and
The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)
Partnership Agreement**

Whereas, CAEP is a nongovernmental, voluntary membership organization committed to the effective preparation of teachers and other P-12 professional educators; and

Whereas, CAEP, through an autonomous Accreditation Council, accredits educator preparation providers (EPP's) and advances excellent educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning; and

Whereas, CAEP is a nationally recognized accreditor, having earned recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and is seeking recognition by the United States Secretary of Education, and, therefore, develops policy and procedures aligned with all applicable requirements of CHEA and, to the extent practicable, the U.S. Department of Education; and

Whereas, the Montana Board of Public Education (MBPE), and the Montana State Superintendent, herein referred to as the State, support continuous improvement in educator preparation; shall be.

CAEP, and the State hereby enter into this agreement detailing the State's preferences with regard to program review options and review team composition for accreditation Site Reviews conducted by CAEP of EPP's operating within the State and establishing the primary responsibilities each party has in supporting CAEP's accreditation activities involving all such EPP's.

1. CAEP Standards and Scope of Accreditation

The Parties understand and agree that:

The CAEP Board of Directors (CAEP Board or Board) has adopted standards (CAEP Standards or Standards) that serve as the basis for all accreditation reviews undertaken by CAEP.

- 1.1. As a result of the ongoing critical self-review that CAEP undertakes to maintain and improve the quality of CAEP accreditation, the CAEP Board will undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the CAEP Standards on a schedule set by the Board and may, as needed, make interim amendments to the Standards. In making any such changes, CAEP will seek stakeholder and public input, including input from the State and its EPP's.
- 1.2. It is the responsibility of the State and any EPP's seeking or continuing CAEP accreditation to stay informed of any changes made to the CAEP Standards and the timeline(s) set by the Board for the implementation of or transition to new or revised Standards.
- 1.3. The CAEP scope of accreditation, defined in policy, distinguishes between two levels of educator preparation:

1.3.1. Initial-Licensure Preparation is provided through programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels leading to initial-licensure, certification, or endorsement that are designed to develop P-12 teachers. All Initial-Licensure Preparation programs within the Scope of Accreditation will be reviewed under CAEP Standards for Initial-Licensure.

1.3.2. Advanced-Level Preparation is provided through programs at the post-baccalaureate or graduate level leading to licensure, certification, or endorsement. Advanced-Level Programs are designed to develop P-12 teachers who have already completed an initial-licensure program, currently licensed administrators, other certificated (or similar state language) school professionals for employment in P-12 schools/districts. All Advanced-Level programs within the Scope of Accreditation will be reviewed under CAEP Standards for Advanced-Level Preparation.

2. CAEP's Responsibility for Education Preparation Provider (EPP) Accreditation

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 2.1. CAEP, through the Accreditation Council, has sole responsibility for granting CAEP accreditation to an EPP, and for supporting and overseeing NCATE- and TEAC- accredited EPP's through continuous accreditation and the CAEP eligibility processes described in CAEP policy.
- 2.2. The process required for accreditation by CAEP is outlined in policies and procedures. Policies and procedures may be revised from time to time. It is the responsibility of the State and any EPP seeking CAEP accreditation to stay informed of any such changes as they may impact the CAEP accreditation process from the time of their adoption or publication.

3. State's Responsibility for Program Approval

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 3.1. The State has responsibility for program approval. In granting program approval, the State will utilize information generated from CAEP's review(s) of an EPP, including but not limited to an Accreditation Council decision on CAEP accreditation and the assignment of any Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and Stipulations, as described in CAEP policy. Although the State may elect to have state-specific standards and/or requirements incorporated into the CAEP review, consistent with the program review options outlined below, only information gathered on an EPP's compliance with CAEP Standards and requirements will be used by the Accreditation Council to make a decision.
- 3.2. The State will periodically review its program review requirements against the CAEP Standards and policies and will, in a timely manner, make CAEP aware of any conflicts or potential inconsistencies so that all parties to this agreement are aware of any such issues and can work constructively together to minimize any challenges that may arise from them.

4. CAEP Accreditation Cycle

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 4.1. The CAEP accreditation cycle involves an EPP in continuous improvement and requires an EPP to demonstrate that it meets CAEP's high standards of quality required to improve P-12 student learning.
- 4.2. To merit full accreditation by CAEP, an EPP must meet all CAEP Standards on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence.
- 4.3. A Site Review, carried out by an Evaluation Team, is an essential part of the accreditation process. Members of the assigned team investigate the quality of an EPP's evidence, including the accuracy and consistency of the evidence provided in relation to CAEP Standards. In accordance with CAEP policy, CAEP may utilize a virtual site review or may have one or more Evaluation Team members participating using electronic means.
- 4.4. The State elects that CAEP's reviews of EPPs in the State will be carried out using Evaluation Teams composed as follows:
 - 4.4.1. **Joint Review Team.** For any review except one required in conjunction with an accreditation decision of Accreditation with Stipulations or Probationary Accreditation, the composition of the Evaluation Team will be as follows:
 - 4.4.1.1. For a Review involving only one level of accreditation (i.e., initial or advanced), the Joint Review Team includes four national reviewers appointed by CAEP and up to three reviewers appointed by the State.
 - 4.4.1.2. For a Review involving both levels of accreditation, initial and advanced-level, the Evaluation Team will include five CAEP-appointed reviewers and up to four state-appointed reviewers.
 - 4.4.1.3. For a Stipulation or Probation review, the Evaluation Team is comprised of two CAEP-appointed reviewers. The state may choose to add one reviewer for a total of a three-person team. The lead reviewer is appointed by CAEP.
 - 4.4.1.4. The State shall provide CAEP with its recommended Evaluation Team members within any timelines established by CAEP. If the State is unable to appoint members, CAEP will appoint from its pool of volunteers trained to serve as Evaluation Team members a CAEP-only team. All such teams are led by an Evaluation Team chair (or Evaluation Team leader) appointed by CAEP.
- 4.5. Prior to assignment to any CAEP Evaluation Team, an individual must have successfully completed CAEP training for review team members and must acknowledge understanding of, and agreement to, adhere to CAEP's code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.
- 4.6. Each Evaluation Team shall include a P-12 practitioner, when possible. The State will make recommendations for P-12 practitioners through the CAEP accreditation platform.

- 4.7. At the discretion of the State, the State's teachers' association(s) may appoint one (1) representative per association to observe the Site Review. Any expenses associated with the attendance of an observer must be covered by the association(s) or State. Prior to participation, any observer must acknowledge understanding of an agreement to adhere to CAEP's policies and procedures regarding Site Reviews and the CAEP code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.
- 4.8. All Site Review activities undertaken by a CAEP Evaluation Team will be conducted in accordance with CAEP policies and procedures.
- 4.9. CAEP is not responsible for Site Review expenses for state-assigned personnel.
- 4.10. An EPP that is subject to the jurisdiction of the State may choose from among any of the following program review options for CAEP accreditation:
- 4.10.1. **Specialty Program Review with National Recognition.** The goal of the specialized professional association (SPA) Program Review with National Recognition is to align specialty licensure area data with national standards developed by SPAs in order to receive national recognition at the program level. The Evaluation Team will consider evidence that the EPP presents as gathered from the National Recognition decision-making process and made available in SPA program level reports to meet the sufficiency criteria related to CAEP Standard R1, Component R1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard RA.1, Component RA1.2 (Advanced).
 - 4.10.2. **State Review by State Authority.** The State conducts program reviews for purposes of State approval and to inform CAEP accreditation. An EPP undergoing the State Review option will follow State guidelines. The State provides forms and instructions on how to meet all State standards for licensure/certificate program approval. Upon an EPP's completion of the State authority forms, trained reviewers are selected and assigned within appropriate content areas. Reviewers make recommendations for further action and/or approval. The State makes the final decision on the approval of any program. The CAEP Evaluation Team will consider evidence that the EPP presents as gathered from the State Review process to meet the sufficiency criteria related to CAEP Standard R1, Component RA1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard RA1, Component RA1.2 (Advanced).
 - 4.10.3. **CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1/A.1.** Evidence for the CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1/A.1 process is developed through the analysis of an EPP's outcome assessment data aligned to specialty licensure area standards delineated in CAEP Standard R1, Component RA1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard A1, Component RA1.2 (Advanced). Evidence from the EPP's internal assessment may be used by the state to determine its alignment with state required standards in the respective area(s) of licensure to demonstrate candidates' ability to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in the area of licensure.
- 4.11. The specific timeline established for the review of an EPP, as well as CAEP's consideration of any request for an extension, will be decided by CAEP or the Accreditation Council, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with CAEP policies.

- 4.12. Once granted full accreditation by CAEP, an EPP's term of accreditation shall be seven (7) years. Shorter terms are granted with a decision of Accreditation with Stipulations or Probationary Accreditation. Throughout its term, to maintain accreditation, an EPP must comply with CAEP policies, including policies regarding payment of annual dues and the submission of annual reports.
- 4.13. An EPP for which the Accreditation Council issues a decision to deny or revoke accreditation may have a right to petition for an appeal subject to CAEP's policy on appeals.
- 4.14. The State will provide to CAEP its policy leading to a "Change in State Status." The State will notify CAEP within thirty (30) days of action taken when a CAEP-accredited EPP has had a "Change in State Status" as a result of a decision on specialized professional association (SPA) program status by the State.
- 4.15. Accreditation-specific terminology and definitions used by CAEP as part of its EPP review and accreditation processes may vary from similar terms and definitions used by the State. Any definitions of key terms and glossaries created by CAEP are available on the CAEP website [<http://caepnet.org/glossary>]. The State should inquire with CAEP about the definition of any term if there is uncertainty regarding its meaning in the CAEP accreditation context.

5. Opportunities for State Input

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 5.1. CAEP will afford the State multiple opportunities to provide CAEP, the Evaluation Team, and members of the Accreditation Council with any information or data the State deems relevant to the accreditation of an EPP, as follows:
- 5.2. At least sixteen (16) weeks prior to any scheduled Site Review, CAEP will give the State notice of the upcoming Site Review. At any time, up to six (6) weeks before the scheduled Site Review, the State may provide CAEP with comments and information on the EPP for consideration by the Evaluation Team. EPP's will be given an opportunity to respond to any such comments prior to the Site Review.
- 5.3. At any time, the State may file a complaint regarding an EPP with the Accreditation Council for investigation and consideration as part of the EPP's ongoing cycle of CAEP accreditation. In accordance with CAEP policy, adverse action may result from any such investigation.
- 5.4. In the event an EPP within the State petitions for the appeal of an adverse action of the Accreditation Council, CAEP will notify the State that such petition has been received. Any notification of a decision made by an ad-hoc appeal panel will be made in accordance with Section 7, below, and the detailed notification provisions included in CAEP policy.

6. Decisions of the Accreditation Council and an Ad-Hoc Appeals Council

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 6.1. The Accreditation Council makes decisions regarding the accreditation of EPP's at meetings held not less than two (2) times each year.
- 6.2. Following any decision of the Accreditation Council to deny or revoke the accreditation of an EPP, the EPP is promptly informed of its option to file a petition for an appeal and appeal requirements. Appeals criteria and process information are included in CAEP's policies on appeals.
- 6.3. CAEP provides written notice of each decision of the Accreditation Council and an Ad-hoc Appeal Panel in accordance with CAEP policies.
- 6.4. The written notice CAEP provides regarding its accrediting decisions, includes notice to the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency which may be a party to this agreement. CAEP's policies regarding notices specify the parties to which notice must be provided and the respective timelines for each.

7. Data Sharing

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 7.1. The CAEP Standards and process for CAEP Accreditation require an EPP to collect and share data. To the extent that the State maintains data necessary for CAEP's review of an EPP, subject to any data sharing agreement that may exist between an EPP and the State, CAEP expects that the State will make the relevant data available to EPP's at no cost, in a timely manner, with all personally identifiable information removed or redacted, and with all appropriate permissions to use the data for CAEP accreditation activities.
- 7.2. In order to facilitate the reviews necessary for CAEP accreditation, CAEP will provide the State and each dues paying EPP in the State with access to the CAEP accreditation platform, CAEP's data and information management system. Should the State or any EPP fail to pay annual dues to CAEP in a timely manner, CAEP reserves the right to suspend access to the CAEP accreditation platform until any outstanding dues are paid.
- 7.3. CAEP policies and the CAEP accreditation platform include information on the confidential nature of information maintained within the CAEP accreditation platform. All CAEP accreditation platform users must acknowledge CAEP's confidentiality policy and agree to adhere to it.

8. Partnership Dues, State Benefits, and Fees for Additional Services

The Parties understand and agree that:

9. The State will be responsible for payment of annual State Partnership dues (See Appendix A). Dues may be reviewed and updated annually by CAEP. Should the amount of the State's annual State Partnership dues be changed during the term of this agreement, CAEP will notify the State of the new dues amount and the effective date.
- 9.1. CAEP will provide up to three (3) individuals employed by the State with access to the CAEP

accreditation platform.

- 9.2. During each year covered by this agreement, CAEP will waive the CAEP Conference registration fee for one (1) designated State representative; however, the State or State representative must assume other expenses associated with conference participation.
- 9.3. CAEP offers states access to CAEP National Training for up to five (5) site reviewers a year, including training and travel (additional participants may be added based on need and on a cost-recovery basis). CAEP may also offer supplemental training opportunities for state reviewers. Supplemental training events that are arranged, including events in the State, will be provided by CAEP on a cost-recovery basis and with specific arrangements negotiated according to CAEP's policies regarding fees and expenses for training.
- 9.4. The State will work with associations that represent P-12 educators (NEA, AFT, NBPTS), EPP's, and education administrators to establish credit toward continuing education units or professional development requirements at the local district level in return for the State's P-12 educators' professional contributions to the work of CAEP as site review team members.

10. State and CAEP Contacts

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 10.1. The State will designate a liaison to serve as the primary contact for CAEP throughout the term of this agreement.
- 10.2. CAEP will designate a liaison to serve as the primary contact for the State through the term of this agreement.

11. Agreement Term and Amendments

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 11.1. CAEP and the State enter into this partnership agreement for the five (5)-year period beginning July 1, 2024 and ending on June 30, 2025.
- 11.2. The Parties will review this agreement at least annually and, as necessary, propose any amendment deemed appropriate and which may be adopted upon the agreement of the Parties.
- 11.3. Should any provision of this agreement be determined to be in conflict with CAEP policy, CAEP policy will be the prevailing authority and this agreement will be required to be amended to resolve the conflict.
- 11.4. Notwithstanding the annual review described above, this agreement may be modified by consent of the Parties at any point.

Christopher Koch, President
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

DATE

By signing this agreement, the undersigned agrees to be bound by the terms outlined above and affirms that he or she has the authority to enter into this agreement on behalf of the State.

Board of Public Education, Chair
Dr. Tim Tharp

DATE

Elsie Arntzen

02/09/2024

State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Elsie Arntzen

DATE

DRAFT

Appendix A: State Dues Structure

Annual costs for supporting activities associated with State Partnerships have both fixed and proportional components which include costs associated with the CAEP Clinic, fall and spring CAEP Conferences, staff time, technology costs for maintaining workspaces within CAEP's accreditation platform, and other indirect expenses.

For the fixed and proportional amounts, states would be assessed \$1,500 annually (reviewed on an annual basis) to cover expenses for the spring convening and conference registration plus a portion of indirect expenses which are based on the actual percentage of CAEP member EPPs within each state.

Example: State A (Joint Reviews)

State A has 25 CAEP member EPPs, or 3.99% of total CAEP EPPs.

- The fixed amount is set at \$1,500 per state.
- The proportional amount is set at 3.99% of \$325,000 (current total=services to all states) = \$12,960.
- The variable joint review fee (for 25 joint reviews) is $25 \times \$2,500 = \$62,500/7\text{years} = \$8,930$.

Therefore, the total fees for State B will be:

$\$1,500$ (fixed) + $\$12,960$ (proportional) + $\$8,930$ (variable joint review fee) = $\$23,390$.

ITEM 17

**ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDATION TO INITIALLY
APPROVE ABCTe AS AN ALTERNATIVE
TEACHER CERTIFICATION AND
ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM**

**Dr. Julie Murgel
Crystal Andrews**

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Presentation on the Request for Initial Approval for the Alternative Program- American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (American Board).
Presenter	Julie Murgel and Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Chief Program Officer and Accreditation and Licensure Director at the Office of Public Instruction
Overview	As aligned with ARM 10.58.802; the Superintendent is requesting approval of the American Board, an alternative certification program.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	<p>The American Board's request addresses the requirements listed in SB373, the statute for an alternative teacher certification and endorsement program.</p> <p>ARM 10.57.102(5)(c) "Approved preparation program" means: An educator preparation program approved by a state board of education or state education agency that leads to licensure in the state of preparation.</p>
Recommendation(s)	Recommend initial approval to ABCTE until January 2026 at which time ABCTE will have to provide evidence of five items outlined in ARM 10.58.802(2) to be considered for full approval.



APPROVAL OF NEW CURRICULAR PROGRAMS
APPLICATION GUIDELINES

American Board

Administrative Rules of Montana 10.58.802

Step 1: Initial Approval	Date Submitted
Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) curriculum process and procedures.	n/a
Institutional body implements policy to add new programs.	n/a
Institutional governing body, i.e., board of directors, institutional leadership, or Board of Regents, as applicable, approves new program application.	n/a
Verification of regional accreditation.	n/a

Step 2: Application Process	Date Submitted
EPP completes the Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) to address Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM)10.58.802 Approval of New Curricular Programs.	October 2, 2023
EPP completes sections of the ISSR unit standards addressing how the new curricular program is aligned with ARM 10.58.311 – 315	October 2, 2023
EPP completes sections of the ISSR: ARM 10.58.501 Teaching Standards for endorsement subject areas; and specific sections of ARM related to the new program (i.e., ARM 10.58.523 Social Studies; ARM 10.58.518 Mathematics).	October 2, 2023
EPP provides support material and resources as needed to respond to the Specific ISSR Sections – use electronic links as applicable, e.g., online Web links containing additional resources and support material, catalogs, programs of studies, assessment system information, surveys of need.	October 2, 2023

Step 3: Application Submission	Date Submitted
EPP submits completed ISSR electronically to the OPI.	October 27, 2023

Step 4: Office Audit/Review	Date Submitted
OPI conducts the audit/review of the application materials.	November 2023
OPI provides an electronic report to EPP with comments and specific requests for additional documentation.	November 2023
EPP submits a follow-up report to OPI, as necessary.	November 2023
The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend initial approval status to the BPE based upon the review of documentation.	November 16-17, 2023: BPE Information Item January 18-19, 2024: BPE Action Item Postponed March 18, 2024: BPE Action

Step 5: EPP Audit/Review	Date Submitted
If the EPP is scheduled for a regular review, the new program is included in the regular review.	n/a
If the EPP is not scheduled for a regular review within the next two years, the OPI will conduct a review to verify the ISSR of the new curricular program meets the PEPP Standards.	January 2026
OPI facilitates the review to verify the ISSR meets the PEPP Standards of the new program.	January 2026
Reviews follow the approved state protocol based on the PEPP Standards.	January 2026

Step 6: Final Approval Process	Date Submitted
Review team submits the state exist report to the state superintendent.	
State Superintendent of Public Instruction makes recommendation to approve/disapprove the proposed new curricular program to the BPE based upon the site team report.	
BPE takes final action on the Superintendent's recommendation.	



ALTERNATIVE EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDERS: INITIAL APPROVAL PROCESS

Aligned to ARM [10.58.802](#) APPROVAL OF NEW CURRICULAR PROGRAM

To seek initial approval for a new curricular program, the following steps are required:

1. The provider may request the approval of a new curricular program by describing the purpose, need, and objectives of the program and the impact on P-12 education.
2. The provider submits evidence of the program aligned with the BPE Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) ARM 10.58.
3. The OPI facilitates a review of the submitted documentation and evidence.
4. The BPE-approved PEPPS will be used to guide the review process. The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend initial approval status to the BPE based upon the review of documentation.
5. If the recommendation from this meeting is to approve, the new provider is recognized as initially approved for two years until the provider demonstrates compliance with 10.58.802(2):

The provider:

- (a) ensures that the program of study is based on current research, proven practice, and emerging trends in this field of P-12 school curriculum;
- (b) works cooperatively with accredited school districts, education organizations, agencies, and P-20 stakeholders to design the program;
- (c) implements, assesses, and evaluates the program's impact on the identified P-12 needs;
- (d) submits regular and systematic reports of the program's impact on P-12 education to the state superintendent and the Board of Public Education; and
- (e) updates and maintains program information on its Web page.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – (Item 18)**

Tim Tharp

ITEM 18

**INFORMATION ON K-12 PAYMENT
SCHEDULE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025**

Barbara Quinn

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	K-12 Schools Payment Schedule for Fiscal Year 2025
Presenter	Barbara Quinn
Position Title	School Finance Senior Manager
Overview	As required by 20-9-344, MCA, the Board of Public Education approves the distribution of K-12 BASE aid for public education. This notice is to provide information to the BPE of proposed K-12 payment dates for FY2025 including the Significant Enrollment Increase (SEI) payment and to change the timing of the Indian Language Immersion Program (ILIP) payment from November to January. The OPI School Payment Schedule has been updated appropriately and is attached for your viewing.
Requested Decision(s)	Notice of change
Related Issue(s)	None.
Recommendation(s)	Notice provided to the BPE



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Elsie Arntzen, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov

Proposed PAYMENT SCHEDULE - FISCAL YEAR 2025

The following distribution dates for FY 2025 BASE aid payments to K-12 schools are proposed to the Montana Board of Public Education and scheduled according to 20-9-344, MCA.

August 27 Direct State Aid, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, Special Education, Technology, and Transportation Prepayment

September 25 Direct State Aid, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, and Special Education

October 28 Direct State Aid, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, and Special Education

November 22 Direct State Aid, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, and Special Education

December 20 Guaranteed Tax Base Aid for General Fund, State Coal Mitigation Block Grant, and County Retirement

January 28 Direct State Aid, Significant Enrollment Increase, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, Special Education, and Indian Language Immersion Payment

February 25 Direct State Aid, Significant Enrollment Increase, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, and Special Education

March 26 Direct State Aid, Significant Enrollment Increase, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, Special Education, and Transportation

April 25 Direct State Aid, Significant Enrollment Increase, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, and Special Education

May 27 Guaranteed Tax Base Aid, State Coal Mitigation Block Grant, State Major Maintenance Aid, Debt Service Assistance and County Retirement

June 25 Direct State Aid, Significant Enrollment Increase, Quality Educator Component, At Risk Component, Indian Education for All, Student Achievement Gap, Data for Achievement, Special Education, and Transportation

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – (Items 19-20)**

Renee Rasmussen

ITEM 19

**INITIAL REVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT'S
PROPOSED REVISIONS TO ARM TITLE 10,
CHAPTER 56, ASSESSMENT STANDARDS**

**Dr. Julie Murgel
Marie Judisch**

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Presentation on the initial review of revisions to ARM Title 10, Chapter 56, pertaining to Student Assessment Standards.
Presenter(s)	Marie Judisch Julie Murgel
Position Title	Teaching and Learning Senior Manager, Office of Public Instruction Chief Program Officer, Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>This agenda item is presented for the BPE to consider recommendations for revision of the rules as aligned with 10.56.</p> <p>In 2023, the Administrative Rule in Montana for School Accreditation, Title 10, Chapter 55, underwent a great deal of revisions. This, along with the implementation of an innovative through-year assessment for grades 3-8 in math and English language arts, the Montana Aligned to Standards Student Through-year (MAST), promoted the need to review the State Assessment Standards.</p> <p>Attached is summary document outlining the recommended changes from the Superintendent.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Information Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	



Montana Assessment Standards Revisions

Revision Summary for Proposed Amendments

ARM [Title 10, Chapter 56, Subchapter 1 Assessment Standards](#)

February 2024



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Prepared by:

- Marie Judisch, Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning
- Cedar Rose, State Assessment Director

Introduction

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, supported by the staff of the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), launched a process to review, revise, and update the Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM), [Title 10, Chapter 56, Subchapter 1 Assessment Standards](#). The Superintendent's vision was to update this set of standards after the revision of the accreditation standards, Title 10, Chapter 55, and to open the rules up for flexibility and clarity. Her vision and direction were to ensure the assessment standards and accreditation standards worked together for a comprehensive and coordinated set of educational standards.

Background

The Title 10, Chapter 56, Subchapter 1 rules were last reviewed in 2019. Since 2016, Montana adopted new science standards, established performance levels for the Grade 11 assessment (ACT with Writing), responded to the Title I Audit on Test Security, and submitted three assessments to Peer Review under the US Department of Education. These activities resulted in a need to review the 10.56.101 Student Assessment rules that commenced in 2019. The Student Assessment 2019 Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRC) considered the impact of any changes to the proposed rule and attempted to reach a consensus concerning a proposed rule and any other matter the committee determined was relevant to the proposed rule. The updates included restructuring from one standard, 10.56.10:Student Assessment, into five standards; 10.56.101: Student Assessment, 10.56.102: Participation, 10.56.103: Test Security, 10.56.104: Accessibility and Accommodations, and 10.56.105: Reporting.

In 2023, the Administrative Rule in Montana for School Accreditation, [Title 10, Chapter 55](#), underwent a great deal of revisions. This, along with the implementation of an innovative through-year assessment for grades 3-8 in math and English language arts, the [Montana Alternative Student Testing \(MAST\)](#), promoted the need to review the State Assessment Standards.

Summary of Superintendents Recommendations

In reviewing the rules, the OPI found opportunities for better alignment with the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#). This included copying the language from ESEA on the grade levels in which assessments were given, demonstrating the required grade bands versus specific grades. Revisions were also made to match the flexibility for when the assessments would take place throughout the year. In alignment with the revised accreditation standards from ARM title 10, chapter 55, connections were made throughout by listing the correlating accreditation rule.

Negotiated Rulemaking

As required by 2-5-104, Montana Code Annotated, the Superintendent convened a Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRC) to undertake an expanded public engagement and fact-finding process and to inform the articulation of her recommended revisions to the Montana Student assessment standards. The NRC consisted of thirteen members fulfilling the required roles, as listed in MCA (See Appendix B for a complete list). The NRC had a virtual orientation presented by the OPI, explaining the process and responsibilities of the committee and the background on why the rules were up for revision.

Rulemaking commenced on February 12, 2024 with a virtual session scheduled for the entire day. The committee voted to approve the proposed facilitator, Diane Groves, as well as the appointed committee members. The recording and meeting minutes can be found on the [OPI's website](#) under state assessment for review. The committee made proposals for consistency in language as well as alignment with ESEA language. The NRC determined the need for an Economic Impact Survey to be sent to the public in order to create an Economic Impact Statement as required by [2-4-405,MCA](#). The survey was dispersed February 16, 2024 with a due date of March 8, 2024.

Economic Impact Statement

In development upon receipt of economic impact survey.

Montana Assessment Standards Revisions

ARM RULE PROPOSAL - 10.56.101 - STUDENT ASSESSMENT		
10.56.101 - Student Assessment	Proposed Revision	Rationale
(1) By the authority of 20-2-121 (12), MCA and ARM 10.55.603 , the Board of Public Education adopts rules for state-level assessment in the public schools and those private schools seeking accreditation.	(1) By the authority of 20-2-121(12), MCA and ARM 10.55.603, the Board of Public Education (board) adopts rules for state-level assessment in the public schools and those private schools seeking accreditation.	Updated to show Board of Public Education as (board) for consistency throughout rules.
(2) The Board of Public Education (board) recognizes that the primary purpose of assessment is to serve learning. A balanced assessment system including formative, interim, and summative assessments aligned to state content standards, will provide an integrated approach to meeting both classroom learning needs and school and state level information needs . A balanced assessment system is structured to continuously improve teaching and learning and to inform education policy.	(2)The Board of Public Education (board) <u>board</u> recognizes that the primary purpose of assessment is to serve learning. An <u>assessment system that includes multiple measures and is aligned to state content and program delivery</u> standards will provide an integrated approach to <u>inform student learning, progression, growth, and proficiency</u> . An assessment system is structured to continuously improve teaching and learning and to inform education policy.	In alignment with recent revisions to the accreditation standards, namely 10.55.603 , this language allows for flexibility beyond, but not exclusive, of a summative assessment. Revision demonstrates inclusion of program delivery standards - Title 10, Chapter 55, Subchapters 11-18, 21 - 23 10.55.601 outlines the elements of the Integrated Strategic Action Plan, including '(d) a description of strategies for assessing student progress toward meeting

		<p>all content standards, pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.55.603 and 10.56.101;</p> <p>The terminology of 'balanced assessment' is connected to the current vendor and their model. Updating this language opens up the potential for other models.</p>
<p>(3) The obligation for funding the assessments is the responsibility of the state. This chapter may not be construed to require a school district to provide these assessments if the state does not have a current contract with test vendors for provision of these assessments to Montana school districts.</p>	<p>(3)The obligation for funding the <u>statewide</u> assessments is the responsibility of the state. This chapter may not be construed to require a school district to provide these assessments if the state does not have a current contract with test vendors for provision of these assessments to Montana school districts.</p>	<p>Updated to add 'statewide' for consistency throughout assessment rules.</p>
<p>(4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend in writing to the board any modifications to the single system of state level assessment as set forth in (2). The board may consider recommended modifications as an information item on an agenda at a board meeting. At that meeting, the board may vote to list the recommendations as an action item on the agenda of a subsequent board meeting. Unless approved by the board, no recommended modifications are effective and no accredited schools may implement the recommended modifications.</p>	<p>(4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend in writing to the board any modifications to the single system of <u>statewide level</u> assessments as set forth in (2). The board may consider recommended modifications as an information item on an agenda at a board meeting. At that meeting, the board may vote to list the recommendations as an action item on the agenda of a subsequent board meeting. Unless approved by the board, no recommended modifications are effective and no accredited schools may implement the recommended modifications.</p>	<p>Updated to add 'statewide' for consistency throughout assessment rules.</p> <p>Removed 'the single system of' for clarity.</p>

(5) When developing a recommendation to the board for adopting statewide assessments the Superintendent of Public Instruction will include implications including alignment to content standards.	Keep as written	
(6) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall:	Keep as written	
(a) ensure Montana educators participate in the process;	Keep as written	
(b) ensure that all statewide test items are field tested before being used to determine proficiency; and	Keep as written	
(c) request approval from the board to allow for census field testing before determining proficiencies.	Keep as written	

ARM RULE PROPOSAL - 10.56.102 - PARTICIPATION

Original ARM Language	Proposed Revision	Rationale
(1) By the authority of 20-2-121(11), MCA, and ARM 10.55.603, the Board of Public of Education (board) adopts rules for statewide assessment in all public and accredited nonpublic schools.	Keep as written	
(2) Statewide assessments approved by the Board shall be administered in all public and accredited nonpublic schools.	(2) Statewide assessments approved by the B board shall be administered in all public and accredited nonpublic schools.	Updated to show Board of Public Education as (board) for consistency throughout rules.

<p>(3) School districts shall annually administer statewide assessments to all students in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations that meet or exceed the following specifications:</p>	<p>Keep as written</p>	
<p>(a) English language arts and mathematics assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards in English language arts and mathematics and administered in grades 3-8 and 11;</p>	<p>(a) English language arts and mathematics assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards in English language arts and mathematics and administered in grades 3-8 and <u>at least once in grades 9-12.</u></p>	<p>Alignment with ESEA language, allows for flexibility, (ESSA Section 1111).</p>
<p>(b) Science assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards for science and administered in grades 5, 8, and 11; and</p>	<p><u>(b) Science assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards for science and administered once in grades band 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12; and</u></p>	<p>Alignment with ESEA language, allows for flexibility, (ESSA Section 1111).</p>
<p>(c) Assessments shall be administered in the spring of each year.</p>	<p>(c) Statewide assessments <u>approved by the board</u> shall be administered in all public and accredited nonpublic schools <u>within the statewide assessment windows.</u></p>	<p>This rule constrains assessment to spring for assessments. Removing this allows for flexibility in assessment windows throughout the year.</p>
<p>(4) State-level assessments aligned to Montana-English language proficiency standards shall be administered to all students identified as English Learners (EL) in grades (K-12). These assessments shall be administered mid-school year.</p>	<p>(4) State-level <u>wide</u> assessments aligned to Montana-English language proficiency standards shall be administered to all students identified as English Learners (EL) in grades (K-12) <u>within the statewide assessment window.</u></p>	<p>Time constraint to mid-year are unnecessary for EL assessments. Updated language for consistency to include 'statewide'.</p>
<p>(5) The Board of Public Education may approve alternative grade levels and timelines for the administration of statewide assessments due to the availability of assessments and other academic factors.</p>	<p>(5) The Board of Public Education may approve alternative grade levels and timelines for the administration of statewide assessments due to the availability of assessments and other academic factors.</p>	<p>Consistency in using 'board' rather than Board of Public education throughout.</p>
<p>(6) School districts shall use guidance provided by the Office of Public Instruction to inform parents/guardians</p>	<p>(6) School districts shall use guidance provided by the Office of Public Instruction to inform parents/guardians</p>	<p>Federal Requirement: provide parents with transparency on testing including participation requirements, time</p>

about statewide assessments, including:	about statewide assessments, pursuant to 10.55.601 and 10.55.722 , including:	requirements, and information available from the assessments in a timely manner (ESSA Section 1112) 10.55.601 updated, including (d) a description of strategies for assessing student progress toward meeting all content standards, pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.55.603 and 10.56.101; this shows a connection amongst the accreditation and assessment standards.
(a) the purpose;	Keep as written	
(b) the source of the requirement;	Keep as written	
(c) when the information about student performance is provided to teachers and parents;	(c) when the information about student performance is provided to teachers relevant educators and specialists and parents/ guardians	Ensuring student privacy is explicit for who has access to student performance reports. Added 'guardians' for inclusivity for all families
(d) how teachers, principals, and district officials use the information about student performance; and	(d) how relevant educators and specialists teachers , principals, and district officials use the information about student performance; and	Ensuring student privacy was explicit for who has access to student performance reports
(e) how parents can use that information to help their child.	(e) how parents/ guardians can use that information to help their child.	Added 'guardians' for inclusivity for all families

ARM RULE PROPOSAL - 10.56.103 - TEST SECURITY

Original ARM Language	Proposed Revision	Rationale
(1) The Office of Public Instruction has the responsibility to audit test administration activities to monitor adherence to test security and best practices without undue disruption to	Keep as written	These rules are all federally mandated to protect assessment items for reliable, valid assessments

schools.		
(2) All statewide assessments must be administered to students only by school district employees who have been trained and are familiar with standardized testing procedures.	Keep as written	
(3) Suspected violations of test security must immediately be reported to the Office of Public Instruction.	Keep as written	
(4) Failure to comply with the test administration and security requirements may result in the Office of Public Instruction making a recommendation for consequences to the Board of Public Education for further action within the limits of its authority.	Keep as written	

ARM RULE PROPOSAL - 10.56.104 -ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Original ARM Language	Proposed Revision	Rationale
(1) Schools shall administer statewide assessments with or without accommodations based on individual student needs consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations.	Keep as written	These rules are all federally mandated to protect assessment items for reliable, valid assessments (ESSA Section 1111)
(2) The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team for a student shall determine if the student meets the eligibility criteria for the statewide alternate assessment based on the alternate achievement standards.	Keep as written	

<p>(3) Schools shall use the guidance from the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify English Learners (EL) and annually monitor individual progress in acquiring academic English consistent with all state and federal laws and regulations.</p>	<p>Keep as written</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">ARM RULE PROPOSAL - 10.56.10 -REPORTING</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Original ARM Language</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Proposed Revision</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Rationale</p>
<p>(1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a report of the annual state assessment results to the Legislature and the Board of Public Education.</p>	<p>(1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide <u>an annual</u> report of the annual-statewide assessment results to the Legislature and the Board of Public Education.</p>	<p>Language updated for clarification and consistency</p>
<p>(2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make available student assessment data in compliance with confidentiality requirements of federal and state law (20-7-104, MCA). To facilitate transparency, the statewide assessment results released to the public shall be accompanied by a clear statement of the purpose, subject areas assessed, description of proficiency levels, and the percentage of students who participated in the assessments.</p>	<p>(2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make available student assessment <u>data results</u> in compliance with confidentiality requirements of federal and state law (20-7-104, MCA). To facilitate transparency, the statewide assessment results released to the public shall be accompanied by a clear statement of the purpose, subject areas assessed, description of proficiency levels, and the percentage of students who participated in the assessments.</p>	<p>Language updated for clarification and consistency</p>
<p>(3) Statewide <u>assessment results</u> are a part of each student's permanent record as described in compliance with 20-1-213 and 20-7-104, MCA.</p>	<p>(3) <u>Annual</u> Sstatewidesummative-proficiency-levels <u>assessment results</u> are a part of each student's permanent record as described in compliance with 20-1-213 and 20-7-104, MCA.</p>	<p>Federal Requirement: provide timely individual student reports to parents, teachers, and principals and include the results on local report cards (ESSA Section 1111).</p> <p>Clarifies what results go into students' cumulative records.</p>

Appendix A: Negotiated Rulemaking Committee (NRC)

NRC Member Name	NRC Role	Location
Michael Grizzaffi	K-12 Educator	Columbus
Dana Haring	K-12 Educator	Kalispell
Beverly Chin	Higher Education Faculty, Taxpayer	Missoula
Justine Alberts	Parent, Higher Education	Helena
Erin Hunt	K-12 Educator	Helena
Heather Marcella	School Business Manager	Clinton
Brian Kessler	K-12 School Administrator	East Helena
Corey Barron	K-12 School Administrator	Harlem
Leslie DiMaio	K-12 Educator	Columbia Falls
Jordann Lankford	K-12 Educator, MT Tribe Representative	Great Falls
Sue Corrigan	School District Trustee	Kalispell
Julie Murgel	Office of Public Instruction	Helena
Marie Judisch	Office of Public Instruction	Ledger

Appendix B: Montana Office of Public Instruction Project Leadership

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Christy Mock-Stutz, Assistant Superintendent

Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer

Marie Judisch, Teaching and Learning Senior Manager

Cedar Rose, Assessment Director

Aimee Konzen, Professional Learning Manager

Sheri Harlow, Administrative Support

DRAFT

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of) NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
ARM 10.56.101, 10.56.102, and) PROPOSED AMENDMENT
10.56.105 pertaining to Assessment)
Standards.)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On May 2, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. the Board of Public Education (board) will hold a public hearing in Room 152 of Montana State Capitol, in Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed amendment of the above-stated rules.

2. The board will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the Board of Public Education no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 22, 2024, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 North Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, MT, 59620-0601; or email bpe@mt.gov.

3. The rules as proposed to be amended provides as follows, new matter underlined, deleted matter interlined:

10.56.101 – STUDENT ASSESSMENT

(1) ~~By the authority of 20-2-121(12), MCA and ARM 10.55.603, the~~ The Board of Public Education (board) adopts rules for state-level assessment in the public schools and those private schools seeking accreditation.

(2) ~~The Board of Public Education (board)~~ board recognizes that the primary purpose of assessment is to serve learning. ~~A balanced assessment system including formative, interim, and summative assessments aligned to state content standards, will provide an integrated approach to meeting both classroom learning needs and school and state level information needs. An assessment system that includes multiple measures and is aligned to state content and program delivery standards will provide an integrated approach to inform student learning, progression, growth, and proficiency. A balanced~~ An assessment system is structured to continuously improve teaching and learning and to inform education policy.

(3) The obligation for funding ~~the~~ statewide assessments is the responsibility of the state. This chapter may not be construed to require a school district to provide these assessments if the state does not have a current contract with test vendors for provision of these assessments to Montana school districts.

(4) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall recommend in writing to the board any modifications to ~~the single system of state level assessment~~ statewide assessments as set forth in (2). The board may consider recommended modifications as an information item on an agenda at a board meeting. At that meeting, the board

may vote to list the recommendations as an action item on the agenda of a subsequent board meeting. Unless approved by the board, no recommended modifications are effective and no accredited schools may implement the recommended modifications.

(5) through (6) remain the same.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-7-402, MCA

10.56.102 - PARTICIPATION

(1) remains the same.

(2) Statewide assessments approved by the ~~Board~~ board shall be administered in all public and accredited nonpublic schools.

(3) School districts shall annually administer statewide assessments to all students in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations that meet or exceed the following specifications:

(a) English language arts and mathematics assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards in English language arts and mathematics and administered in grades 3-8 and 11 at least once in grades 9-12.

(b) Science assessments shall be aligned to Montana content standards for science and administered in not less than one time during grades 5, 8, and 11 ~~5, 8, and 11~~ 3-5, 6-9, and 10-12; and

(c) ~~Assessments shall be administered in the spring of each year.~~ Statewide assessments shall be administered in all public and accredited nonpublic schools within the statewide assessment windows established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(4) ~~State-level~~ Statewide assessments aligned to Montana-English language proficiency standards shall be administered to all students identified as English Learners (EL) in grades (K-12). ~~These assessments shall be administered mid-school year.~~ within the statewide assessment window established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

(5) ~~The Board of Public Education~~ board may approve alternative grade levels and timelines for the administration of statewide assessments due to the availability of assessments and other academic factors.

(6) School districts shall use guidance provided by the Office of Public Instruction to inform parents/guardians about statewide assessments, pursuant to 10.55.601 and 10.55.722, including:

(a) and (b) remain the same.

(c) when the information about student performance is provided to ~~teachers~~ relevant educators and specialists and parents/guardians;

(d) how ~~teachers~~ relevant educators and specialists, principals, and district officials use the information about student performance; and

(e) how parents/guardians can use that information to help their child.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-7-402, MCA

10.56.105 – REPORTING

(1) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall provide a an annual report of the annual state statewide assessment results to the Legislature and the Board of Public Education board.

(2) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall make available student assessment data results in compliance with confidentiality requirements of federal and state law (~~20-7-104, MCA~~). To facilitate transparency, the statewide assessment results released to the public shall be accompanied by a clear statement of the purpose, subject areas assessed, description of proficiency levels, and the percentage of students who participated in the assessments.

(3) Statewide Annual assessment results are a part of each student's permanent record as described in compliance with 20-1-213 and 20-7-104, MCA.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, 20-7-402, MCA

REASON: The board proposes these amendments to better align the assessment standards with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This alignment allows assessments to be administered during broader grade bands rather than during specific grade levels. The proposed amendments also provide flexibility by establishing statewide assessment windows when the assessments could be administered during the school year. The proposed amendments also include cross-references to accreditation standards from ARM title 10, chapter 55 to emphasize the importance of communication with parents/guardians about statewide assessments. The proposed amendments also include clarity and consistency of language used in the rules.

4. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments either orally or in writing at the hearing. Written data, views, or arguments may also be submitted to: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 North Last Chance Gulch, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0300; or email bpe@mt.gov and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 10, 2024.

5. McCall Flynn, executive director of the board, has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

6. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by this agency. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, email, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by email unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Such written request may be mailed or delivered to the contact person in 4 above or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the board.

7. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's web site at <http://sos.mt.gov/ARM/Register>.

MAR Notice No. 10-55-286

8. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

9. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the board has determined that the amendment of the above-referenced rules will not significantly and directly impact small businesses.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State April 2, 2024.

ITEM 20

**ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE
PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 56, ASSESSMENT
STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF
THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF
STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE
MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER**

Renee Rasmussen

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Presentation on action item pertaining to ARM 10.56, Student Assessment Standards
Presenter(s)	Marie Judisch Julie Murgel
Position Title	Senior Manager of Teaching and Learning, Office of Public Instruction Chief Program Officer, Office of Public Instruction
Overview	This agenda item is presented to the BPE for action on the proposed notice of public hearing pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 56, student assessment standards and to authorize filing of the notice with the secretary of state for publication in the Montana administrative register.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approve the notice of public hearing and authorization to file the notice with SOS in MAR.





Board of Public Education

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TIMELINE PROPOSED CHAPTER 56 RULES ASSESSMENT STANDARDS

- BPE approves rulemaking timeline March 18, 2024
- Proposal notice to BPE for consideration March 18, 2024
- BPE authorization to publish proposal notice, including public hearing date March 18, 2024
- Proposal notice to SOS for publication in MAR April 2, 2024
- MAR publication of proposal notice April 12, 2024
 - Public comment begins
- Public hearing date May 2, 2024
- Final public comment deadline May 10, 2024
- Adoption notice to BPE for consideration/respond to comments** May 9-10, 2024
- BPE authorization to publish adoption notice July 17-19, 2024
- Adoption notice to SOS for publication in MAR July 30, 2024
- MAR publication of adoption notice August 9, 2024
- Effective date of rules August 9, 2024

***The Board recognizes that there may be additional public comments that are submitted on May 9 or 10 that will need to be responded to via action at the July 17-19 meeting.*

**The Board of Public Education may revise the above dates, based on the requirements of the Montana Administrative Procedure Act and the rulemaking statutes.*

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – (Items 21-26)**

Madalyn Quinlan

ITEM 21

**INFORMATION ON PROPOSED PRAXIS
TEST SCORE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Praxis Test Review- Special Education
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Director of Accreditation and Licensure Office of Public Instruction
Overview	The current Special Education Test #5354 will be retiring in August 2024. The regenerated test (#5355) will need a qualifying score set for the state of Montana. This is a brief overview of the timeline for this process and action will be requested at the May BPE meeting.
Requested Decision(s)	None
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Information Item Only



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Elsie Arntzen, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov



ETS Praxis Special Education Test Review Informational Item

- The Special Education Foundational Knowledge Test #5354 will be retiring, and the state will need to adopt Test #5355 this summer.
- Expert Panel met virtually on February 7, 2024, from 2-4 pm
 - 14 voting panelists – 2 OPI, 2 EPP, 10 teachers, and/or district/coop-level sped directors
- Praxis Working Committee (PWC) met virtually on February 27, 2024, from 10-11 am
 - Committee reviewed panel recommendation and set own recommendation
- The Montana Council of Deans of Education (MCDE) will meet in April to discuss and make their recommendation to present to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- May BPE Meeting- The superintendent will request action on her recommended score for the Special Education Foundational Knowledge test #5355.

What has Changed?

Previous 5354		Redesigned 5355	
Content Categories	Approximate Percentage of Examination	Content Categories	Approximate Percentage of Examination
I. Development and Characteristics of Learners	20%	I. Human Development and Individual Learning Differences	26 %
II. Planning and the Learning Environment	23%	II. Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments	32 %
III. Instruction	23%	III. Assessment	23 %
IV. Assessment	18%	IV. Professional Learning, Practice, and Collaboration	19 %
V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities	20%		

ITEM 22

**ACTION ON GRASS RANGE ANNUAL
REPORT PERTAINING TO THE MONTANA
ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANT
PROGRAM**

Krystal Smith

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 18, 2024

Presentation	Grass Range MT Advanced Opportunities Annual Report
Presenter(s)	Krystal Smith
Position Title	Education Innovation Manager of Office of Public Instruction
Overview	The MT Advanced Opportunities annual report window closed on Monday, January 8 th at 5pm. At that time, the Grass Range annual report was not received. It has since been successfully submitted and needs to be qualified by the Board of Public Education for Grass Range to be funded in FY2025 for the MT Advanced Opportunities grant.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	N/A
Recommendation(s)	Approve Grass Range's annual report





Montana Advanced Opportunities Grant Annual Report 2023

As a participating school district that has received funding through the Montana Advanced Opportunities Grant (HB 257) the completion and submission of this annual report is required to demonstrate continued qualification for funding. The completed document is submitted on the [OPI MT Advanced Opportunities Webpage](#).

The window for submission of this annual report opens Monday, December 4, 2023 at 8am MST. The annual report is due by Monday, January 8, 2024 at 5pm MST.

SECTION 1: General Information

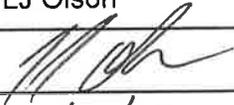
District Name	Grass Range Schools
LEA #	0268 and 0269
Submitter's Full Name	Tim Majerus
Email	tmajerus@grps.k12.mt.us
Contact Phone Number	406-428-2341
Amount of Funding Received	0268 = \$830.37 0269 = \$2601.03
FY 2024 Expenditures to Date	0268 = \$0 0269 = \$530
Current Balance	0268 = \$1425.14 0269 = \$2601.03

SECTION 2: Progress Toward Measurable Objective

Measurable Objective from District's Advanced Opportunity Plan	Increase the academic opportunities for high school students by assisting with online/distance delivery courses. With only one section of each class we are limited in our opportunities within our schedule to have a student make up credit. MTDA is our only option.
Progress made	We have been able to increase the use of MDTA for credit recovery.
Measurable Objective from District's Advanced Opportunity Plan	Work-based learning program - With limited CTE courses available in our small school the use of work based learning is a solution for students with a strong interest in CTE occupations. Funds will be available to defer some of the additional cost to the students
Progress made	We have a student who works with a business the last period of the day and until closing hours. This program has led into a job beyond the school hours. MTAO funds were used to help defer the cost of required safety equipment needed for his work.
Measurable Objective from District's Advanced Opportunity Plan	Reduce the cost of CTE courses for students and parents.
Progress made	We have two opportunities in which MTAO funds will help reduce fees. First, each year students are charged a \$10 fee to participate in our FFA program. Secondly is to offset the student cost of special presenters to train students in a particular skill. This year we've already had a metal art project and in February a second presenter will come for a leatherworking project. There is a fee for both projects as students create individual projects.
Measurable Objective from District's Advanced Opportunity Plan	Reinstate a Drivers' Education program – We are currently working with the Lewistown School District to join their spring/summer program. Funds will be utilized to defer the additional cost to our students for the instructor come work with just our students for the driving portion of the course.
Progress made	This will begin in May.

SECTION 3: Additional Information

<p>Identify each Opportunity Afforded to a Student (template linked)</p>	<p>Career exploratory trainings. Online courses for credit recovery Online courses for career related trainings Additional cost of drivers' education course due to our location Fees for membership in FFA</p>
<p>Summary of Projected Growth in the Program</p>	<p>It's my goal as the new superintendent to identify and provide opportunities for individual pathways by increasing workplace experiences. Because of our rural location, the most feasible option to exposing students to bring training sessions to our school. It's also my goal to expand career related online courses that help lead students to certifications. This includes a return to the EMT course through Central Montana Medical Center and Fergus High School.</p>
<p>Funding Needs for Next Biennium</p>	<p>It's my goal to expand to the point that we go beyond the MTOA funding and will need to seek further resources.</p>
<p>Issues Reported by Stakeholders and How Issues are being Addressed</p>	<p>The greatest issues are due to our rural location and the limited variety of courses due to a small teaching staff. Another limitation is the lack of a variety of businesses in our community for work experiences. The solution is to bring trainings to the students and to access online resources. If we gained anything from the COVID experience is the increased quality and accessibility of online instruction.</p>
<p>Pictures, Graphs, and/or Narratives Sharing the Impact of Advanced Opportunities Funds on Students</p>	

<p>School Board Chair Printed Name</p>	<p>LJ Olson</p>
<p>School Board Chair Signature</p>	
<p>Date of Signature</p>	<p>11/23/24</p>

ITEM 23

**ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION
PERTAINING TO THE AMENDMENT OF
ARM, TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STANDARDS,
AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE
NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF
STATE'S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION IN
THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER**

Madalyn Quinlan

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of) NOTICE OF ADOPTION
ARM 10.53.301 through 10.53.305)
pertaining to English Language)
Proficiency Content Standards)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On February 9, 2024, the Board of Public Education (board) published MAR No. 10-53-139 pertaining to the public hearing on the proposed adoption of the above-stated rules at page 172 of the 2024 Montana Administrative Register, Issue Number 3.

2. The board has adopted the following rules as proposed: ARM 10.53.301, 10.53.302, 10.57.303, 10.57.304, and 10.53.305.

3. No comments or testimony were received.

4. The rules adopted in this notice are effective July 1, 2025.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State April 2, 2024.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of) NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
ARM 10.53.301 through 10.53.305) PROPOSED AMENDMENT
pertaining to English Language)
Proficiency Content Standards)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On March 5, 2024, at 9:00 a.m., the Board of Public Education (board) will hold a public hearing in Room 152 of the Montana State Capitol in Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed amendment of the above-stated rules.

2. The board will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the board no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 23, 2024, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0300; or email bpe@mt.gov.

3. The rules as proposed to be amended provide as follows, new matter underlined, deleted matter interlined:

10.53.301 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARD 1

(1) To satisfy the requirements of English language proficiency content standard 1, English language learners ~~must~~ communicate for social and instructional purposes within the school setting.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

10.53.302 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARD 2

(1) To satisfy the requirements of English language proficiency content standard 2, English language learners ~~must~~ communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

10.53.303 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARD 3

(1) To satisfy the requirements of English language proficiency content standard 3, English language learners ~~must~~ communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

10.53.304 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARD 4

(1) To satisfy the requirements of English language proficiency content standard 4, English language learners ~~must~~ communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

10.53.305 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CONTENT STANDARD 5

(1) To satisfy the requirements of English language proficiency content standard 5, English language learners ~~must~~ communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-121, MCA

REASON: The board proposes to amend these rules, which were last amended in 2011, to align with the WIDA English Language Development Framework, 2020 Edition.

4. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed action in writing to: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620; telephone (406) 444-0300; or email bpe@mt.gov and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on March 8, 2024.

5. McCall Flynn, executive director of the Board of Public Education, has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

6. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by the board. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, email, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by email unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Such written request may be mailed or delivered to the contact person in paragraph 4 or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the board.

7. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's web site at <http://sosmt.gov/ARM/Register>.

8. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

9. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the board has determined that the amendment of the above-referenced rules will not significantly and directly impact small businesses

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State January 30, 2024.

ITEM 24

**ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION
PERTAINING TO THE AMENDMENT OF
ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS
AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE
NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF
STATE'S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION IN
THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER**

Madalyn Quinlan

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of)	NOTICE OF ADOPTION AND
ARM 10.63.101, 10.63.102,)	REPEAL
10.63.103, 10.63.104, 10.63.107,)	
10.63.109, 10.63.110, 10.63.111,)	
10.63.112, 10.63.113, 10.63.114, and)	
10.63.115 and the repeal of ARM)	
10.63.108 pertaining to early)	
childhood education standards)	

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On February 9, 2024, the Board of Public Education (board) published MAR Notice No. 10-63-270 pertaining to the public hearing on the proposed amendment and repeal of the above-stated rules at page 185 of the 2024 Montana Administrative Register, Issue Number 3.

2. The board has repealed the following rule as proposed: ARM 10.63.108.

3. The board has adopted the following rules as proposed: ARM 10.63.101, 10.63.102, 10.63.103, 10.63.104, 10.63.107, 10.63.109, 10.63.110, 10.63.111, 10.63.112, 10.63.113, 10.63.114, and 10.63.115.

4. No comments or testimony were received.

5. The rules adopted in this notice are effective April 12, 2024.

/s/ McCall Flynn
 McCall Flynn
 Executive Director
 Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
 Tim Tharp
 Chair
 Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State April 2, 2024.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the amendment of)	NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
ARM 10.63.101, 10.63.102,)	PROPOSED AMENDMENT AND
10.63.103, 10.63.104, 10.63.107,)	REPEAL
10.63.109, 10.63.110, 10.63.111,)	
10.63.112, 10.63.113, 10.63.114, and)	
10.63.115 and the repeal of ARM)	
10.63.108 pertaining to early)	
childhood education standards)	

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On March 5, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., the Board of Public Education (board) will hold a public hearing in Room 152 of the Montana State Capitol in Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed amendment and repeal of the above-stated rules.

2. The board will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the board no later than 5:00 p.m. on February 23, 2024, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0300; or e-mail bpe@mt.gov.

3. The rules proposed to be amended provide as follows, new matter underlined, deleted matter interlined:

10.63.101 APPLICATION AND PROCEDURES (1) The early childhood education standards are focused on developmentally appropriate supports and strategies to enhance learning outcomes for a child between the ages of 3 and 5 for preschool programs and between the ages of 4 and 5 for early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten. Use of these standards for a public preschool program is subject to the funding limits of 20-7-117(2) and 20-9-311(7)(a), MCA. Use of these standards for early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten is subject to the provisions of Title 20, chapter 7, part 18, MCA.

~~(4)~~(2) The trustees of a school district, pursuant to Title 20, chapter 6, MCA, may establish a public preschool early childhood education program to meet the unique developmental needs for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years for preschool programs and between the ages of 4 and 5 for early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten. When preschool early childhood education programs are established they must be an integral part of the

public school and must be governed according to the following accreditation standards for the ~~preschool~~ early childhood education standards of early learning content and accreditation in coordination with the standards outlined for schools within ARM Title 10, chapter 55, excluding 10.55.601, 10.55.602, 10.55.603, 10.55.704, 10.55.705, 10.55.709, 10.55.710, 10.55.712, 10.55.715, and ARM Title 10, chapter 55, subchapters 10 through 21. For the purposes of the accreditation process detailed in ARM 10.55.606, ~~preschool~~ early childhood education programs will be assessed on the program's assurance standards only.

(2)(3) ~~Preschool~~ Early childhood education programs shall meet this chapter's curriculum, instruction, and program delivery standards, supporting children's development of the knowledge and skills outlined in the content standards in ~~subchapter 3~~ ARM 10.63.110, which describe the expectations for what young children should know, understand, and be able to do across the four core developmental domains of learning upon entrance to kindergarten.

(3)(4) Montana's ~~preschool~~ early childhood education standards shall be reviewed and revised on a five-year cycle beginning July 1, 2017 recurring schedule with input from representatives of accredited schools.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.102 DEFINITIONS (1) For the purposes of this chapter, the following terms apply:

(a) "Accreditation" means certification by the Board of Public Education that a school meets the adopted standards of the Board of Public Education for a specified school year.

(b) "Assessment" means the gathering, organizing, and evaluation of information about student learning in order to monitor and measure student learning, the effectiveness of the instructional program, and to inform local policies and decisions.

(c) "Developmental domain" means the broad, interrelated categories or dimensions of early childhood development reflective of ~~preschool~~ early childhood education children's learning and growth. The four core domains include ~~emotional/social and emotional~~, physical, ~~communication language~~, and cognitive.

(d) "Early childhood curriculum" means an articulated educational plan for young children, which is grounded in research-based understandings of child development and developmentally appropriate practices. Curriculum guides the teaching process from identifying what to teach, including early content standards in each of the four developmental domains and how to teach, including developing learning experiences based upon individual and group outcomes, and assessing what was learned then using this data to inform future planning and teaching. For early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten, the curriculum must embrace the four developmental domains while focusing on the subject of literacy with a goal of establishing a trajectory leading to reading proficiency at the end of third grade.

(e) "Learning center" means a self-contained area of the classroom featuring a wide variety of hands-on materials that children can choose and use independently which are organized around a curriculum area (science, math, art, music, dramatic play, literacy) or a specific kind of play material (blocks, sensory, manipulative).

(f) "~~Paraprofessional, assistant teacher, or teacher aide~~" means an adult with the qualifications detailed in ~~ARM 10.63.115~~ 10.63.105 who works under the direct supervision of a teacher and who may work independently in a teacher's absence, but for the majority of the time works directly with the teacher in the same space with the same group of students.

(g) "Teacher" means a licensed individual as defined in ARM 10.55.602, with primary responsibility for a group or class of ~~preschool~~ early childhood education students.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.103 LEADERSHIP (1) The program leadership shall effectively implement policies, procedures, and systems that support stable staff and strong personnel, fiscal, and program management so all students, families, and staff have high-quality experiences.

(2) Professional development for ~~preschool~~ early childhood education educators as required by ARM 10.55.714 should be tailored to early childhood development and learning.

(3) Professional development completed by elementary (K-8) educators providing early literacy targeted interventions should be tailored to such interventions. The elementary (K-8) educators providing early literacy targeted interventions, the employing districts, and accredited educator preparation providers, pursuant to ARM 10.58.102, are encouraged to collaborate to develop professional development options that support attainment of qualifications leading to an early childhood education (P-3) endorsement.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.104 TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC PRESCHOOL AND EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

(1) Teachers shall be assigned at the levels for which they are licensed and endorsed in accordance with state statutes and Board of Public Education rules.

(2) Teachers with an ~~Early Childhood Education Special Permissive Competency~~ early childhood (P-3) endorsement shall be considered to be appropriately licensed, endorsed, and assigned to teach in an accredited preschool program until July 1, 2018, at which time those teachers will need to be appropriately licensed and endorsed pursuant to ARM Title 10, chapter 57.

(3) While teachers with an early childhood (P-3) endorsement are encouraged, teachers with either an early childhood (P-3) endorsement or an elementary (K-8) endorsement shall be considered to be appropriately licensed, endorsed, and assigned to teach early literacy targeted interventions implemented

through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten. Teachers with an elementary (K-8) endorsement who are teaching early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten are encouraged to pursue professional development as outlined in 10.63.103 to ensure delivery of high-quality early literacy targeted interventions.

~~(3) All other teachers or individuals with background, training, or experience in early childhood that are interested in teaching in a public school preschool program may apply for a Class 5 provisional license pursuant to ARM 10.57.424, if they do not have the proper endorsement.~~

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.107 CLASS SIZE (1) There must be one appropriately licensed and endorsed teacher for ten students, with an early childhood paraprofessional for any additional students over ten, for up to no more than 18 total students in a classroom with two adults. The school district must assign qualified human resources that comply with all fingerprint and background check requirements when exceeding maximum class sizes at a rate of 1 1/2 hours per day, per student overload. An overload of five students per classroom is considered excessive.

~~(2) Class size of 18 preschoolers is the maximum number of students, regardless of the number of staff.~~

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.109 ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY (1) A child must have reached three years of age before the districts' official start date of the preschool program or have been enrolled by special permission by the board of trustees.

(2) A child who is 4 years of age or older on or before September 10th of the year in which the child is to participate in early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten and who has not completed kindergarten and who is determined through the evaluation methodology process outlined in [NEW RULE I in Notice No. 10-54-292] to be below a trajectory leading to reading proficiency at the end of third grade is eligible for enrollment in early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.110 EARLY LEARNING CONTENT STANDARDS DEVELOPMENTAL DOMAINS AND CONTENT STANDARDS (1) The following early learning developmental domains represent the foundational skills all students need to be successful learners. The development of communication, language, and literacy

skills supports the growth in all other domains of development. All developmental domains are applicable for public preschool programs and early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten.

(a) The language domain includes communication and comprehension in oral and written language.

(i) Language instruction includes opportunities for students to develop:

(A) receptive language, wherein students use listening and observation skills to make sense of and respond to spoken language and other forms of communication; enter into the exchange of information around what is seen, heard, and experienced; and begin to acquire an understanding of the concepts of language that contribute to learning;

(B) expressive language, wherein students develop skills in using sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and words, such as to help others understand their needs, ask questions, express feelings and ideas, and solve problems;

(C) social language, wherein students develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways; and

(D) support for dual language speakers, wherein students receive support in their home language(s) while becoming proficient in English.

(ii) Literacy instruction includes opportunities for students to develop:

(A) written language, wherein students build an understanding and interest in the symbols, sounds, and rhythms of written language and develop awareness that the printed word can be used for various purposes;

(B) written communication, wherein students develop interest and skill in using symbols as a meaningful form of communication;

(C) print awareness, wherein students build an understanding that print carries a message through symbols and words and that there is a connection between sounds and letters (the alphabetic principle); and

(D) speech development, wherein students develop an awareness of the sounds of letters and the combination of letters that make up words and use this awareness to manipulate syllables and sounds of speech.

(4)(b) The ~~emotional and social and emotional~~ domain requires instruction which incorporates and: includes culture, family, community as well as social and emotional development.

(a)(i) Culture, family, and community, wherein students learn to develop skills instruction includes opportunities for students to develop:

(i)(A) an awareness of and appreciation for similarities and differences between themselves and others;

(ii)(B) an awareness of the functions and diverse characteristics of families; and

(iii)(C) an understanding of the basic principles of how communities function, including work roles and commerce.

(ii) Social development skill instruction includes opportunities for students to:

(A) develop trust, emotional bonds, and interact comfortably with adults;

(B) interact and build relationships with peers; and

(C) develop skills in cooperation, negotiation, and empathy.

~~(b)(iii)~~ Emotional development ~~wherein students~~ skills instruction includes opportunities for students to:

~~(i)(A)~~ develop an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique, competent, and capable individual;

~~(ii)(B)~~ demonstrate a belief in their abilities;

~~(iii)(C)~~ manage internal states, feelings, and behavior, and develop the ability to adapt to diverse situations and environments; and

~~(iv)(D)~~ express a wide and varied range of feelings through facial expressions, gestures, behaviors, and words.

~~(c)~~ social development which helps students:

~~(i)~~ develop trust, emotional bonds, and interact comfortably with adults;

~~(ii)~~ interact and build relationships with peers; and

~~(iii)~~ develop skills in cooperation, negotiation, and empathy.

~~(2)(c)~~ The physical domain ~~requires~~ includes development of motor skills and instruction in health, safety, and personal care.

~~(a)(i)~~ Development of Motor skills instruction includes opportunities for students to develop:

~~(i)(A)~~ small muscle strength, coordination, and skills;

~~(ii)(B)~~ large muscle strength, coordination, and skills; and

~~(iii)(C)~~ use of their senses to explore the environment and develop skills through sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound.

~~(b)(ii)~~ Health, safety, and personal care ~~standards for early childhood education are that students~~ skills instruction includes opportunities for students to develop:

~~(i)(A)~~ develop personal health and hygiene skills as they develop and practice self-care routines;

~~(ii)(B)~~ eat a variety of nutritional foods and develop healthy eating practices by eating a variety of nutritional foods;

~~(iii)(C)~~ develop healthy behaviors through physical activity; and

~~(iv)(D)~~ develop an awareness and understanding of safety rules as they learn to make safe and appropriate choices.

~~(3)~~ The communication domain includes communication, language, and literacy development.

~~(a)~~ Standards for early childhood communication and language include:

~~(i)~~ receptive communication, wherein students use listening and observation skills to make sense of and respond to spoken language and other forms of communication; enter into the exchange of information around what is seen, heard, and experienced; and begin to acquire an understanding of the concepts of language that contribute to learning;

~~(ii)~~ expressive communication, wherein students develop skills in using sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and words, such as to help others understand their needs, ask questions, express feelings and ideas, and solve problems;

~~(iii)~~ social communication wherein students develop skills to interact and communicate with others in effective ways; and

~~(iv)~~ for dual language speakers, students receive support in their home language(s) while becoming proficient in English.

~~(b) Literacy standards for early childhood education are that students develop:~~

~~(i) an understanding, skills, and interest in the symbols, sounds, and rhythms of written language and develop awareness that the printed word can be used for various purposes;~~

~~(ii) interest and skills in using symbols as a meaningful form of communication;~~

~~(iii) an understanding that print carries a message through symbols and words and that there is a connection between sounds and letters (the alphabetic principle); and~~

~~(iv) an awareness of the sounds of letters and the combination of letters that make up words and use this awareness to manipulate syllables and sounds of speech.~~

~~(4)(d) The cognitive domain requires instruction which incorporates and includes: approaches to learning.~~

~~(a)(i) Approaches to learning which help students skills instruction include opportunities for students to develop:~~

~~(i)(A) curiosity through imagination, inventiveness, originality, and interest as they explore and experience new things;~~

~~(ii)(B) initiative and self-direction through engagement in new tasks and to take risks in learning new skills or information;~~

~~(iii)(C) persistence and attentiveness with the ability to focus their attention and concentration to complete tasks and increase their learning; and~~

~~(iv)(D) reflection and interpretation skills in thinking about their learning in order to inform their future decisions; and~~

~~(b)(E) development of reasoning and representational thought skills in causation, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, and representational thought;~~

~~(2) The following early learning content standards are aligned to the Montana K-12 Content Standards and highlight what students should know, understand, and be able to do upon entering kindergarten. All early learning content standards are applicable for public preschool programs while only the English Language Arts and Literacy Content Standards apply to early literacy targeted interventions implemented through the classroom-based program for 4-year-olds and summer jumpstart program preceding kindergarten.~~

~~(a) English Language Arts and Literacy standards include:~~

~~(i) early reading, wherein students develop an understanding, skill, and interest in alphabet knowledge using the symbols, sounds, and rhythms of written language;~~

~~(ii) print development and writing, wherein students demonstrate interest and skill in using symbols as a meaningful form of communication;~~

~~(iii) speaking and listening, wherein students use phonemic and phonological awareness to identify and play with individual sounds in spoken words; and~~

~~(iv) language, wherein students develop the ability to communicate with others to build relationships, share meaning, and express needs.~~

~~(c)(b) instruction in Creative arts, including standards include:~~

(i) creative movement, wherein students produce rhythmic movements spontaneously and in imitation with growing technical and artistic abilities;

(ii) drama, wherein students show appreciation and awareness of drama through observation, imitation, and participation in simple dramatic plots;

(iii) music, wherein students engage in a variety of musical or rhythmic activities; and

(iv) visual arts, wherein students demonstrate a growing understanding and appreciation for the creative process and visual arts.

~~(d)(c)~~ Mathematics and numeracy standards for early childhood education are that students include:

(i) ~~develop~~ number sense and operations through, wherein students develop the ability to think and work with numbers, to understand their uses, and describe their relationships through structured and everyday experiences;

(ii) ~~develop an awareness of~~ measurement concepts through, wherein students use of measurement instruments to explore and discover measurement relationships and characteristics, such as length, quantity, volume, distance, weight, area, and time;

(iii) ~~apply~~ mathematical skills in data analysis, such as wherein students counting count, sorting sort, and comparing compare objects;

(iv) ~~develop an awareness of~~ initial algebraic thinking and operations through counting, sorting, and comparing objects, wherein students identify, describe, produce, and create patterns using mathematical language and materials; and

(v) ~~build the foundation for~~ geometric and spatial reasoning, wherein students build the foundation for through recognition recognizing, creation creating, and manipulation manipulating of shapes, and learning spatial reasoning and directional words as they become aware of their bodies and personal space in their physical environment.

~~(e)(d)~~ Science standards for early childhood education are that students include:

(i) ~~engage in~~ scientific thinking and the use of the scientific methods through investigation using their senses to observe, manipulate objects, ask questions, make predictions, and develop conclusions and generalizations;

(ii) ~~develop~~ an understanding of and compassion for living things;

(iii) ~~develop~~ an understanding of the physical world, the nature and properties of energy, and nonliving matter;

(iv) ~~develop~~ an understanding of the earth and planets; and

(v) ~~develop~~ an understanding of engineering as the process that assists people in designing and building.

~~(f)(e)~~ Social studies standards for early childhood education are that students include:

(i) ~~develop~~ an understanding of the concept of historical time, including past, present, and future;

(ii) ~~develop~~ knowledge of geographical places and regions by understanding that each place has its own unique characteristics and the reciprocal effect individuals have with the world around them; and

(iii) ~~become aware~~ awareness of their natural world, including the environment and our interdependence on the natural world; and

(f) Technology standards include:

~~(iv)(i)~~ (i) develop an understanding of technology with awareness of technological tools and developmentally appropriate exploration of the ways to use these resources.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.111 CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT (1) The early childhood curriculum, as defined in ARM 10.63.102, shall:

(a) contain a written philosophy and framework, grounded in research-based understandings of child development, to provide a clear, coherent focus for planning students' experiences;

(b) informing instruction through observation and documentation of children's strengths, interests, and needs in their play, work, and behavior;

(c) guide the learning process and daily plans for learning through the selection of materials and equipment to enhance development and learning in ~~each core domain~~ the early learning developmental domains, including ~~emotional/social and emotional~~, physical, ~~communication~~ language, and cognition; and encourage integration of applicable early childhood learning content areas, including ~~social, emotional, physical, health, safety, language~~, literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, creative expression and the arts, and technology;

(d) include planned opportunities for active exploration, discovery, and social interaction;

(e) plan for students' engagement in play each day; and

(f) be implemented in a manner reflective of students' family and community lives while being responsive to diversity, including gender, age, language, culture, and ability, including opportunities for students and families to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians, particularly Montana Indian tribes, in a culturally responsive manner (20-1-501, MCA).

(2) School districts shall develop ~~preschool~~ early childhood education programs to include an ongoing and systematic written assessment plan which includes protocols for:

(a) monitoring the progress of students toward achieving content standards and learning in the developmental domains using formative and summative approaches that include universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments;

(b) administration of assessments and interpretation of assessment results;

(c) providing disaggregated data to educators and teams to inform instructional planning and decision making;

(d) involving families as partners in linguistically and culturally responsive ways to inform decisions about students' needs; and

(e) assessing the effectiveness of the instructional program that guides adjustments for improvement.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.112 INSTRUCTION (1) The ~~preschool~~ early childhood education program shall ensure developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate and effective teaching strategies that enhance students' development and learning of the early learning content standards in ARM 10.63.110 through the program's curriculum.

(2) The ~~preschool~~ early childhood education instructional program shall:

(a) use both content and child development knowledge to create learning opportunities and to engage young learners in meaningful, planned, and purposeful experiences related to the curriculum goals and content standards;

(b) use a variety of effective approaches and strategies which include opportunities for both teacher and student-initiated interactions and activities;

(c) support children's development by providing opportunities for all children to play with and learn from each other;

(d) use knowledge of each student's development to enhance instruction, modify strategies and materials, and adjust supports and challenges as students gain competence, understanding, and skills;

(e) build upon student's language, understanding of concepts, and increase vocabulary;

(f) integrate knowledge of students' families and the community to build relationships that foster integral connections with the curriculum and learning experiences;

(g) use cultural and community resources in the classroom to enhance student learning and development; and

(h) work as a team to implement learning plans, including plans for students with special needs.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.113 PHYSICAL AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS (1) The ~~preschool~~ early childhood education program shall ensure an appropriate and well-maintained safe and healthful physical environment that:

(a) is designed to protect student health and safety;

(b) allows for supervision of students primarily by sight;

(c) provides sanitization according to state and federal health standards;

(d) follows state and federal guidelines for meals and snacks; and

(e) provides safe, supervised, and adequate outside play space with age-appropriate equipment and safe, adequate indoor space for each child.

(2) The ~~preschool~~ early childhood education program shall ensure a safe and healthful learning environment by:

(a) providing a written predictable but flexible schedule that provides intentionally planned routines and transitions; and

(b) providing daily indoor and outdoor activities, including:

(i) planned learning center time where students have individual choice of activities;

- (ii) daily opportunities to learn and play individually, in small groups, and as a whole group; and
- (iii) use of developmentally appropriate materials and equipment.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.114 CHILD GUIDANCE (1) Child guidance means employing a variety of strategies to foster self-regulation, respect for others, problem solving, and ~~emotional and social~~ and emotional development in an ongoing interactive process and helps students learn how to communicate with others in developmentally appropriate ways. To ensure appropriate child guidance, the ~~preschool~~ early childhood education program shall:

- (a) use positive behavior supports to ensure the social, emotional, and cultural development of each student;
- (b) provide a positive climate to ensure equality, inclusion, and citizenship;
- (c) develop relationships with the student and the student's family in ways that are linguistically and culturally sensitive;
- (d) provide opportunities for students to be contributing members of the classroom community;
- (e) provide clear behavioral expectations, including the use of effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior; and
- (f) partner with families and other professionals for students with challenging behavior to develop and implement an individualized plan that fosters the child's inclusion and success.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA
IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

10.63.115 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (1) The program staff shall establish and maintain collaborative relationships with each child's family and community to foster student's development in all settings.

(2) To ensure collaborative relationships between the community, school, and families, ~~preschool~~ early childhood education programs shall have protocols which:

- (a) establish intentional practices designed to foster strong reciprocal relationships with families;
- (b) ensure that families are an integral part of the decision-making team through communication and family conferences which promote dialogue and partnership regarding their student's educational goals and services;
- (c) collaborate with families to help students participate successfully in early childhood settings;
- (d) ensure that all families, regardless of family structure, socioeconomic, racial, religious, and cultural diversity, gender, abilities, or preferred languages are included in their child's educational experience;
- (e) assist families in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support the student's well-being, development, and goals;

(f) promote awareness and understanding of the unique legal and political structures of Montana Tribal Nations in order to best meet the needs of Indian students and families;

(g) collaborate with community-based programs to ensure that parents and families have the resources they need to be involved in their student's education, growth, and development; and

(h) provide access to health screenings and referrals for all students in the program.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-101, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-101, 20-7-117, 20-7-1803, MCA

4. The rule proposed to be repealed is as follows:

10.63.108 AGGREGATE HOURS

AUTH: 20-7-101, MCA

IMP: 20-7-117, MCA

REASON: The board proposes the amendment and repeal of the existing rules in ARM Title 10, chapter 63, Early Childhood Education Standards to comply with HB 352 (2023). The Early Literacy Advisory Council, created by the board, recommended the proposed revisions to address the purposes of the legislation to provide parents with voluntary early literacy interventions for their children, increase the number of children who are reading proficient at the end of third grade, and foster a strong economic return for the state on early literacy investments. Additionally, the council aligned the revised standards with the language in 20-7-1803(5)(b), MCA, that states, "The classroom-based program must align with developmentally appropriate early childhood education learning standards as determined by the board of public education...". Subchapter 1 will be renamed "Early Childhood Education Standards."

5. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed action in writing to: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620; telephone (406) 444-0300; or e-mail bpe@mt.gov, and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., March 8, 2024.

6. McCall Flynn, executive director, Board of Public Education, has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

7. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by this agency. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, e-mail, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by e-mail unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Written requests may be mailed or

delivered to the contact person in paragraph 5 or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the agency.

8. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's web site at <http://sosmt.gov/ARM/Register>.

9. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, apply and have been fulfilled. The primary bill sponsor was contacted by email on January 8, 2024.

10. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the board has determined that amendment of the above-referenced rule will not significantly and directly impact small businesses.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State January 30, 2024.

ITEM 25

**ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION
PERTAINING TO THE ADOPTION OF
ARM, TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY
LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION
STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING
OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY
OF STATE'S OFFICE FOR PUBLICATION
IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER**

Madalyn Quinlan

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the adoption of NEW) NOTICE OF ADOPTION
RULE I and NEW RULE II pertaining)
to early literacy targeted intervention)
programs)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On November 28, 2023, the Board of Public Education (board) published MAR No. 10-54-292 pertaining to the public hearing on the proposed adoption of the above-stated rules at page 1656 of the 2023 Montana Administrative Register, Issue Number 23.

2. The board has adopted the following rules as proposed: NEW RULE I (ARM 10.54.901) and NEW RULE II (ARM 10.54.902).

3. The board has thoroughly considered the comments and testimony received. A summary of the comments received, and the board's responses are as follows:

COMMENT 1: One commenter opposed the requirement in New Rule I and New Rule II that prohibits a child from being evaluated for the purposes of participating in the early literacy targeted interventions unless requested by the child's parent or guardian.

RESPONSE: The Board disagreed with Comment 1 and stated that the parental notification requirements are prescribed in the early literacy targeted intervention statute in 20-7-1803(4), MCA.

4. The rules adopted in this notice are effective April 12, 2024.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State April 2, 2024.

BEFORE THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In the matter of the adoption of NEW) NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON
RULE I and NEW RULE II pertaining) PROPOSED ADOPTION
to early literacy targeted intervention)
programs)

TO: All Concerned Persons

1. On January 4, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., the Board of Public Education (board) will hold a public hearing in Room 152 of the Montana State Capitol in Helena, Montana, to consider the proposed adoption of the above-stated rules.

2. The board will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this rulemaking process or need an alternative accessible format of this notice. If you require an accommodation, contact the board no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 22, 2023, to advise us of the nature of the accommodation that you need. Please contact McCall Flynn, Executive Director, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620-0601; telephone (406) 444-0300; or e-mail mflynn@mt.gov.

3. The rules proposed to be adopted provide as follows:

NEW RULE I EVALUATION METHODOLOGY FOR EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTIONS (1) The local board of trustees shall adopt and ensure use of an evaluation methodology to identify, enroll, and admit children to early literacy targeted interventions. The evaluation methodology used must be overseen by and include application of professional judgment of qualified employees. A child may not be evaluated for the purposes of these interventions unless requested by the child's parent or guardian. The district must maintain evidence of the request. The evaluation methodology may be administered in April, May, or June, and must assess at least one of the following literacy skills:

- (a) For four-year-olds:
 - (i) oral language;
 - (ii) phonological awareness;
 - (iii) alphabet knowledge.
- (b) Prior to kindergarten:
 - (i) oral language;
 - (ii) phonological awareness;
 - (iii) alphabet knowledge.
- (c) Prior to first grade:
 - (i) phoneme awareness;
 - (ii) listening comprehension;
 - (iii) developmental spelling;
 - (iv) vocabulary (expressive or receptive);
 - (v) word reading (nonsense or real);

- (vi) reading composite.
- (d) Prior to second grade:
 - (i) listening comprehension;
 - (ii) developmental spelling;
 - (iii) vocabulary (expressive or receptive);
 - (iv) word reading (nonsense or real);
 - (v) connected text reading fluency;
 - (vi) connected text accuracy;
 - (vii) reading composite.
- (e) Prior to third grade:
 - (i) developmental spelling;
 - (ii) vocabulary (expressive or receptive);
 - (iii) word reading (nonsense or real);
 - (iv) connected text reading fluency;
 - (v) connected text accuracy;
 - (vi) reading comprehension;
 - (vii) reading composite.

(2) The list of approved evaluation methodology screening tools must be reviewed in odd years through a process of review complying with the provisions of Title 2, chapter 3, MCA, to ensure continuous adherence to developmentally appropriate and research-based screening tool requirements. Any changes to the list must be published and made publicly available by the Board of Public Education no later than 30 days after adoption of any changes. The removal of an evaluation methodology screening tool shall not be effective until July 1 following such removal.

(3) A local board of trustees adopting and using one of the approved evaluation methodology screening tools shall be construed to have complied with this rule.

(a) Use of one of the approved evaluation methodology screening tools shall not, however, be required, provided that the district's adopted evaluation methodology screening tool conforms to the requirements of (1).

(4) For the purposes of this rule, "evaluation methodology" means an age-appropriate research-based methodology, instrument, or assessment selected by the Board of Public Education to determine, based on a child's age or grade level, whether the child is above, at, or below a developmental trajectory leading to reading proficiency on completion of third grade.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-1803, MCA

NEW RULE II JUMPSTART PROGRAM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION (1) The local board of trustees may offer a jumpstart program to support early literacy targeted intervention based on evaluation methodology identified in [NEW RULE I] as aligned to the Montana Early Childhood Education Standards and the Montana Content Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy.

(2) The jumpstart program must be overseen by and include application of professional judgment of qualified employees and must be designed in a manner to

increase the likelihood of a child being evaluated at the end of the ensuing school year to be at or above a trajectory leading to reading proficiency at the end of third grade.

(3) For the purposes of this rule, "jumpstart program" means a program that is at least four weeks in duration and provides at least 120 instructional hours and takes place during the time between the end of one school calendar year and the start of the next school calendar year, as determined by the trustees, preceding a child's entry into kindergarten, first grade, second grade, or third grade.

AUTH: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-2-114, 20-7-1803, MCA

IMP: Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-7-1803, MCA

REASON: The board proposes to adopt NEW RULE I and NEW RULE II to comply with HB 352 (2023). The Early Literacy Advisory Council, created by the Board of Public Education, recommended the proposed evaluation methodology and jumpstart program framework to address the purposes of the legislation to provide parents with voluntary early literacy interventions for their children, increase the number of children who are reading proficient at the end of third grade, and foster a strong economic return for the state on early literacy investments. NEW RULE I will be adopted as ARM 10.54.901 and NEW RULE II will be adopted as ARM 10.54.902, and they will be located in a new subchapter named "Early Literacy Targeted Interventions."

4. Concerned persons may submit their data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed action in writing to: McCall Flynn, Executive Director, Board of Public Education, 46 N. Last Chance Gulch, Suite 2B, P.O. Box 200601, Helena, Montana, 59620; telephone (406) 444-0300; or e-mail mflynn@mt.gov, and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m., January 7, 2024.

5. McCall Flynn, executive director, Board of Public Education, has been designated to preside over and conduct this hearing.

6. The board maintains a list of interested persons who wish to receive notices of rulemaking actions proposed by this agency. Persons who wish to have their name added to the list shall make a written request that includes the name, e-mail, and mailing address of the person to receive notices and specifies for which program the person wishes to receive notices. Notices will be sent by e-mail unless a mailing preference is noted in the request. Such written request may be mailed or delivered to the contact person in 4 above or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the agency.

7. An electronic copy of this proposal notice is available through the Secretary of State's web site at <http://sosmt.gov/ARM/Register>.

8. The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, apply and have been fulfilled. The primary bill sponsor was contacted by email on November 7, 2023.

9. With regard to the requirements of 2-4-111, MCA, the Board has determined that amendment of the above-referenced rule will not significantly and directly impact small businesses.

/s/ McCall Flynn
McCall Flynn
Executive Director
Board of Public Education

/s/ Tim Tharp
Tim Tharp
Chair
Board of Public Education

Certified to the Secretary of State November 28, 2023.

ITEM 26

**ACTION ON THE APPROVED LIST OF
SCREENING TOOLS PERTAINING TO THE
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY
TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS**

Madalyn Quinlan



Board of Public Education

Board of Public Education List of Approved Evaluation Methodology Screening Tools

According to ARM 10.54.901, the list of approved evaluation methodology screening tools must be reviewed by the Board of Public Education in odd years through a process of review complying with the provisions of Title 2, Chapter 3, MCA, to ensure continuous adherence to developmentally appropriate and research-based screening tool requirements.

Any changes to the list must be published and made publicly available by the Board of Public Education no later than 30 days after adoption of any changes. The removal of an evaluation methodology screening tool shall not be effective until July 1 following such removal.

Approved: March 18, 2024

(1) For four-year-olds and prior to Kindergarten:

- ❖ Acadience Reading PreK (PELI -- Preschool Early Literacy Indicators)
Screens for: Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge
- ❖ Assessment of Story Comprehension (ASC)
Screens for: Oral Language
- ❖ Early Bird
Screens for: Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge
- ❖ Get Ready To Read! (Revised)
Screens for: Oral Language, Alphabet Knowledge
- ❖ Language Screen (OxEd) and Reading Screen
Screens for: Oral Language
- ❖ myIGDIs
Screens for: Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge
- ❖ Quick Interactive Language Screener (QUILS)
Screens for: Oral language
- ❖ Test of Preschool Early Literacy (TOPEL)
Screens for: Oral Language, Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Knowledge

(2) For prior to first grade, second grade, third grade:

- ❖ Acadience Reading (formerly DIBELS NEXT)
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Developmental Spelling, Word Reading (nonsense or real), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ aimswebPlus
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Developmental Spelling, Word Reading (nonsense or real), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ DIBELS 8th
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Word Reading (nonsense or real), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ Early Bird
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Listening Comprehension, Developmental Spelling, Vocabulary (expressive or receptive), Word Reading (nonsense or real), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ easyCBM
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Vocabulary (expressive or receptive), Word Reading (nonsense or real), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ FastBridge
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Developmental Spelling, Vocabulary (expressive or receptive), Connected Text Reading Fluency, Connected Text Accuracy, Reading Comprehension, Reading Composite
- ❖ Language Screen (OxEd) and Reading Screen
Screens for: Phoneme Awareness, Listening Comprehension, Vocabulary (expressive or receptive), Word Reading (nonsense or real), Reading Composite

Screening Tools for Prior to First, Second, and Third Grade	Age Appropriate Use & Purpose of Tool	Skill Focus	Skills Assessed Prior to First, Second, and Third Grade Age 5+ (K-3rd Grade) Only											
			Phoneme Awareness	Listening Comprehension	Developmental Spelling	Vocabulary (expressive or receptive)	Word Reading (nonsense or real)	Connected Text Reading Fluency	Connected Text Accuracy	Reading Comprehension	Reading Composite			
Universal Screeners ("X" indicates skill assessed by tool)														
Acadience Reading (formerly DIBELS NEXT)	Tool appropriate for K to 3rd grade. Used to determine how students are performing on important reading skills (phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).	Literacy and math				X		X		X	X	X	X	X
aimswebPlus	Tool appropriate for K to 3rd grade. aimswebPlus offers nationally-normed, skills-based benchmark assessments and progress monitoring integrated into one application across reading and math domains.	Literacy, math, behavioral, & social-emotional learning				X		X		X	X	X	X	X
DIBELS 8th	Tool appropriate for K to 3rd grade. DIBELS ® (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of literacy skills. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures that can be used to regularly detect risk and monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills in kindergarten through eighth grade.	Literacy				X				X	X	X	X	X
Early Bird	Tool appropriate for PreK to grade 2. Comprehensive early literacy screener that is aligned with the National Reading Panel and the Science of Reading. It is a game-based screener that can be administered as early as age four and includes 3X benchmarking, progress monitoring, and evidence-based intervention resource platform for teachers.	Literacy				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
easyCBM	Tool appropriate for K to 3rd grade. The easyCBM system is designed for benchmark assessments to be given at a students' actual grade level (progress monitoring measures can be used off grade level) for grades K-8th grade. The easyCBM program is researched/developed for testing in fall, winter, and spring with summer being the natural academic break, and grade advancement of students.	Literacy and math				X			X	X	X	X	X	X
FastBridge	Tool appropriate for K to 3rd grade. FastBridge combines Computer-Adaptive Tests (CAT) and Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) for universal screening and progress monitoring while delivering psychometrically valid data.	Literacy, math, social emotional/behavioral				X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Language Screen (OxEd) and Reading Screen	Tool appropriate for PreK to 7th grade. ReadingScreen OxEd & Assessment, assesses children's single word recognition and decoding ability by testing a series of words and nonwords which increase in difficulty as the test progresses. It takes less than 10 minutes to complete (there are discontinuation rules in place so depending on the reading level of the child, the test can be as short as 2-3 minutes).	Language, literacy and math				X	X		X	X				X

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS May 9-10, 2024

MACIE Update

Approve K-12 Schools Payment Schedule

Assessment Update

Accreditation Report

Federal Update

Content Standards Revision Update

Executive Director Performance Evaluation