

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

January 15-16, 2026

***Montana Heritage Center
Ponderosa Room
225 Roberts St
Helena, MT***

AGENDA

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

January 15-16, 2026
Montana Heritage Center
Ponderosa Room
225 Roberts St, Helena, MT

January 15, 2026
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 #9

(Items may be pulled from Consent Agenda upon request)

- A. November 19-21, 2025 and December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes
- B. Financials

ADOPT AGENDA

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-6)

- Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #40
Dr. Tim Tharp
- Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #41
McCall Flynn
- Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 1 Hour, page #42
State Superintendent Susie Hedalen
 - Assessment Update
 - Federal Update
 - Content Standards Update
 - Accreditation Update
 - HiSET Report
 - Transportation Report

- Item 4 **COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #60**
Dr. Angela McLean
- Item 5 **GOVERNOR’S OFFICE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #62**
Rachel Green
- Item 6 **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #63**
Lydia Comstock
- ❖ **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Item 7)**
- Item 7 **ACTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION RESOLUTION – 15 Minutes, page #64**
Dr. Hannah Nieskens
- ❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 8-9)**
- Item 8 **ACTION ON UPDATED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACTS – 15 Minutes, page #66**
Dr. Ron Slinger
- Item 9 **WORK SESSION ON THE APPROVAL AND DENIAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 1 Hour, page #86**
Dr. Ron Slinger
- *******LUNCH BREAK*******
- **Lunch will be provided for Board Members and Ex-Officio Members****
- ❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 10-15)**
- Item 10 **INFORMATION ON THE TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP GRANT AND REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – 45 Minutes, page #88**
Commissioner Sarah Swanson and Crystal Armstrong
- Item 11 **INFORMATION ON ANNUAL EDUCATOR LICENSURE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #101**
Crystal Andrews
- Item 12 **INFORMATION ON ABCTE PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING – 30 Minutes, page #116**
Isabelle Welch, ABCTE and Crystal Andrews
- Item 13 **INFORMATION ON THE SITE VISIT AND JOINT ACCREDITATION STATE EXIT REPORT OF MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – 15 Minutes, page #135**
Crystal Andrews
- Item 14 **INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – 15 Minutes, page #191**
Christy Mock-Stutz
- Item 15 **INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION ON TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57 CLASS 9 SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE – 30 Minutes, page #194**
Patrick Cates and Dr. Julie Murgel

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 16-18)

- Item 16 ACTION ON THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING PHASE II GRANTS – 15 Minutes,
page #197
Krystal Smith
- Item 17 ACTION ON MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANTS – 15 Minutes, page #208
Krystal Smith
- ACTION ITEMS:
- Qualify Applications
 - Annual Reports
- Item 18 INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF THE CREATION OF THE SEAL OF CIVICS
LITERACY – 15 Minutes, page #210
Tyler Capece and Chris Averill

❖ MSDB COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Item 19)

- Item 19 MSDB REPORT – 30 Minutes, page #219
Superintendent Paul Furthmyre
- ACTION ITEMS:
- Action on Out of State Travel Requests
 - Action on Personnel Items
 - Action on 2nd Reading Policy 8210

*****CLOSED SESSION*****

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 20)

- Item 20 MSDB SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION – 30 Minutes, page #320
Dr. Tim Tharp

*****OPEN SESSION*****

RECESS

January 16, 2026
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER

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

❖ CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 21-22)

- Item 21 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 15 Minutes, page #322
Cathy Kincheloe
- Item 22 ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS TO APPROVE AND DENY PUBLIC CHARTER
SCHOOLS – 30 Minutes, page #337
Dr. Ron Slinger

❖ **MACIE LIAISON – Julia Maxwell (Item 23)**

Item 23 **MACIE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #338**
Jordann Lankford Forster

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Items 24-25)**

Item 24 **ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS AND ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 15 Minutes, page #340**
Renee Rasmussen

Item 25 **INFORMATION ON MAST ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION – 30 Minutes, page #344**
Cedar Rose

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Item 26)**

Item 26 **ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 5 Minutes, page #359**
Dr. Ron Slinger

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Item 27)**

Item 27 **INFORMATION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION ON THE INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION – 30 Minutes, page #365**
Dr. Julie Murgel and Tyler Capece

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 28-30)**

Item 28 **ACTION ON MSDB SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT – 15 Minutes, page #379**
Dr. Tim Tharp

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Action on 2025 Contract**
- **Action on 2026 Contract**

Item 29 **ACTION ON THE CREATION OF THE SEAL OF CIVICS LITERACY – 5 Minutes, page #380**
Dr. Tim Tharp

Item 30 **RECOGNITION OF EXITING BOARD MEMBER – 15 Minutes, page #381**
Dr. Tim Tharp

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS March 19-20, 2026, Ronan, MT

MACIE Update

Action on MSDB School Calendar

Action on Early Literacy Screening Tools (Odd Years)

Assessment Update

Federal Update

Accreditation Report

Annual School Food Services Report

Review Draft CAEP MOU

Content Standards Revision Update

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.

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, kmstockton@mt.gov, 406-444-0302.

❖ BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLANNING – Dr. Tim Tharp

12:00PM	REVIEW OF NASBE DOCUMENTS
12:30PM	REVIEW OF MISSION AND DISCUSSION OF VISION
1:45PM	WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

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. November 19-21, 2025 and
December 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes**
- B. Financials**

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

November 19-20, 2025

Missoula County Public Schools, Administration Building, Board Room
909 South Ave. West, Missoula, MT

Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Missoula County Public Schools
10:30 AM

❖ PERKINS COMMITTEE MEETING

10:30 AM Missoula County Public Schools, Administration Building, Board Room
909 South Ave. West, Missoula, MT

CALL TO ORDER – 00:00:00

Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM. The Chair led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen, Ms. Lydia Comstock, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE). Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant;. Guests: Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB); Ms. Tyler Capece, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Ellery Bresler, OPI; Superintendent Victoria Falls Down, Lame Deer Public Schools; Superintendent Wes Young, Lustre Christian High School; Board Chair Justyn Klatt, Lustre Christian High School; Mr. Peter Donovan; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel; Dr. Tricia Siefert, Montana State University (MSU); Ms. Kim Popham; Montana Federation of Public Employees (MFPE); Ms. Kristi Steinberg, University of Montana (UM); Ms. Jeannie Origbo, OCHE; Dr. Beth Durodoye, Montana State University Northern (MSUN); Dr. Dan Lee, UM; Ms. Melissa Fisher; Mr. Dylan Klapmeier, OPI; Mr. Gordon Klasna, Billings Public Schools; Dr. Jeril Hehn, Billings Public Schools.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 00:04:25

No public comment was made.

CONSENT AGENDA – 00:04:46

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:05:18

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

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1- 4)

Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT -00:05:47
Dr. Tim Tharp

Chair Tim Tharp reviewed meetings and conferences he attended since the September Board meeting which included the School Funding Interim Commission Meetings, Board Executive Committee Meetings, National

Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Conference, and other local and state meetings related to Mental Health Awareness.

Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 00:09:19
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn thanked Superintendent Micah Hill and the Missoula County Public Schools staff for their hospitality. Ms. Flynn reviewed the Board's budget presented at the Education Interim Budget Committee Meeting in September, discussed her attendance at the Montana Conference of Education Leadership and NASBE Conferences in October, her participation in the Rigorous Action Task Force, and reviewed work completed for the Public Charter School Program.

Item 3 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 00:19:06
Dr. Angela McLean

Dr. Angela McLean presented projects at OCHE that included the College Access Arc of Events and ACT Connections for 2025-2026, Future Ready Efforts, MUS Workforce Training, and the Montana State University Northern Traffic Education Program. Ms. Jeannie Origbo concluded the report with an update on the GEAR Up Grant and Dr. McLean answered Board members' questions.

Item 4 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT -00:38:10
Lydia Comstock

Ms. Lydia Comstock updated the Board on the Montana Association of Student Council's State Conference held in October, discussed topics that were presented, and reviewed resolutions passed at the conference. Ms. Comstock answered Board members' questions.

❖ **MSDB COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Item 5)**

Item 5 MSDB REPORT -00:52:44
Superintendent Paul Furthmyre

Superintendent Paul Furthmyre presented the MSDB Report and highlighted the recent Cognia Accreditation review on site at the MSDB, reviewed the First Reading of Policy 8210, discussed a review of salaries for the Educational Staff, a recent audit of the MSDB Foundation financials, and the Student Newsletter.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Personnel Items as listed in the Agenda Packet. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Out of State Travel Requests as listed in the Agenda Packet. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the OPI Special Education Discretionary Grant with updated dates. Motion seconded by Board member Nieskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Vice Chair Slinger commended Superintendent Furthmyre for the exceptional review from Cognia.

Chair Tharp noted the exemplary rating reviews for MSDB on the Cognia review.

Board member Maxwell called for congratulations and recognition of Mr. Jim Kelly who will retire from the MSDB at the end of the school year.

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Item 6)**

**Item 6 INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION OF EARLY LITERACY AND NUMERACY
ADVISORY COUNCIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS PERTAINING TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS – 01:19:35
McCall Flynn**

Ms. McCall Flynn led the Board in a work session to review the proposed revisions to the Early Childhood Education Standards as recommended by the Early Literacy and Numeracy Advisory Council. Ms. Flynn answered Board members' questions and discussed next steps in the revision process.

❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Madalyn Quinlan (Items 7-11)**

**Item 7 ACTION AND INFORMATION ON RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE
FAFSA COMPLETION PRIOR TO HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION – 01:30:10
Dr. Angela McLean**

Dr. Angela McLean presented a proposal from OCHE that would encourage students to complete the FAFSA prior to High School graduation. Dr. McLean discussed specifics of the resolution, answered Board members' questions regarding data sharing protocols and access to student data, then requested the Board's support of the resolution.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Direct Admissions and FAFSA Completion Resolution. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

Board member Schmidt noted that families can opt out if they choose.

Board member Nieskens noted the language states OCHE and OPI will assist districts with data sharing protocols and with outreach to students and families and because of that she will support the motion.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 8 ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF ADOPTION PERTAINING TO
RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 53, ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS AND
LITERACY CONTENT STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE
WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER – 02:15:09
Madalyn Quinlan**

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the timeline for revisions and noted the effective date is July 1, 2027. Ms. Flynn added that the Economic Impact Statement has been presented to the Education Interim Budget Committee.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the proposed Notice of Adoption pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 53, English Language Arts and Literacy Content Standards, and authorize 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.

**Item 9 ACTION ON VARIANCE TO STANDARDS REQUESTS AND RENEWALS -02:29:53
Ellery Hill and Crystal Andrews**

Ms. Ellery Hill and Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Variance to Standards Initial Applications and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Initial Applications for a Variance to Standards Request as listed in the Agenda Packet. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Maxwell recused herself due to the application from Marion Public Schools for a Variance to Standards.

Board member Schmidt voiced concerns with the application from Billings Public Schools for Financial Literacy courses and stated she will not support the motion.

Vice Chair Slinger concurred with Board member Schmidt and stated he will support the motion but encouraged Billings Public Schools to find a way to correct the problem.

Board member Rasmussen stated that Billings Public Schools has not explored opportunities to partner with other entities that offer Financial Literacy coursework.

Chair Tharp reviewed the statute that requires Financial Literacy coursework.

Board member Nieskens echoed the previous comments from Board members that concerned the application from Billings Public Schools.

No further discussion. Motion passed with Board member Schmidt dissenting and Board member Maxwell abstaining.

Ms. Ellery Hill and Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Variance to Standards Renewal Applications and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Renewal Applications for a Variance to Standards Request as listed in the Agenda Packet with the exception of Independent Elementary whose request would be approved for one year. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Schmidt stated her concern over variance requests for Library Media and School Counseling but supports the one-year approval for Independent Elementary.

Superintendent Hedalen stated her support of the change for Independent Elementary.

Chair Tharp noted that schools can discontinue their variance at any time.

Board member Nieskens requested that future recommendations specify if the variance is for one, two, or three years.

Dr. Tricia Siefert stated that MSU has an online Library Media Services program for educators to obtain certification.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 10 ACTION AND PRESENTATION ON THE CORRECTIVE PLANS FOR SCHOOLS IN DEFICIENT STATUS FOR ACCREDITATION – 03:22:23
Crystal Andrews and Ellery Bresler**

Superintendent Victoria Falls Down presented the Corrective Action Plan for Lame Deer Public Schools and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Corrective Plan for Lame Deer Public Schools. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

Public comment from Ms. Melissa Fisher who thanked Superintendent Falls Down for her work.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent Wes Young and Board Chair Justyn Klatt presented an updated Corrective Plan for Lustre Christian High School and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Corrective Plan for Lustre Christian High School. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 11 UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ON THE INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR
ACCREDITATION – 04:04:27
Dr. Julie Murgel and Tyler Capece**

Ms. Tyler Capece noted a Task Force has been formed to review the Intensive Assistance Process for Accreditation. Dr. Julie Murgel discussed work completed by the Task Force and reviewed future meeting dates and work to be completed. Dr. Murgel noted that a final plan will be presented to the Board at the March 2026 meeting.

The Board recessed for the day at 5:44 PM.

**Thursday, November 20, 2025
Missoula County Public Schools
8:30 AM**

Board members and members of the Legislative Education Interim Committee toured Hellgate Elementary School, TEACH Academy at Franklin Elementary School, and the Special Education Department at Rattlesnake Elementary School in the morning before convening for a joint meeting in the afternoon.

CALL TO ORDER – 00:00:01

Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 1:15 PM. The Chair led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen; Ms. Lydia Comstock, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: State Superintendent Susie Hedalen, OPI. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Lea Ann Munkres, Program Officer; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission. Education Interim Committee Members: Representative Linda Reksten, Chair; Senator Sara Novak, Vice Chair; Representative Shelly Fyant; Representative Lee Deming; Mr. Pad McCracken, Legislative Analyst; Ms. Becca Brown, Legislative Analyst. Guests: Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Ms. Nancy Berg, Safe Schools Center; Ms. Tina Hays, Safe Schools Center; Dr. Dan Lee, UM; Dr. Tricia Seifert, MSU; Dr. Jodi Carlson, Rocky Mountain College; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Superintendent Michah Hill, Missoula County Public Schools; Superintendent Les Meyer, Frenchtown School District; Superintendent Pete Joseph, Corvallis School District; Superintendent Dave Thennis, Hamilton School District; Representative Connie Keough; Ms. Kim Popham, MFPE; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, UM; Deputy Superintendent Craig Barringer, OPI; Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel.

**❖ BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION INTERIM COMMITTEE
JOINT MEETING – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 12-18)**

**Item 12 PRESENTATION ON SAFE SCHOOL CENTER SURVEY – 00:03:20
Nancy Berg, Tina Hays**

Ms. Nancy Berg and Ms. Tina Hays discussed the survey conducted by the UM Safe Schools Center related to school safety, how schools address safety, the use of Emergency Operations Plans, and answered members' questions.

**Item 13 DISCUSSION ON TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PREPARATION AND EDUCATOR
PIPELINE CHALLENGES -00:21:55
Dr. Dan Lee, University of Montana; Dr. Tricia Seifert, Montana State University;
Dr. Jodi Carlson, Rocky Mountain College**

Dr. Dan Lee, Dr. Tricia Seifert, and Dr. Jodi Carlson discussed Educator Preparation Programs across the state, how many students complete, challenges in teacher recruitment and retention and developing school leaders, statewide shortage areas, the importance of student achievement, how the campuses are working to encourage and promote the teaching profession, and national trends. The group answered Board members' questions.

**Item 14 FUTURE READY UPDATE – 01:35:19
Superintendent Susie Hedalen**

Superintendent Susie Hedalen presented an update on Future Ready as outlined in the STARS Act and discussed collaborative work between OPI, OCHE, and the Department of Labor and Industry.

Item 15 **SCHOOL FUNDING INTERIM COMMISSION UPDATE – 01:44:50**
Dr. Tim Tharp, Representative Lee Deming, Senator Sara Novak, Pad McCracken
Mr. Pad McCracken reviewed the work of the School Funding Interim Commission, what they've been tasked with, the work they've completed, and work to be accomplished. Representative Deming, Senator Novak, Superintendent Hedalen, and Chair Tharp provided input related to work the Commission has done and presentations the Commission has heard.

Item 16 **INFORMATION ON MONTANA ALIGNED TO STANDARDS THROUGH-YEAR (MAST) AND REVIEW OF STATEWIDE PROFICIENCY SCORES – 02:03:20**
Cedar Rose
Ms. Cedar Rose gave an overview of the goal of MAST, how the test is designed and utilized, presented the newly released statewide assessment results, and answered member's questions.

Item 17 **PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL PANEL AND PRELIMINARY ANNUAL REPORT DATA – 02:7:56**
McCall Flynn; Pad McCracken; Superintendent Micah Hill, Missoula County Public Schools; Superintendent Les Meyer, Frenchtown School District; Superintendent Pete Joseph, Corvallis School District; Superintendent Dave Thennis, Hamilton School District
Mr. Pad McCracken and Ms. McCall Flynn presented background information on the Public Charter School Program, created by House Bill 549 in the 2023 Legislative Session before a panel of Superintendents highlighted their Public Charter Schools and answered members' questions.

Item 18 **OPEN DISCUSSION AND FINAL THOUGHTS – 03:33:35**
Dr. Tim Tharp and Representative Linda Reksten
Representative Linda Reksten noted that work the Legislature put in has come to fruition and expressed her pride with the work that the schools have done.

PUBLIC COMMENT
No public comment was made.

The Board recessed for the day at 4:52 PM.

University of Montana
Phyllis J. Washington College of Education, Room 334

Friday, November 21, 2025
University of Montana – College of Education
8:30 AM

CALL TO ORDER -00:00:01
Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:31 AM. The Chair led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Julia Maxwell; Ms. Renee Rasmussen, Ms. Lydia Comstock, Student Representative. Ex Officio members: State Superintendent Susie Hedalen, OPI. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission. Guests: Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Mr. Brenton Craggs, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Ms. Aimee Konzen, OPI; Ms. Eva Cox, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Mr. Patrick Cates, OPI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE); Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, UM; Dr. Dan Lee, UM;

Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Dr. Tricia Siefert, MSU; Dr. Beth Durodoye, MSUN; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel; Dr. Jason Neiffer, Montana Digital Academy (MTDA); Ms. Nicole Thuotte, OPI.

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

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 20-22)**

Item 20 **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 00:02:19**
Cathy Kincheloe

Ms. Cathy Kincheloe announced the Commission received a second year of grant funding, discussed the procurement request to assist with the development of Special Education policies and procedures, reviewed the October Advance, and provided an overview for the December meeting. Ms. Kincheloe answered Board members' questions.

Item 21 **INFORMATION ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL FALL ENROLLMENT DATA – 00:11:03**
Christy Mock-Stutz

Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz presented the Fall Enrollment Data for Public Charter Schools and answered Board members' questions.

Item 22 **UPDATE ON PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 00:27:45**
McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the Performance Framework Revisions, new Public Charter School applications and interviews, and the Application and Evaluation Criteria Review. Ms. Flynn answered Board members' questions.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 23-27)**

Item 23 **NOTICE OF SURRENDER IN BPE CASE #2025-05 – 00:38:40**
Brenton Craggs

Mr. Brenton Craggs presented an Affidavit of Surrender in BPE Case #2025-05.

Item 24 **INFORMATION ON THE ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT UNIT PROVIDERS LIST – 00:42:04**
Marie Judisch, Aimee Konzen, Eva Cox

Ms. Marie Judisch presented the Annual Professional Development Unit Providers list and Ms. Eva Cox discussed upcoming changes to the Professional Development Unit Providers System and answered Board members' questions.

Item 25 **ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S REQUEST TO REVISE TITLE 10, CHAPTER 55, SPECIAL EDUCATION STANDARDS AND INITIAL REVIEW OF NEW RULES PERTAINING TO A CLASS 9 SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE – 01:22:02**
Dr. Julie Murgel and Patrick Cates

Dr. Julie Murgel and Mr. Patrick Cates presented a proposal to create a new Class 9 Special Education Technician License to address the need for Special Education providers across the state. Dr. Murgel explained the need to open Chapter 57, and Chapter 55, which will require Negotiated Rulemaking, and reviewed the timeline for revisions. Dr. Murgel and Mr. Cates answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Superintendent's request to revise Title 10, Chapter 55, Special Education Standards and Title 10, Chapter 57, Educator Licensure Standards. Motion seconded by Board member Nieskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 26 **ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER REPORT – 01:38:12**
Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Annual Professional Educator Preparation Provider Report to the Board and answered Board members' questions.

Item 27

**UPDATE ON CORRECTIVE ACTION FOR MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM PROVIDER ACCREDITATION –
01:43:33**

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Corrective Action Plan for Montana State University Northern and Dr. Beth Durodoye reviewed work the school completed to comply with the stipulations in the Corrective Plan and the timeline moving forward to seek full accreditation. Dr. Durodoye answered Board members' questions.

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Item 29)**

Item 29

**ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE
PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY LITERACY
TARGETED INTERVENTIONS AND TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION STANDARDS, AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE WITH THE
SECRETARY OF STATE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER – 01:55:38**

McCall Flynn

Ms. McCall Flynn presented the revisions to the Early Literacy Targeted Interventions rules and the Early Childhood Education Standards rules as shared the previous day, reviewed the timeline, and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the Notice of Public Hearing and timeline pertaining to rulemaking in ARM Title 10, Chapter 54 Early Literacy Targeted Interventions, and Title 10, Chapter 63, Early Childhood Education Standards and authorize filing of the Notice with the Secretary of State for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **MACIE LIAISON – Julia Maxwell (Item 28)**

Item 28

MACIE REPORT – 02:14:02

Jordann Lankford Forster

Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster reviewed the Regalia Protections Letter with the Board and requested their support.

Board member Maxwell moved to approve the Board of Public Education signing on to the Regalia Protections Letter as prepared by MACIE. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

Board member Maxwell expressed her support for the letter.

Board member Quinlan asked for clarification on the intended audience. Ms. Lankford Forster explained the target audience is districts outside the state of Montana.

Vice Chair Slinger noted that Montana is a state that requires Indian Education for All and he strongly supports the motion.

Chair Tharp stated his support for the letter.

Board member Nieskens stated her support for the letter.

Superintendent Hedalen stated that OPI provides support to schools to ensure compliance with the law.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 19)**

Item 19

STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 02:25:25

State Superintendent Susie Hedalen

Superintendent Susie Hedalen updated the Board on work at the OPI which included an update on changes to Federal Programs, Artificial Intelligence Guidance created in conjunction with the MTDA, work related to mental health, and a partnership with Level All. Board member Nieskens requested information on MAST Science for a future agenda item before Superintendent Hedalen answered Board members' questions.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS January 15-16, 2026, Helena, MT

Exiting Board Member – Last Meeting & Recognition

MACIE Update

Review Community Choice School Annual Reports

Action on ABCTe Program Approval

Action on Authorizing Public Charter Schools

Transportation Report

Assessment Update

Federal Update

Accreditation Report

Teacher Licensure Report

Qualify Advanced Opportunity Grant Applications

Action on Transformational Learning Phase II Grants

Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Report

Content Standards Revision Update

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Annual HiSET Report

MSDB Superintendent Performance Evaluation & Contract Extension Discussion

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 AM.

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, kmstockton@mt.gov, 406-444-0302.

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2025
Zoom

Monday, December 1, 2025
8:45 AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:00:00

Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:45 AM. The Chair led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance, Ms. Kris Stockton took Roll Call, and the Chair read the Statement of Public Participation and welcomed guests.

Board members: Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair; Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair; Ms. Madalyn Quinlan; Dr. Hannah Nieskens; Ms. Lisa Schmidt; Ms. Renee Rasmussen. Ex Officio members: Dr. Angela McLean, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education; Ms. Tyler Capece, Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Office of Public Instruction, (OPI). Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Lea Ann Munkres, Program Officer; Ms. Cathy Kincheloe, Director of Planning, Community Choice Schools Commission. Guests: Craig Barringer, Deputy Superintendent, OPI; Superintendent Cory Dziowgo, Columbia Falls Public Schools (CFPS); Mr. Dustin Zuffelato, CFPS; Principal Josh Gibbs, CFPS; Assistant Principal Shaun Forrest, CFPS; Mr. Mark McCord, Curriculum Director, CFPS; Board Chair Dr. Jill Rocksund, CFPS; Vice Chair Barb Riley, CFPS; Superintendent Meghan Brown, Miles City Unified School District, (MCUSD); Ms. Lenore Bricco, MCUSD; Board Chair Andy Zook, MCUSD; Mr. Tyler Niedege, MCUSD; Superintendent Don Christman, Lockwood Public Schools (LPS); Principal Gwen Poole, LPS; Assistant Principal Cole Cavan, LPS; Superintendent Eldon Johnson, Livingston Public Schools; Dr. Anne Penn Cox, Student Services Director, Livingston Public Schools; Principal Becky Ayler, Livingston Public Schools; Mr. Todd Wester, Livingston Public Schools; Ms. Hanna Scheiderer, Livingston Public Schools; Superintendent Todd Fiske, Florence-Carlton Public Schools (FCPS); Principal Scott Marsh, FCPS; Principal Sheree Jenkins, FCPS; Superintendent Jon Konen, Stevensville Public Schools, (SPS); Ms. Ayse Haxton, SPS; Principal Zeke Kaney, SPS; Mr. Robert Ryan, SPS; Ms. Katy Cardoza, SPS; Ms. Brittany Leatham, Bitterroot Health; Ms. Jenni West, Montana Manufacturing Extension Center; President Jane Karas, Flathead Valley Community College; Mr. Sam Kuhlin, Morrison-Maerle; Ms. Carolyn Dettori; Ms. Cindy Daniels; Ms. Moffie Funk, Montanans Organized for Education; Ms. Lesa Maher, Chief Juvenile Probation Officer, Park County.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:02:03

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the agenda as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger – 00:02:35

Ms. McCall Flynn outlined the interview process and noted that the livestream will be available on the Board's website upon the conclusion of the meeting.

9:00 AM

COLUMBIA FALLS TRADES ACADEMY – 00:13:45

Cory Dziowgo, Superintendent; Dustin Zuffelato, Business Manager and Clerk; Josh Gibbs, Principal; Shaun Forrest, Assistant Principal; Mark McCord, Curriculum Director; Dr. Jill Rocksund, School Board Chair; Barb Riley, School Board Vice Chair

Superintendent Dziowgo presented the proposal for the Columbia Falls Trades Academy. Principal Gibbs and Assistant Principal Forrest provided specific information on the proposed program and answered Board members' questions. Public comment was made by Ms. West, President Karas, and Mr. Kuhlin.

9:35 AM

CUSTER COUNTY C.L.A.S.S ACADEMY – 00:49:29

Meghan Brown, Superintendent; Lenore Bricco, District Clerk; Andy Zook, School Board Chair; Tyler Niedege, Charter School Committee Liaison; Charter School Committee Members and Trustees

Superintendent Brown, Board Chair Zook, and members of the Board of Trustees presented the Custer County CLASS Academy proposal for a Public Charter School and answered Board members' questions.

10:10 AM

LION'S PATH ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL – 01:24:23

Don Christman, Superintendent; Gwen Poole, High School Principal; Cole Cavan, High School Assistant Principal/Alternate Education Coordinator

Assistant Principal Cavan reviewed the application for the proposed Lion's Path Academy Charter School.

Superintendent Christman, Principal Poole, and Assistant Principal Cavan answered Board members' questions.

11:00 AM

PARK PATHWAYS SCHOOLS – 02:14:03

Eldon C Johnson, Superintendent; Dr. Anne Penn Cox, Student Services Director; Becky Ayler, Middle School Principal; Todd Wester, Curriculum Director; Hanna Scheiderer, School Psychologist

Superintendent Johnson opened the interview and Dr. Penn Cox, Ms. Ayler, Mr. Wester, and Ms. Scheiderer

reviewed the Park Pathways School application and answered Board members' questions. Public comment from Ms. Maher in support of the proposed school.

11:35 AM

SOAR ACADEMY – 02:49:00

Todd Fiske, Superintendent; Scott Marsh, High School Principal; Sheree Jenkins, Middle School Principal

Superintendent Fiske presented the application for the SOAR Academy and answered Board members' questions.

1:00 PM

STEVENSVILLE ALTERNATIVE STEPS CHARTER SCHOOL "STEPS" – 04:14:53

Jon Konen, Superintendent; Ayse Haxton, Teacher; Zeke Kaney, High School Principal; Robert Ryan, Counselor; Katy Cardoza, Counselor

Superintendent Konen, Ms. Haxton, Principal Kaney, Mr. Ryan, and Ms. Cardoza presented the Stevensville Alternative Steps Charter School proposal as a group and answered Board members' questions.

1:35 PM

STEVENSVILLE HEALTH SCIENCES ACADEMY – 04:46:55

Jon Konen, Superintendent; Brittany Leathan, Bitterroot Health; Zeke Kaney, High School Principal; Robert Ryan, Counselor; Katy Cardoza, Counselor

Superintendent Konen, Ms. Leathan, Principal Kaney, Mr. Ryan, and Ms. Cardoza presented the Stevensville Health Sciences Academy Charter proposal and answered Board members' questions. Public comment was made by Trustee Esch in support of the proposed charter. The group answered additional Board members' questions.

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed next steps for the January Board meeting when the Board will act on the applications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:14 PM.

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.

Hamilton School District

217 Daly Avenue
Hamilton, MT 59840

voice: 406-363-2280 x513
fax: 406-363-1843



Marie Antonioli
antoniolim@hsd3.org

October 10, 2025

It is my pleasure to endorse the Biomedical Science lessons and field trips led by health educator **Brittany Leatham** at Bitterroot Health. This program is an invaluable asset to our community, providing local students with unparalleled insight and hands-on experience in the world of healthcare.

Last year, students in my Human Body Systems class, travelled several times to the Bitterroot Health Hospital where they joined students from other schools in our valley to engage in activities highlighting the anatomy and/or physiology of various body systems. Even though my students were not directly enrolled in Ms. Leatham's online courses, my students were so appreciative for the opportunity to expand their knowledge of medicine while interacting with like-minded students from other schools. For many of my students, this was their first opportunity to see the inner workings of a hospital, interact with professionals, and envision a future for themselves in this vital field. Brittany's program does more than just teach science; it sparks curiosity and passion.

The need for programs like this has never been more urgent. Across the country, the healthcare sector is facing a critical shortage of workers. Since 2020, hundreds of thousands of healthcare professionals have left the field, leaving a massive gap in patient care. In rural areas like ours, the impact of these shortages is felt even more acutely.

Brittany Leatham's work is a direct and effective response to this crisis. By investing in our students, we are cultivating a homegrown workforce of skilled, passionate, and dedicated healthcare professionals who are more likely to live and work right here in the Bitterroot Valley. This initiative is essential for ensuring the long-term health and well-being of our community.

If you have any questions regarding the experience my students had with Brittany, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Marie Antonioli

Science & Health Enhancement Teacher
Hamilton High School
327 Fairgrounds Rd
Hamilton, MT. 59840
406-375-6060 ext. 5101

October 9, 2025

Dear Brittany Leatham-Olney,

I am pleased to offer my enthusiastic support for the creation of the Stevensville Health Sciences Academy. As Director of the Nursing Programs at Missoula College – UM, I've had the privilege of working with many high school graduates from the Bitterroot Valley. A significant number of these students apply to and are accepted into our nursing programs, reflecting the region's strong interest in healthcare education. We remain deeply committed to expanding educational opportunities for individuals throughout our community.

The launch of a dedicated Health Sciences Academy will provide high school students with early exposure to essential skills and knowledge that form the foundation of successful careers in healthcare. Your commitment to advancing health-related education in the region is both commendable and increasingly recognized. By expanding access to healthcare-focused programs, you will not only enhance the local workforce but also contribute meaningfully to the strength of Montana's—and the nation's—healthcare system.

Feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance in advancing this initiative. The Missoula College Nursing Program values the collaboration we've shared and looks forward to continuing our partnership in the future.

Sincerely,



Linda Barnes MSN, RN, CNE
Nursing Program Director

I wanted to share how much the healthcare program has positively impacted my daughter, Sophia Barreto. She has really enjoyed the program and speaks very highly of **Brittany**, her enthusiasm and support have made a lasting impression on Sophia.

Through this experience, Sophia has developed a strong interest in pursuing a career in medicine. Her goal is to become a surgeon specializing in reconstructive and plastic surgery, with a particular passion for staying in a rural community and one day working for Bitterroot Health. This program has given her both the confidence and the direction to pursue that path, helping her understand how rewarding a career in healthcare can be.

I truly believe programs like this are essential for the Bitterroot Valley, as they inspire and prepare the next generation of healthcare professionals who want to give back to their own community. It's an incredible opportunity for students to explore healthcare careers early and see firsthand the difference they can make.

As an employee of Bitterroot Health myself, I'm grateful for the opportunities this program provides and would be more than happy to assist or support the program in any way Brittany might find helpful in the future.

Thank you for investing in our students and helping shape their futures.

Warm regards,
Stephanie Barreto



October 29, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Bitterroot Health, I am pleased to express our strong support for the Stevensville Health Sciences Academy, an innovative program dedicated to preparing students from the Bitterroot Valley for meaningful and rewarding careers in healthcare.

This academy represents a forward-thinking approach to education—one that bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. By combining college-aligned coursework, industry-recognized certifications, and hands-on training, students will develop the essential knowledge and skills needed to thrive in today's healthcare environment.

Bitterroot Health is proud to partner with the Stevensville Health Sciences Academy in multiple ways, including providing CTE-certified instructors to teach healthcare courses, offering experiential learning opportunities such as job shadowing and mentorship, and giving students exposure to a wide range of medical careers. These experiences not only strengthen students' technical competencies but also cultivate a sense of purpose and connection to their community.

As the healthcare landscape continues to evolve, so too does the need for a skilled, compassionate, and locally rooted workforce. The Stevensville Health Sciences Academy addresses this need directly by creating personalized academic pathways that align with both student interests and the workforce demands of the Bitterroot Valley.

We believe this program will have a lasting impact—empowering students, supporting local families, and ensuring the long-term vitality of our regional healthcare system. Bitterroot Health is committed to being an active partner in its success.

Sincerely,

Becci Conroy Bargfrede
Chief Transformational Officer
Operational Excellence

1201 Westwood Dr., Suite A
Hamilton, MT 59840

Tyler Joyner and Bradford Fruechte

Science Teachers

Stevensville High School

10/30/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our support for the integration of the **Bitterroot Health Charter School** into our district. This new partnership would offer new opportunities for our students interested in medical professions and strengthen the Stevensville High School science department.

We believe that the Bitterroot Health Charter's focus on a medical and health science pathway will provide students with a unique jumpstart into the healthcare field. This program will create immediate opportunities for students through access to specialized science courses, such as *Anatomy and Physiology*, which in turn will help address the long-term need for healthcare providers in our community. Additionally, it will strengthen our science department by providing additional personnel, equipment, and financial resources. We also appreciate that a new teacher will be occupying a currently unused laboratory space.

Overall, we think that integrating the Bitterroot Health Charter School into our system is a positive step that will improve the quality of education in the science department.

Sincerely,

Tyler Joyner and Bradford Fruechte

Stevensville High School science department

Christine Lewanski
Attorney at Law
194 Chaffin Creek Rd., Darby, MT 59829
calewanski@hotmail.com

October 9, 2025

Via Email
BrittanyLeatham@BitterrootHealth.org

Re: Endorsement for the Continuation and Expansion of Healthcare Education Opportunities in the Bitterroot Valley

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strongest possible support for the continuation and expansion of comprehensive healthcare education opportunities available to students in the Bitterroot Valley community. These programs serve as a vital gateway, helping students discover their passion for healthcare, preparing them directly for professional certification programs, and critically supporting their transition into college and/or the workforce.

The value of career and technical education has been evident in my own family. My daughter benefited immensely from the experience she received through the Certified Nursing Assistant program at Bitterroot Health. This program provided a professional, immersive environment through which my daughter learned not only the clinical skills required by the CNA pathway, but also gained a crucial understanding of how CNAs fit within the larger healthcare landscape—an invaluable perspective.

CTE programs, particularly those offered in the healthcare field, are vital to the long-term economic health of the Bitterroot Valley. Collectively, healthcare organizations represent the largest employer in our region. Unfortunately, recruiting qualified candidates for these essential positions from outside the Valley is increasingly challenging due to disparately high housing costs. By nurturing a skilled local talent pipeline through early education programs, we proactively address a critical workforce need and invest directly in the stability of our community's largest employment sector.

The practical impact of this foundational experience is already being seen in my family. My daughter is now applying the skills she learned during her CNA certification class to her biochemistry-premed studies in college. The certification she obtained through Bitterroot Health also offers her immediate employment opportunities, both during the school year and over summer breaks. When the time comes to apply for medical school, she will also be able to offer her CNA certification as compelling evidence of her qualifications and commitment to patient care.

Early career and technical education in the field of healthcare provides an essential launchpad for future leaders and critical frontline workers. I urge you to support and expand these indispensable healthcare education programs.

Sincerely,



Christine Lewanski

Endorsement – Support for CTE Healthcare Pathways
By Cheyenne Scott

I am writing to express my strong support for the CTE Healthcare Pathways programs in the Bitterroot Valley. As someone who has personally participated in the Bitterroot Health CNA program, alongside my friends Vanessa McKay and Madisyn Netwig, I have seen firsthand how impactful these healthcare classes are not only for individual students like myself but also for the strength and future of our community.

Going through the CNA program was a life-changing experience. It taught me real-world skills, boosted my confidence, and gave me a clear direction for my career in healthcare. Being able to work and learn in a hands-on environment helped me understand what it truly means to care for others. It also made the classroom content more meaningful, knowing that what we were learning could and would be used to help people in need.

For students like me, these programs offer an opportunity to explore a meaningful and high-demand career path without having to leave the valley or wait until after high school. They open doors early, allowing us to graduate not only with a diploma but with skills, certifications, and experience that put us a step ahead.

The Bitterroot Valley, like many rural areas, is in need of skilled healthcare professionals. Supporting CTE healthcare pathways means investing in our local workforce and ensuring that people in our community can receive quality care from people who truly care—people who have grown up here and want to stay here.

This program didn't just give me technical knowledge it helped shape my future. I now have a clearer vision of my career goals in the healthcare field, and I feel prepared to take the next steps thanks to the foundation this program gave me. In fact, Vanessa and I are planning to continue from our CNA certification to the CMA (Certified Medical Assistant) program, and during our contract with Bitterroot Health, we plan to work toward earning our LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) licenses. The opportunity to grow in the healthcare field while staying local is something I never imagined would be possible before this program.

I fully endorse continued support and expansion of CTE healthcare pathways. These programs don't just educate students they empower us, and they strengthen our entire community.

Sincerely,
Cheyenne Scott



October 31, 2025

Brittany Leatham-Olney, MSN-Ed, RN CMSRN, CTE
Employee Health Nurse & Educator
Bitterroot Health
BrittanyLeatham@bitterroothealth.org

Main Campus

Anna Pearl Sherrick Hall
P.O. Box 173560
Bozeman, MT 59717-3560

Tel 406-994-3783
Fax 406-994-6020

Billings Campus

1500 University Drive
MSU-Billings, Campus Box 574
Billings, MT 59101

Tel 406-657-2912
Fax 406-657-1715

Great Falls Campus

1704 29th Street South
Great Falls, MT 59405

Tel 406-994-4450
Fax 406-994-1697

Kalispell Campus

210 Sunny View Lane, Suite 5
Kalispell, MT 59901

Tel 406-751-6967
Fax 406-994-1919

Missoula Campus

32 Campus Drive #7416
Missoula, MT 59812-7416

Tel 406-994-2123
Fax 406-994-6159

Re: *Letter of Support for Stevensville Health Sciences Academy*

Dear Ms. Letham-Olney,

Please accept this letter of support for the application to create a public charter school, the *Stevensville Health Sciences Academy* (SHSA), in partnership with Bitterroot Health. The Mark & Robyn Jones College of Nursing recognizes the value of high-quality K-12 educational preparation as foundational to Montana's healthcare workforce initiatives. The use of dual enrollment, early hands-on clinical experience, and basic healthcare skills and certifications provide students with an efficient running start to their post-secondary education and career goals.

We look forward to collaborating in support of your effort to create this unique educational pathway for Montana high school students.

Sincerely,

Sarah Shannon, PhD, RN, FAAN
Dean and Professor
Mark & Robyn Jones College of Nursing
Montana State University
sarah.shannon1@montana.edu

SS/sjr

To Whom It May Concern;
October 29, 2025

Imagine having a child that physically can't attend traditional schooling. Nothing appears visually different about your child, but you know that traditional schooling is slowly killing your child. The battles are becoming worse, and the answers seem unachievable. Imagine knowing that homeschooling isn't an option because of the financial need for you to work full-time. Now, imagine that there's no hope. Imagine knowing that it's only a matter of time until your child either drops out, becomes irate at the school system, or starts thinking of ending it all, permanently.

It's a scary situation to picture. Bleak. Hopeless. A parent's worst nightmare.

Now, realize. Realize that there's a solution to helping your child graduate. Realize that there is a possibility that your child won't have to fight their way to graduation. That schooling can come to your child in a way that she/he can learn, be successful and graduate feeling accomplished instead of ran over by traditional constraints.

My daughter faced the daunting situation I described above. As a student with high functioning autism, anxiety, and a high I.Q., traditional schooling was slowly killing her. It had killed her hope, her confidence, her self-esteem, her will to graduate, and was working on killing her will to live. Reaching out to the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) was the most remarkable thing I've been able to do for her as her mother. It not only gave her an environment she could survive in, could thrive in, it gave us back the hope that she would graduate, that she would feel successful, and that she could learn with her head held high instead of bowing to the pressures of traditional schooling.

I'm so very proud and extremely grateful to be able to say my daughter graduated from ALC last year, with fantastic grades. She graduated a year and a half ahead of her original classmates. She graduated with feeling confident in finding a job, with knowing that she accomplished 12 years of work, and she now believes that she can finish what she starts.

While this may seem like a short cut to some, believe me, while It's the path less taken, it's just as vital as the path most taken.

Please grant Stevensville the funds to grow their ALC program! It is incredibly important to the health and stability of our marginalized youth. Please see it as an opportunity to save, not only our students' education, but more importantly, their lives. I beg this of you, from one parent to another, please find it In your heart to save our children.

Sincerely,
Katherine Braun

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the Alternate Learning Center (ALC), at Stevensville High School. I have both professional and personal experience with the ALC. I provided mental health support for students at Stevensville High School for 2 ½ years and worked with several students who transitioned from traditional high school to the ALC. I witnessed several students who were at risk of not graduating high school catch up on credits and earn the privilege of walking across the stage to receive their high school diploma. I worked with several students who were at risk of suspension from behavioral issues, but once the student was in a smaller and quieter setting, they were successful.

My daughter also attends the ALC, which has provided a less stressful and chaotic atmosphere where she can complete her school work with much less distraction.

I want to show my support for a charter school so the Stevensville School District can continue to offer alternative education options for the students. It is so important to provide alternative educational settings because not everyone can thrive in a traditional environment. A high school diploma is an important building block to success for all students and having access to an alternate educational setting is incredibly beneficial to our area.

Thank you,
Laura Burrows

Cottonmontana <cottonmontana@aol.com>
To: "Haxton, Ayse" <haxtona@stevensville.k12.mt.us>

Sat, Oct 11, 2025 at 10:12 AM

Jennifer and Brent Cotton

[433 Sharrott Hill Loop](#)

[Stevensville, Mt 59870](#)

cottonmontana@aol.com

10/09/2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the Alternative Learning Center (ALC) in Stevensville and to strongly advocate for its transition into a charter school. Our community deeply needs this option for students who thrive outside the traditional classroom model. The ALC has proven to be an invaluable resource not only for our family but also for countless others whose children might otherwise have fallen through the cracks of the conventional education system.

Our daughter's experience is a powerful example of the life-changing impact the ALC has had. During a very serious illness, she was forced to leave her regular school for an extended period to focus on recovery. By the time she was able to return, she had fallen significantly behind her classmates and felt hopeless about catching up. The ALC gave her a second chance. The staff met her where she was, supported her emotionally and academically, and helped her rebuild her confidence and motivation. Without the ALC, she likely would have given up on school entirely. Thanks to the compassionate teacher and flexible structure, she not only graduated but is now pursuing an associate's degree in college. We are certain this would not have been possible without the ALC's individualized approach and unwavering support. We cannot imagine where she would be today if the ALC would not have been an option for her.

Our son has also flourished at the ALC. He is a bright, creative, and hands-on learner who struggled in the traditional public school setting—not because he lacked ability or drive, but because he learns differently. Despite the fact that he understands aviation to the point where he could land several different aircrafts in a pinch at 14 yrs old, or that he understand and has memorized the algorithms he needs to solve several different rubic cubes in under 30 seconds, he felt like a complete failure in the traditional classroom. He became depressed and lost all confidence in his ability to do well in classes. The ALC recognized and

celebrated his strengths rather than forcing him into a rigid mold. The program has helped him understand that intelligence takes many forms and that success is not defined solely by test scores. In the calm, quiet and supportive environment of the ALC, he has regained confidence, rediscovered his love of learning, and developed a clearer sense of purpose for his future.

The ALC's unique approach serves students who think "outside the box" — young people who need flexibility, encouragement, and a learning environment that honors their individuality. Without this program, many of these students, including our own children, would have been at risk of dropping out or disengaging from their education altogether. The ALC has given them and many others a path forward.

We are deeply grateful to Ayse and the entire ALC team for their vision, compassion, and dedication to helping every student succeed in their confidence in education. Establishing the ALC as a charter school would ensure that this vital resource remains available for generations to come. Our community needs this — for the students who don't fit neatly into the public school system, for those facing life's unexpected challenges, and for every child who deserves the chance to discover their own potential.

Please, and thank you for your consideration and for recognizing the tremendous value the Alternative Learning Center brings to our community and how important it is to obtain a charter school status.

Sincerely,

Jennifer and Brent Cotton

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

On Thursday, October 9, 2025, 12:09 PM, Haxton, Ayse
<haxtona@stevensville.k12.mt.us> wrote:

To Whom It May Concern,

As a parent in the Stevensville School District, I want to express my strong support for the proposed Stevensville Alternative STEPS Charter School. Our community is filled with bright, capable students whose learning styles, personal circumstances, and goals don't always fit within a traditional classroom structure. STEPS appears to offer a much-needed opportunity for those students to succeed in ways that honor their individuality.

The vision behind STEPS — a Student-focused, Teacher-guided Educational Pathway for Success — reflects what I believe education should be: flexible, innovative, and deeply connected to the people and programs in our own valley. The idea of combining in-person, online, and remote options, while maintaining collaboration with trusted teachers, local colleges, and career programs, will open doors for students who might otherwise struggle to find their place.

I fully support the creation of the Stevensville Alternative STEPS Charter School and believe it will be a valuable addition to our district and community. Thank you for considering this important opportunity for our students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie Miller". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Stephanie Miller
Stevensville Parent

10/20/25

To Whom it Concerns,

My name is Bridget Sampson and I am writing this letter, with assistance, on behalf of Mrs. Haxton and the ALC program at Stevensville High School. I wanted to share my support for this program and the amazing job that Mrs. Haxton is doing by sharing how our family has been personally impacted.

I have seen three children through the ALC program, all of which I was told would be a "lost cause" and would never graduate. The first is my younger sister who I have raised from a very young age. She experienced significant childhood trauma and school was very challenging for her. The administration at Stevensville High School did not give me much hope and so I took her out of school completely for a while. Mrs. Haxton reached out to my sister, Hannah, personally to let her know about the new ALC program and how she felt it could help her finish school. Hannah agreed to try it and graduated successfully from the program in 2024. Hannah credits Mrs. Haxton and this program for giving her the support, skills and confidence she needed to finish school and navigate the rest of her life.

The second of the three is my daughter, Aydin. Aydin struggles with a learning disability and school was very challenging for her as well. She became very frustrated and wanted to drop out, but Hannah and Mrs. Haxton convinced her to try the ALC program. Mrs. Haxton met Aydin where she was at academically and created assignments that fit both the requirements and Aydin's ability, allowing her to regain her confidence and be successful. Aydin also graduated in 2024, a year before the rest of her class.

The third of the children in my experience was Aliviana, a close friend of Hannah and Aydin, who I had temporary guardianship over. Aliviana also struggled with significant childhood trauma that eventually led to neglect. She lived with our family for a while and during that time, after having fallen behind in school from missing so many days, she was also given the option to join the ALC. It would have been extremely difficult for her to catch up and graduate on time given all that she had been through, but she worked hard with Mrs. Haxton and graduated 2 years early, in 2024.

Mrs. Haxton worked diligently with each of our girls, helping them gain the

confidence and skills they needed to succeed. She worked from each of their strengths and was mindful of their mental health needs. She was kind and caring, but also pushed them and held them accountable. The difference that this program has made will be felt throughout the lives of these three girls, but also the many others that have been served and succeeded because of Mrs. Haxton's dedication to this program.

The thought of a charter school in the valley is exciting to me because it can benefit even more students who need this individualized educational approach. Thank you for making this option available to those who would fall through the cracks otherwise.

Sincerely,

Bridget Sampson



Stevensville High School District
300 Park St
Stevensville, MT 59870

October 13, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

We, at Summit Career Center, are thrilled to learn Stevensville High School is creating and applying for the Stevensville Alternative Steps Charter School (STEPS). There is a great need for alternative learning options in the Bitterroot Valley and this would be a big step forward in filling that need.

Summit Career Center is very willing to partner with STEPS to provide educational and experiential career opportunities for students in high school and beyond. We are currently working in two locations providing career training for adults ages 18-55 and have expanded into high school programs as well. We are truly excited to be working in the high school setting as it is our desire to help as many students prior to graduation as possible. This is a very important focus for us going forward!

Please do not hesitate to contact me, for further information. I will do anything I can to help expedite this program.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Stevens
Executive Director
Summit Career Center
www.summitcareercenter.org
Office: 406.777.7232

CONSENT AGENDA

FINANCIALS

51010 Board of Public Education Appropriation Budget Summary By Subclass, Fund

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 07 (Jan)/2026

OBPP Program Subclass	Fund	Acct Lvl 1	Acct Lvl 2	APPROP Budget	Actuals Amt	A Accrual Amt	APPROP Bud Balance
01 K-12 EDUCATION				722,265.03	261,223.06	0.00	461,041.97
235F5 FY 2025 CARRYFORWARD				43,589.00	40,141.27	0.00	3,447.73
01100 General Fund				43,589.00	40,141.27	0.00	3,447.73
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	40,141.27	0.00	(40,141.27)
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
62100 Other Services				0.00	9,234.60	0.00	(9,234.60)
62200 Supplies & Materials				0.00	8,277.82	0.00	(8,277.82)
62300 Communications				0.00	46.26	0.00	(46.26)
62400 Travel				0.00	15,647.46	0.00	(15,647.46)
62500 Rent				0.00	6,455.13	0.00	(6,455.13)
62800 Other Expenses				0.00	480.00	0.00	(480.00)
(blank)				43,589.00	0.00	0.00	43,589.00
(blank)				43,589.00	0.00	0.00	43,589.00
235H1 ADMINISTRATION				631,917.10	213,656.65	0.00	418,260.45
01100 General Fund				631,917.10	213,656.65	0.00	418,260.45
61000 Personal Services				0.00	154,988.20	0.00	(154,988.20)
61000 Personal Services				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
61100 Salaries				0.00	108,365.30	0.00	(108,365.30)
61300 Other Compensation				0.00	3,200.00	0.00	(3,200.00)
61400 Employee Benefits				0.00	43,422.90	0.00	(43,422.90)
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	58,668.45	0.00	(58,668.45)
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
62100 Other Services				0.00	3,149.97	0.00	(3,149.97)
62200 Supplies & Materials				0.00	5,413.21	0.00	(5,413.21)
62300 Communications				0.00	3,783.17	0.00	(3,783.17)
62400 Travel				0.00	7,639.26	0.00	(7,639.26)
62500 Rent				0.00	6,720.84	0.00	(6,720.84)
62800 Other Expenses				0.00	31,962.00	0.00	(31,962.00)
(blank)				631,917.10	0.00	0.00	631,917.10
(blank)				631,917.10	0.00	0.00	631,917.10
235H4 STATE ITSD/RST				46,709.93	7,425.14	0.00	39,284.79
01100 General Fund				46,709.93	7,425.14	0.00	39,284.79
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	7,425.14	0.00	(7,425.14)
62000 Operating Expenses				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
62100 Other Services				0.00	2,809.42	0.00	(2,809.42)
62200 Supplies & Materials				0.00	2,620.32	0.00	(2,620.32)
62300 Communications				0.00	1,995.40	0.00	(1,995.40)
(blank)				46,709.93	0.00	0.00	46,709.93
(blank)				46,709.93	0.00	0.00	46,709.93
235Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION				49.00	0.00	0.00	49.00
01100 General Fund				49.00	0.00	0.00	49.00
61000 Personal Services				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
61000 Personal Services				0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
(blank)				49.00	0.00	0.00	49.00
(blank)				49.00	0.00	0.00	49.00
Grand Total				722,265.03	261,223.06	0.00	461,041.97

❖ **REPORTS – (Items 1-6)**

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 1

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 2

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

McCall Flynn

ITEM 3

STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- **Assessment Update**
 - **Federal Update**
- **Content Standards Update**
 - **Accreditation Report**
 - **HiSET Report**
- **Transportation Report**

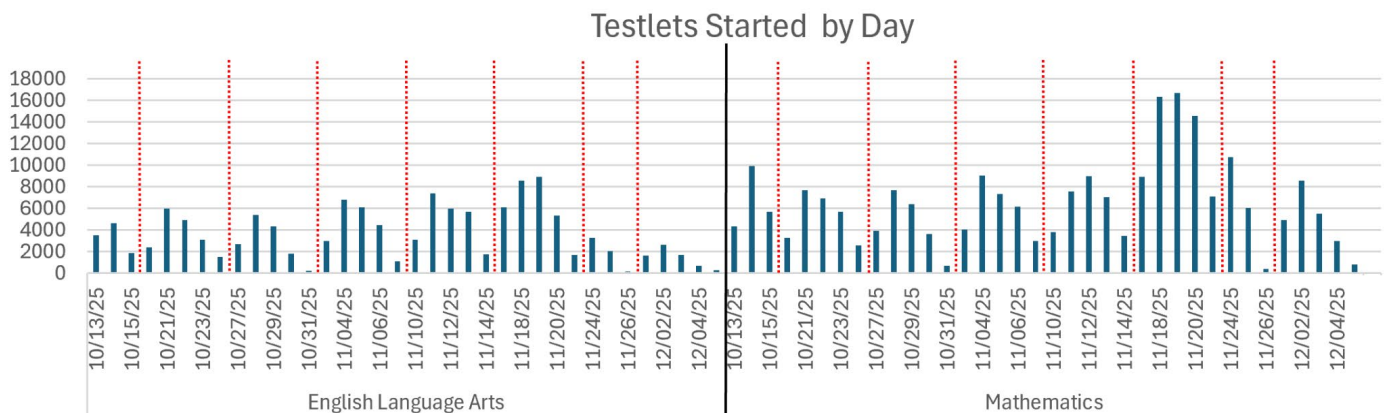
State Superintendent Susie Hedalen



Assessment Update

MAST Update

- The MAST Peer Review Submission has been completed and submitted to the US Department of Education as of January 9. The submission includes over 130 pieces of evidence supporting the technical quality of MAST.
- **Window 1** opened October 13, 2025 and closed December 5.
 - Completion rates for both math and ELA exceeded 97%.
 - Progress reports for Window 1 released January 15th.



- **Window 2** opens January 12-March 6 and includes 3-5 math testlets, 2 ELA testlets (literary and informational) and the ELA Performance Task. ELA Performance Task resources include:
 - Scoring Rubrics:
 - [MGA ELA Writing Scoring Rubric G3](#)
 - [MGA ELA Writing Scoring Rubric G4-5](#)
 - [MGA ELA Writing Scoring Rubric G6-8](#)
 - Student Friendly Rubrics:
 - [ELA G3-8 Student Friendly Rubrics Checklist](#)
 - Exemplary Prompts:
 - [ELA PT G3-4 Exemplar Prompt](#)
 - [ELA PT G5-8 Exemplar Prompt](#)
 - ELA Testlet Specifications:
 - [ELA Assessment Specification](#)

DLM Update

- Fall Window closed December 19.
- Spring window opens February 2- May 15 with flexible math and ELA blueprints in grades 3-8 and 11 and fixed science blueprints for grades 5, 8, and 11.

ACCESS Testing

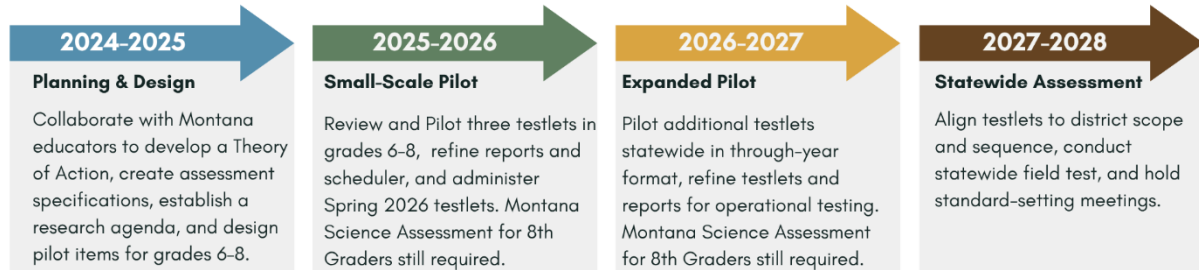
- Testing for all identified English Learns in grades K-12 opens January 5-March 6.
- This adjustment reflects feedback on December testing challenges in previous years and a focus on fall EL identification.

2025-2026 Statewide Testing Windows

Anticipated SY2025-26 Test Windows		Required Subjects	Student Group	Grades Tested	Window Period
Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)	<u>Window 1</u> October 13-December 5	Math and ELA	General	Grades 3–8	3 windows: 8 weeks each
	<u>Window 2</u> January 12-March 6				
	<u>Window 3</u> March 30-May 22				
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate ELA and Math	<u>Fall Window</u> September 8- December 19	Math and ELA	SwSCDs	Grades 3-8, 11	2 windows: 15 weeks each
	<u>Spring Window</u> February 2- May 15				
WIDA ACCESS Alt ACCESS	January 5-March 6	English Language Proficiency	English Learners	Grades K–12	9 weeks
Montana Science Assessment (MSA)	March 2-May 22	Science	General	Grades 5, 8	8 weeks
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Science	February 2- May 15	Science	SwSCDs	Grades 5, 8, 11	15 weeks
ACT with Writing	<u>Window 1</u> March 24-April 3	Math, ELA, and Science	General	Grade 11	3 windows: 2 weeks each
	<u>Window 2</u> April 7-17				
	<u>Window 3</u> April 21-May 1				
Updated by the Office of Public Instruction on August 28, 2025.			Note: Dates and information listed in this schedule are subject to change at any time or without notice.		



MAST SCIENCE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



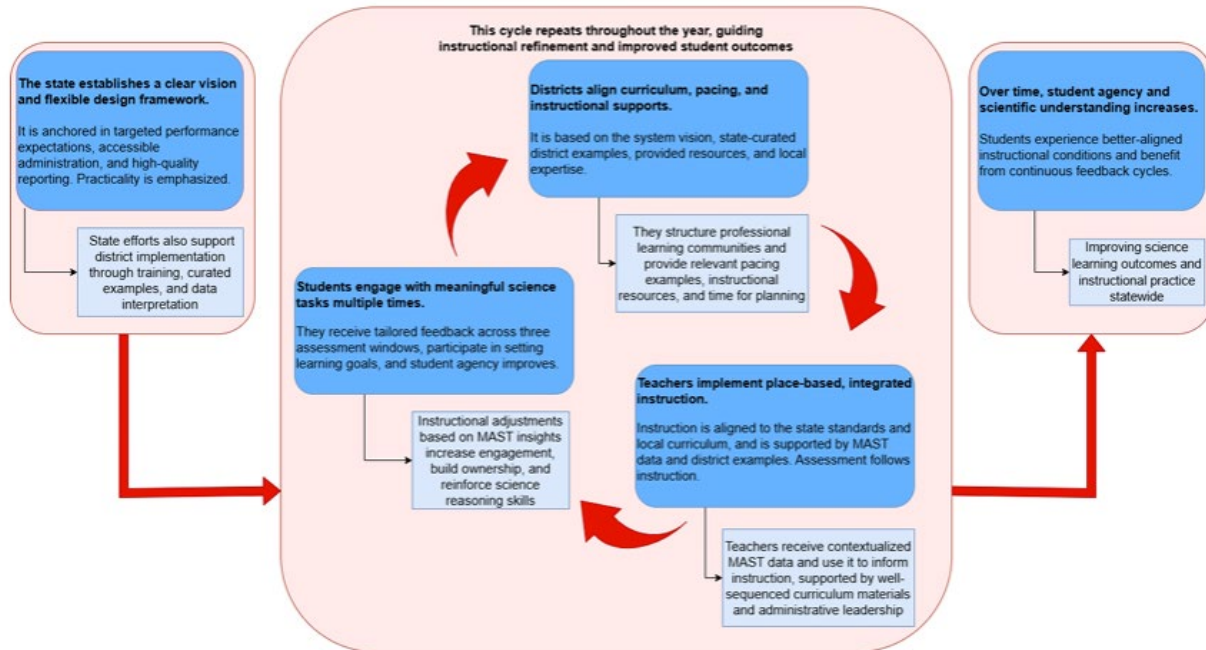
Science CGSA Update

2024-2025: Planning and Design:

- Award was received September 2024
- Building on the framework of MAST ELA and Math, OPI partnered with the Center for Assessment and a task force of Montana educators and leaders to develop a Theory of Action. This framework guides the system's design, ensuring MAST Science assessments are classroom-connected, standards-aligned, and supportive of meaningful student learning across Montana.
- **Montana Through-Year Science Assessment: Theory of Action**
 - *Page 42 includes considerations for the State Board of Education*

Figure 1. Simplified Theory of Action for Montana's Science Assessment System.

Simplified Theory of Action: MAST Science



2025-2026: Small-Scale Pilot:

- **When:** Spring 2026 (April 13th - May 8th)
- **Who:** 6th, 7th, and 8th grade science classrooms across Montana
- **What:** Students will complete one to two short NGSS-aligned testlets (about 30 minutes each), each testlet has 10-12 total items. The small-scale pilot covers the following Montana Content Standards:
 - [Forces & Interactions \(Physical Science\)](#)
 - [Growth, Development, and Life Cycles of Organisms \(Life Science\)](#)
 - [Earth's Systems \(Earth and Space Science\)](#)
- **Eligibility:**
 - To participate in the Year 1 pilot, schools must have already taught these topics in grades 6–8 at some point during the 2025–26 school year, before April 2026.
- **Purpose:** Provide teachers with formative information about student understanding of key science concepts. Gather data to inform future assessment design and development.
- **How:** The pilot will be administered via the KITE Portal, the same platform used by 3rd–8th grade students for MAST ELA and math assessments.
- **Support:** Text-to-Speech accommodations will be available for students who require them. Other accommodations will not be a part of this initial pilot.
- **Participation Commitment:** Each participating classroom will administer one to two testlets, taking approximately 60 minutes that can be broken up into separate sessions.
- **Other Details:**
 - Score Reports for Pilot Year 1 will include raw score reports (showing the number of points a student earned)
 - There is a short educator and student survey after completion of the two assessment testlets (~7 Multiple Choice/Likert Scale Questions)
 - 8th Grade students will still need to complete the [Montana Science Assessment](#) for the 2025-2026 school year.
 - 5th Grade is not a part of the pilot and will continue to take the Montana Science Assessment.
- Recruitment has started for Spring 2026 pilot 6th-8th grade
 - Current Recruitment Status
 - 32 Schools -
 - 6th Grade: 620 students
 - 7th Grade: 550 students
 - 8th Grade: 520 students
 - *Need ~800-900 more per grade level*
 - Targeted recruitment is in progress
 - **Recruitment Participation Form**

Next Steps:

- Issue a Request for Proposals for professional learning designed to build educator capacity to implement the Montana Science Standards aligned to NGSS and support educators implementing MAST Science, with a focus on the middle grades.

Report prepared by Cedar Rose, Assessment Director, cedar.rose@mt.gov



Montana High School Equivalency Summary: 2024-2025

Overview

Provide the Board of Public Education with an update of high school equivalency testing, utilizing the HiSET and GED exams, in Montana.

History

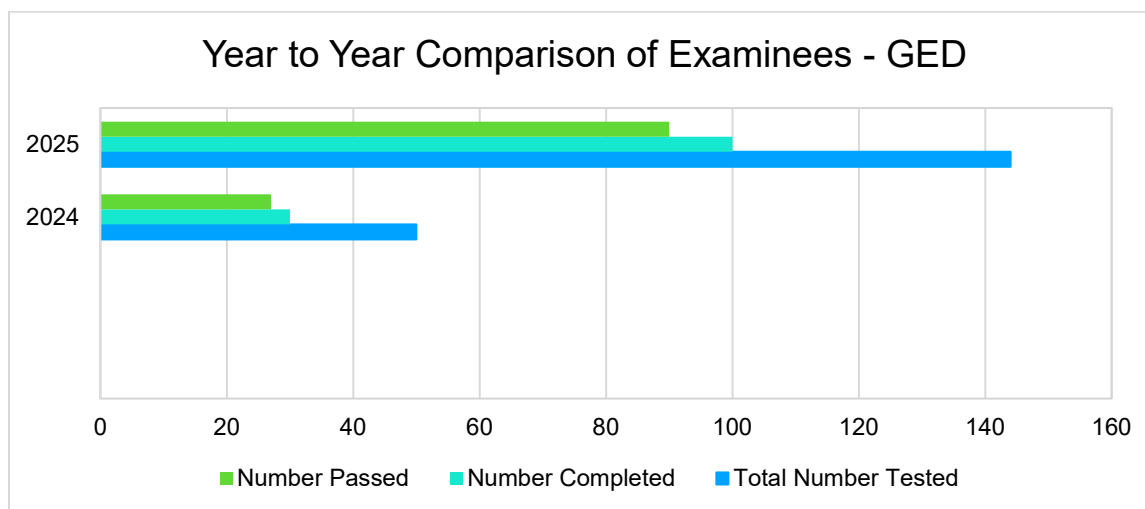
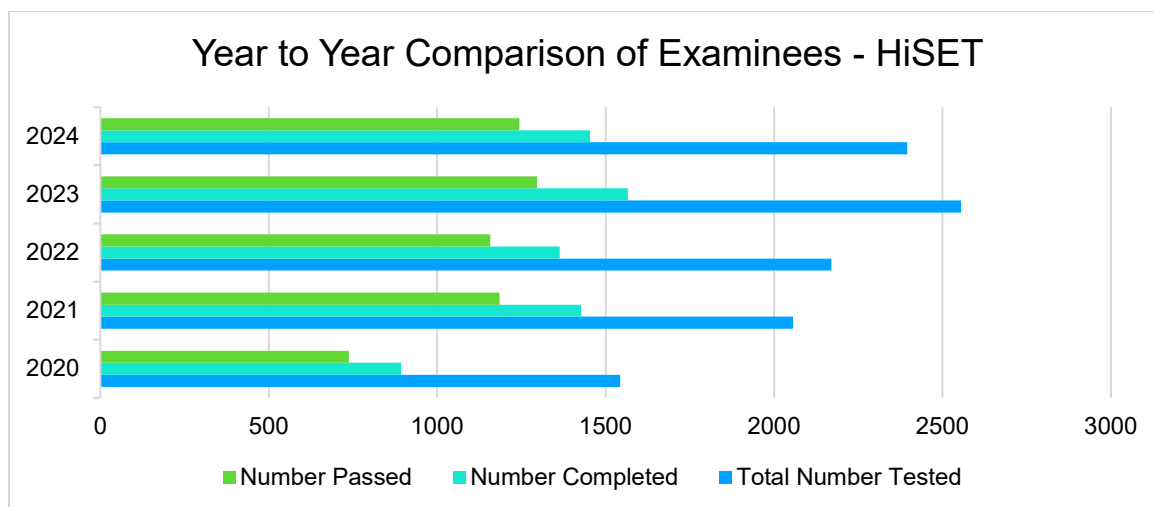
GED was the sole high school equivalency (HSE) exam in Montana prior to 2014. The state transitioned solely to the HiSET exam in 2014. In October 2022, the HiSET test vendor changed from ETS to PSI. In January 2024, GED testing officially became available again in Montana. The Office of Public Instruction pursued the return of GED testing to allow for choice and provide opportunities for constituents. Ultimately, attainment of the HSE credential is critical for employment, admission to postsecondary education or the military, release from incarceration, compliance with court orders, etc. It is imperative that the clients served, those seeking an HSE credential, have access to HSE exam options.

Historically, the number of completers and passing rates have remained relatively consistent in Montana throughout the years.

Year to Year Comparison of Examinees – HiSET*														
Total Number Tested					Completed					Passed				
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1,543	2056	2170	2555	2395	892 57.8%	1427 69.4%	1364 62.9%	1566 61.3%	1454 60.7%	738 82.7%	1185 83.0%	1157 84.8%	1296 82.8%	1244 85.6%

*Passing rates are reflective of the best attempt. HiSET official testing data currently published annually by calendar year.

Year to Year Comparison of Examinees – GED					
Total Number Tested		Completed		Passed	
2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
50	144	30	100	27 90%	90 90%



Testing Details

The HiSET exam is offered in two formats, a paper-based testing system (PBT) and a computer-based testing system (CBT). The cost of the HiSET varies based on the version used. The computer-based test is \$53.75 for the battery, \$10.75 per subtest. The paper-based test is \$75.00 for the battery, \$15.00 per subtest. The price includes two free retests per subtest, within 12 months of the original purchase.

The GED exam is offered in a computer-based format. The cost of the GED is \$104 for the battery, \$26 per subtest. The price includes one free retake per subtest, within 12 months of original purchase.

The testing registration fee is paid directly to HiSET or GED through an online registration process. The individual test center fee varies from center to center. Test centers in the state charge up to \$5 per subtest. An individual must take and pass all five subtests of the HiSET or all four subtests of the GED to receive a high school equivalency credential.

There are 8 test centers that exclusively offer PBT, 22 test centers that exclusively offer CBT, and 5 that offer both PBT and CBT. Test centers have been encouraged to move toward

computer-based testing. With computer-based testing, examiners have a more secure testing environment and test takers receive immediate test results.

GED testing is also offered via a secure virtual platform. The GED Online Proctored Exam is identical in content, format, and on-screen experience to exams taken at a test center. The cost of the online proctored exam is \$104 for the battery, \$26 per subtest. There are no free retakes for this delivery method, but this additional testing option offers increased flexibility for individuals seeking a high school equivalency credential.

Montana Demographics/Statistics

Test taker demographics have changed slightly over the past several years.

Completers Reported Age – HiSET*										
	2020	Passing Rate – Best Attempt	2021	Passing Rate – Best Attempt	2022	Passing Rate – Best Attempt	2023	Passing Rate – Best Attempt	2024	Passing Rate – Best Attempt
16-18	46.4%		47.4%		56.9%		58.9%		62.4%	
19-24	31.0%		32.6%		25.8%		21.8%		19.5%	
25-29	7.6%		7.1%		6.0%		7.2%		5.8%	
30-34	6.5%		5.3%		4.3%		4.2%		4.8%	
35-39	4.0%		3.2%		2.8%		3.6%		3.0%	
40-49	2.8%		3.7%		3.0%		3.2%		2.9%	
50-59	1.3%		0.6%		0.9%		1.0%		1.4%	
60+	0.3%		0.2%		0.2%		0.1%		0.1%	
Total Number of Completers	892	82.7%	1427	83.0%	1364	85.2%	1566	82.8%	1454	85.6%

*Passing rates are reflective of the best attempt. Including 108 individuals who previously failed the battery (prior to 2024) and passed in 2024.

Completers Reported Age – GED				
	2024	Passing Rate – Best Attempt	2025	Passing Rate – Best Attempt
16-18	23%		44%	
19-24	43%		33%	
25-29	23%		11%	
30-34	3%		6%	
35-39	3%		4%	
40-49	3%		2%	
50-59	0%		2%	
60+	0%		0%	
Total Number of Completers	30	90%	100	90%

Completers Reported Gender – HiSET	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Male	56.6%	58.2%	53.1%	57.1%	56.3%
Female	43.4%	41.8%	46.1%	39.5%	41.2%
Chose Not to Respond	0%	0%	0.8%	2.4%	1.9%

Completers Reported Gender – GED	2024	2025
Male	50%	63%
Female	33%	32%
Chose Not to Respond	17%	5%

Completers Reported Race – HiSET*								
	Percent Response Rate	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	African American	Pacific Islander	White	Other	Chose not to respond
2020	98.3%	16.4%	0.7%	1.8%	0.7%	73.7%	4.2%	8.4%
2021	99.2%	20.1%	1.2%	2.5%	0.8%	68.9%	4.4%	9.7%
2022	99.3%	19.5%	0.7%	2.5%	0.6%	61.6%	4.9%	16.0%
2023	100%	17.0%	0.9%	2.8%	0.6%	59.3%	2.7%	20.5%
2024	99.9%	16.2%	1.7%	2.6%	0.2%	62.3%	2.2%	21.0%

Completers Reported Race – GED*							
	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Two or more races	White	Asian	African Americ an	None	Chose not to respond
2024	3%	7%	70%	0%	0%	20%	0%
2025	4%	4%	75%	1%	2%	14%	1%

*Of the examinees reporting, the majority have consistently classified themselves as white.

Completers Reported Education Level – HiSET*									
	Percent Response Rate	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th
2020	64.7%	1.6%	0.9%	1.0%	7.5%	14.2%	29.6%	35.0%	10.2%
2021	62.0%	0.8%	0.5%	0.7%	5.2%	15.5%	28.2%	41.1%	8.0%
2022	58.2%	7.8%	0.6%	1.1%	4.9%	14.6%	26.2%	36.6%	8.1%
2023	32.0%	22.2%	0.4%	0.4%	4.4%	10.6%	19.8%	34.3%	8.0%
2024	26.0%	15.3%	0.3%	0.8%	3.7%	11.9%	24.6%	31.2%	12.2%

Completers Reported Education Level – GED*							
	Pre 5 th	6 th – 8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	Don't Remember
2024	3%	3%	3%	30%	17%	33%	10%
2025	0%	10%	16%	21%	13%	35%	5%

*Of the examinees reporting, the majority have consistently had some high school (9-12) education.

Completers Reported Employment Status – HiSET*					
	Percent Response Rate	Part-time	Full-time	Unemployed	Not in the labor force
2020	68.0%	22.6%	28.3%	30.1%	18.9%
2021	65.1%	24.3%	25.2%	26.4%	24.1%
2022	60.5%	32.4%	25.0%	21.6%	21.1%
2023	32.6%	38.4%	26.1%	21.2%	14.3%
2024	26.1%	40.1%	27.4%	19.0%	13.5%

*GED does not collect data on employment status.

Completers Reported Reasons for Taking the Test – HiSET												
	Tech	2-Yr College	4-Yr College	Get Job	Keep Current Job	RM	SAT	Public Assist	MIL	Early Release	Court Order	Other
2020	11.3%	10.0%	16.4%	18.3%	2.3%	2.8%	20.4%	0.6%	4.7%	0.4%	1.7%	11.1%
2021	13.8%	10.6%	14.8%	15.0%	1.9%	2.9%	21.4%	0.1%	4.6%	1.7%	2.4%	10.9%
2022	18.6%	10.2%	12.9%	16.2%	2.5%	2.9%	22.5%	0.1%	2.9%	0.5%	2.1%	8.3%
2023	33.2%	6.7%	10.6%	13.4%	1.5%	3.4%	17.5%	0.0%	4.5%	1.5%	0.6%	7.1%
2024	27.8%	7.7%	11.8%	14.6%	2.2%	1.9%	19%	0.6%	3.9%	0.6%	1.1%	8.8%

Abbreviations: Tech = Technical School, RM = Role Model, SAT = Personal Satisfaction, MIL = Military

Completers Reported Reasons for Taking the Test – GED					
	Educational Gain	Personal Gain	Work Related	Special Requirement	Entrance to Military
2024	47%	23%	27%	0%	3%
2025	34%	29%	30%	3%	4%

Completers Reported Ways of Preparing for the Test – HiSET*							
	Percent Response Rate	Hard Copy Book	eBook	Computer Software	Online	Prep Class	Did Not Prepare
2020	58.0%	22.2%	1.0%	1.7%	35.4%	42.0%	21.9%
2021	57.3%	20.7%	1.2%	1.7%	37.0%	45.7%	21.3%
2022	46.9%	23.3%	2.5%	1.3%	38.6%	44.7%	21.6%
2023	16.3%	15.3%	0.4%	0.0%	37.3%	31.8%	15.3%
2024	16.1%	19.7%	2.1%	0.4%	40.2%	25.2%	12.8%

Completers Reported Ways of Preparing for the Test – GED*								
	Adult Education Class and Teachers	GED Ready	Book/Print Study Material	Online/ Video Study Material	Mobile App	Other	Audio Study Material	Social Networking Website
2024	19%	36%	14%	27%	0%	5%	0%	0%
2025	48%	28%	13%	7%	0%	0%	1%	2%

*Of the examinees reporting, the majority have consistently reported prep classes or online prep prior to taking the HSE exam.

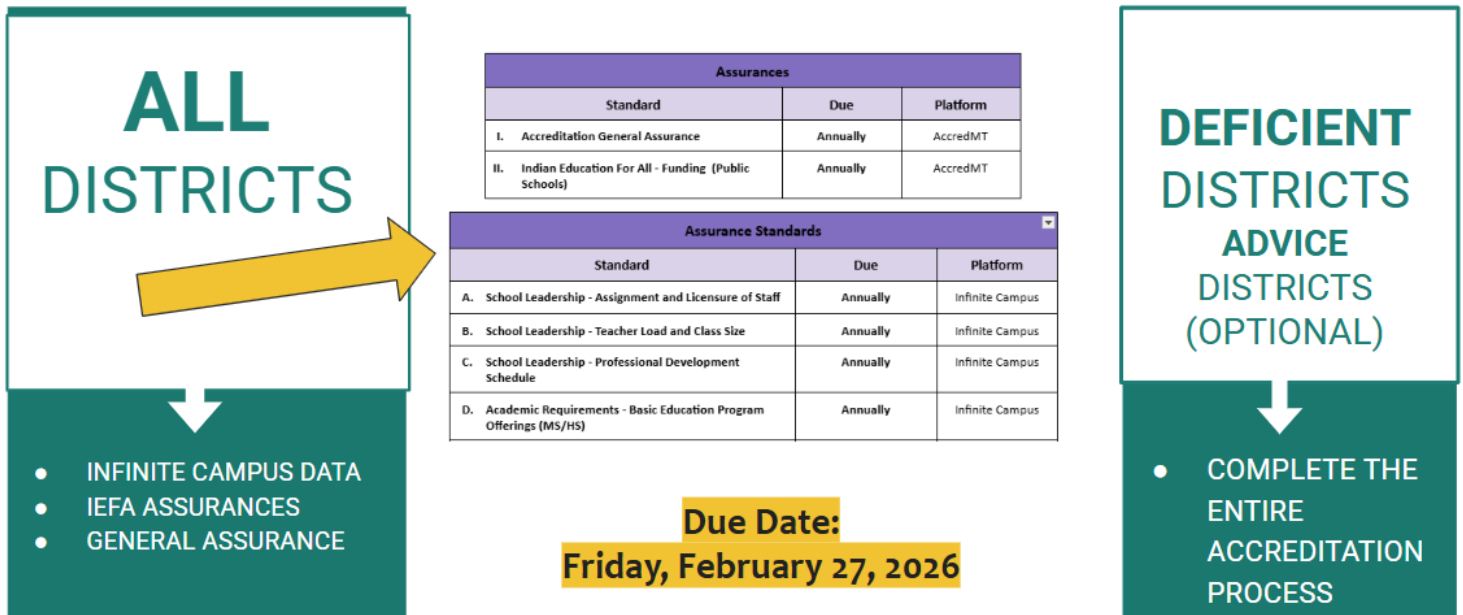
Note: Data compiled from Annual Statistical Reports on the HiSET Exam published by PSI, the HiSET Vendor, and GED Key Metrics by Jurisdiction Reports published by GED Testing Services.

Report prepared by Katie Madsen, Director of Adult Education Director/High School Equivalency Administrator, Phone: 406-465-1341, Email: Katie.Madsen@mt.gov



Accreditation Update Board of Public Education- January

Accreditation Process 2025-26

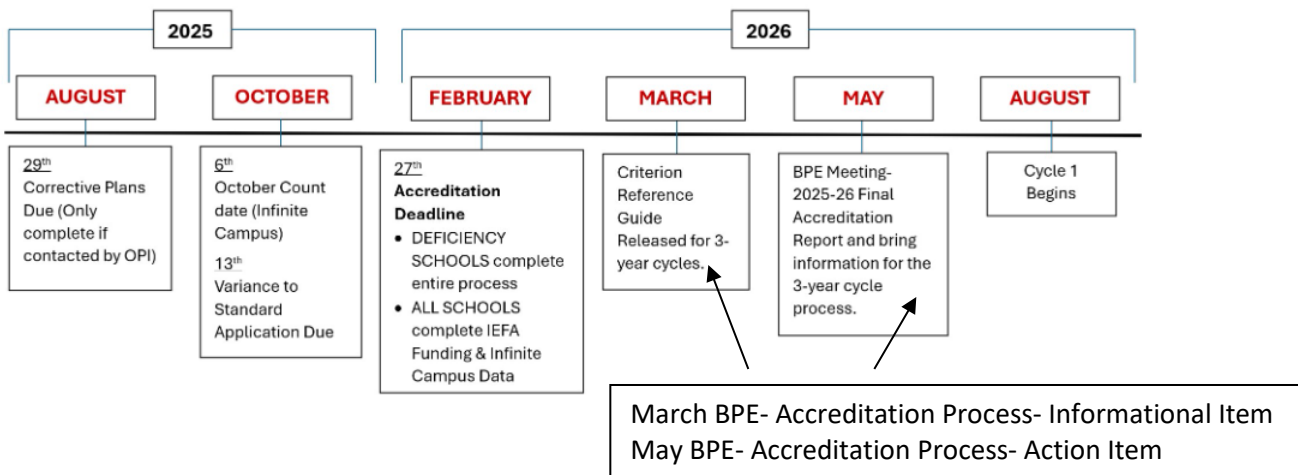


Think Tank Tasks

1. Refine rubrics for Criteria Reference Guide (September- December)
 - a) Sample Evidence Examples
 - b) Resource Materials
2. Define the Student Performance Rubrics - High School (December- January)
 - a) Identifying the math and ELA metrics for ACT data indicator
 - b) Identifying the metrics for graduation rates indicator
 - c) Considering the inclusion of College and Career Readiness indicator
3. Define the Student Performance Rubrics - Elementary (January- March)
 - a) Identifying the math and ELA metrics for MAST data indicator
 - b) Considering other performance metrics



Timeline



Prepared by Crystal Andrews, Accreditation and Licensure Senior Manager, Phone: 406-444-6325, Email: crystal.andrews@mt.gov



Content Standards Update

Mathematics Content Standards Implementation

Resources for Educators

- [P-12 Mathematics Content Standards Guidance Document](#)
- [Kindergarten Expanded Guidance Document](#)
- [First Grade Expanded Guidance Document](#)
- [Satchel](#) - Standards Housing Platform
- [Recommended High School Math Pathways](#)
- [High School Math Course Recommendations](#)

Math Standards Implementation Professional Learning Series

- August: [Why the Change? Understanding the New Math Standards](#)
- September: [Exploring the Changes and Structure: Navigating the Standards Document](#)
- October: [Mathematical Practices: What They Are & Why They Matter](#)
- November: [From Fluency to Flexibility: Understanding Mathematical Proficiency](#)
- December: [Aligning Your Curriculum: Where Do We Stand?](#)
- January: Assessment & Standards: What Needs to Change?
- February: Differentiation & Access: Supporting All Learners
- March: IEFA & Cultural Relevance: Making Math Meaningful for Montana Students
- April: Next Steps: Identifying District/School Needs for Implementation

Montana ELA & Literacy Content Standards Revision

English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy Standards:

- **Economic Impact Statement:**
 - [ELA & Literacy Economic Impact Statement](#) – Presented to Education Interim Budget Committee – May 2025
 - [Expanded Economic Impact Analysis](#): Presented to Education Interim Budget Committee – December 2025
- **Drafted Resources for Educators:**
 - [Summary of ELA & Literacy Content Standards Revisions](#)
 - [Montana Content Standards Revision – Alignment with the Science of Reading](#)

Report prepared by Marie Judisch, Senior Manager - Academic Outcomes & Instruction
Montana Office of Public Instruction, Phone: 406-444-5883, Email:
marie.Judisch@mt.govmarie.judisch@mt.gov



FY 2025 STATEWIDE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION REPORT

As of December 30, 2025

Historical View of Pupil Transportation Data:

The table below presents FY 2025 data along with a multi-year comparison of statewide school pupil transportation metrics. The data is compiled from information reported by school districts through the Pupil Transportation Portal maintained by the Office of Public Instruction.

Category	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
Number of Certified Bus Drivers	1,975	2,046	2,052	2,013	2,072
Number of Bus Routes	2,328	2,290	2,191	2,154	2,205
Total Pupil Ridership	69,953	78,500	77,049	74,780	60,573
School Miles Traveled per Year	15.4 M	15.7 M	15.5 M	15.4 M	15.2 M
Average Route Miles Traveled Per Day	49.50	50.9	49.60	50.20	49.90
MHP Bus Inspections	4,322	4,309	4,209	4,288	4,103
Number of Type A-E School Buses	3,527	3,579	3,693	3,740	3,815
Number of District Owned Buses	1,412	1,401	1,448	1,459	1,507
Number of Contractor Owned Buses	2,115	2,178	2,245	2,281	2,308
Number of Individual Contracts	722	712	710	723	683
Amount Paid for Individual Contracts	\$528,930	\$537,349	\$569,868	\$578,293	\$525,068
State Reimbursement	\$10.92 M	\$11.04 M	\$10.7 M	\$10.4 M	\$10.5 M
County Reimbursement	\$10.92 M	\$11.0 M	\$10.7 M	\$10.3 M	\$10.4 M

Fingerprint-based background checks

House Bill 745 implements fingerprint-based background checks for Montana school district employees and other individuals with unsupervised access to students, strengthening student safety and ensuring consistent screening practices across Montana public schools. This change aligns state law with requirements already established in ARM 10.57.201A.

Human Trafficking Training Requirement

Senate Bill 245 requires *annual* human trafficking awareness training for school bus driver personnel. Under MCA 20-7-1316, OPI must provide cost-free training materials to support this requirement, including instructions on recognizing indicators of child sex trafficking and required reporting procedures.

Montana Association for Pupil Transportation

During FY 2024–2025, MAPT provided in-person school bus driver training across multiple Montana locations. A total of 263 drivers from 45 school districts participated, receiving 61 hours of training. MAPT trainers traveled approximately 3,033 miles to deliver instruction statewide.

Training sessions were held in several Montana communities, including Columbia Falls, Glasgow, Hamilton, Greenfield, Ronan, and Cut Bank. Most sessions involved two trainers, allowing for comprehensive instruction and hands-on engagement with participants. Individual training sessions ranged from 8 to 10 hours in length.

In addition to in-state driver trainings, MAPT sent one trainer to the TSD Conference (transporting student with disabilities) in Texas for four days of in-person professional development. This training focused on special needs students and best practices for transporting students with disabilities on Montana school buses. The cost associated with this conference was covered through the MAPT training budget and supported the delivery of current, updated training content to Montana districts.

Notification of the 17th National Congress of School Transportation Specifications (NCST)

Montana adopts and implements the National Congress of School Transportation (NCST) Standards pursuant to the authority of the Board of Public Education under MCA 20-10-111. NCST standards are updated every five years, barring any state legislative changes. I have begun the process of revising the current 2022 Montana School Bus Standards. Updates include provisions related to electric school buses, transportation of students with special needs, and other required safety and operational updates.



Federal Update as of January 2, 2026

Education Innovation and Research Grant Update

In mid-December the Office of Public Instruction was informed of the awarding of an almost \$10 million federal Education Innovation and Research (EIR) Program grant over five years to expand early literacy supports across the state.

The funding will scale Montana's Science of Reading and Early Literacy Targeted Intervention work, with a focus on improving literacy outcomes in rural, tribal, and other high-needs schools through proven, evidence-based strategies.

The grant will support high-impact tutoring for students in grades 1–3, providing virtual, one-on-one instruction with certified teachers trained in evidence-based literacy practices. Students will receive tutoring three times per week for 30 minutes, using individualized learning plans based on ongoing student data to target foundational skills and comprehension.

Educators in participating schools will receive professional learning in evidence-based reading instruction, including the Science of Reading, to support effective core instruction and a multi-tiered system of supports. OPI will also provide training and tools to help educators use student data to monitor progress and align instruction across intervention levels.

The initiative also emphasizes family engagement, expanding opportunities for parents and caregivers to support early literacy development and increasing awareness of their children's literacy progress.

For eligible schools interested in participating, the OPI will have more information soon.

National "History Rocks!" Tour

Education Secretary Linda McMahon launched the "History Rocks! Trail to Independence" Tour in late 2025, as this year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

Administration officials, including Secretary McMahon, are planning a tour to schools across all 50 states. This initiative aims to highlight exemplary history and civics instruction that effectively teaches American principles. The tour will incorporate hands-on learning activities, give students a chance to consider their future roles as leaders, and include discussions with local community members on strategies to enhance civic education nationwide.

This tour highlights the importance of civics based education in Montana and across the United States. Additionally, this tour supports Superintendent Hedalen's commitment to Montana's students being life ready and civically engaged. We look forward to meeting with the Secretary again.



National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators Conference

Members of the Office of Public Instruction staff will be attending the National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators (NAESPA) conference in Denver next month. The National ESEA Conference is intentionally aimed at coordination among federal education programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and other federal programs.

The National ESEA Conference welcomes thousands of K-12 educators, federal Department of Education staff, State Education Agency staff and additional educational stakeholders from across the country each year. This year, the focus is on "Cultivating Communities for Student Success," providing a platform for State and local educators to share insights and strategies. The shared objective is to enhance education for all students by helping attendees acquire new knowledge, instructional techniques, and the skills necessary to transform student learning.

ITEM 4

COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REPORT

Dr. Angela McLean



Montana University System Report

Montana Board of Public Education

January 2026

- College Access Arc of Events
 - FAFSA Postcards
 - ACT Score Report Code 8302
 - Direct Admission/FAFSA Completion Stakeholder Group
- Future Ready Regional Meetings in Partnership with the OPI and SAM

ITEM 5

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORT

Rachel Green

ITEM 6

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Lydia Comstock

❖ **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE – (Item 7)**

Dr. Hannah Nieskens

ITEM 7

**ACTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
IN EDUCATION RESOLUTION**

Dr. Hannah Nieskens



Board of Public Education

RESOLUTION

BOARD MEMBERS

APPOINTED MEMBERS:

Dr. Tim Tharp, Chair
Savage

Dr. Ron Slinger, Vice Chair
Miles City

Madalyn Quinlan
Helena

Julia Maxwell
Marion

Renee Rasmussen
Clancy

Lisa Schmidt
Conrad

Dr. Hannah Nieskens
Cardwell

Lydia Comstock, Student Rep.
Great Falls

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:

Clayton Christian,
Commissioner of
Higher Education

Susie Hedalen,
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

Greg Gianforte,
Governor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

McCall Flynn

WHEREAS, the Montana Board of Public Education recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming education, and therefore, has established an Artificial Intelligence and Technology Special Committee; and

WHEREAS, AI technologies are reshaping instruction, assessment, administration, and student learning across Montana's schools and offers opportunities for greater efficiency, personalized learning, and improved instructional practice, yet also presents ethical, equity, privacy, and academic integrity challenges; and

WHEREAS, AI literacy and responsible technology use are essential to preparing Montana students for postsecondary success and participation in an evolving workforce; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Board of Public Education affirms that AI should enhance, not replace, the professional judgment, creativity, and human connection provided by educators and believes that any guidance or policy framework on AI in education must remain a living document, updated as technology, practice, and law evolve; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Board of Public Education acknowledges the "Montana Artificial Intelligence in K-12 Education Guidelines," developed by the Office of Public Instruction in partnership with the Montana Digital Academy and statewide education stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Board of Public Education recognizes these Guidelines as a foundational and flexible framework to support best practices, guide local decision-making, and promote responsible AI use;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montana Board of Public Education encourages all Montana school districts and educational institutions to use the Guidelines to inform local policy, professional learning, and implementation, grounded in the state's values of equity, privacy, transparency, human-centered learning, and respect for tribal sovereignty; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Montana Board of Public Education supports ongoing educator professional development, AI literacy, data-informed evaluation, and continuous review of local practices as technologies and research evolve and encourages continued collaboration among K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and workforce partners to ensure coherent, future-ready AI education pathways; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board will monitor national and state-level developments in AI policy and ethics to ensure Montana's educational practices remain current and compliant; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Board requests the Office of Public Instruction to report annually on AI integration in Montana's public schools, including emerging issues, successes, challenges, and recommended updates to the Guidelines or statewide support structures.

RESOLVED BY THE MONTANA BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ON JANUARY 15, 2026.

Dr. Tim Tharp
Chairperson
Board of Public Education

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – (Items 8-9)**

Dr. Ron Slinger

ITEM 8

**ACTION ON UPDATED PUBLIC CHARTER
SCHOOL CONTRACTS**

Dr. Ron Slinger

INITIAL PUBLIC CHARTER CONTRACT

This agreement, executed on this XX day of XX by and between the Montana **Board of Public Education** and the **Charter Governing Board** of NAME OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL (collectively, the "**Parties**").

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS the State of Montana (the "**State**") enacted the Public Charter Schools Act (the "**Act**"); and

WHEREAS pursuant to 20-6-804, MCA, the **Board of Public Education** has the authority to (i) approve applications to establish public charter schools in the State, (ii) thereafter to enter into a **Charter Contract** with applicants setting forth the terms and conditions under which a public charter school shall operate, and (iii) may thereafter renew a **Charter Contract** for a period of up to five years; and

WHEREAS an application was submitted to the **Board of Public Education** for establishment of a new public charter school pursuant to the **Act**, which the **Board of Public Education** approved;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants, representations, warranties, and agreements contained herein, the **Parties** hereby agree as follows:

1. Definition of Terms

- 1.1. **Board of Public Education**: the board created by Article X, section 9(3), of the Montana constitution and 2-15-1507, MCA.
- 1.2. **Charter Contract**: a fixed-term, renewable contract between a **Charter Governing Board** of a public charter school and the **Board of Public Education** that outlines the roles, powers, responsibilities, and performance expectations for each party to the contract.
- 1.3. **Charter Governing Board**: the elected board of trustees of a public charter school district exercising supervision and control over a public charter school or the **Local school board** that is a party to the **Charter Contract** with the **Board of Public Education** and that exercises supervision and control over a public charter school pursuant to a **Charter Contract**. Each **Charter Governing Board** is entitled to operate one **school** in one or more **sites** for each **Charter Contract** issued to it.
- 1.4. **Local school board**: a preexisting board of trustees exercising supervision and control of the schools and programs of a local school district pursuant to Article X, section 8, of the Montana constitution and the laws of the state of Montana.
- 1.5. **Located school district**: the school district in which a proposed, preoperational, or operational public charter school is located and from which the separate boundaries of the public charter school district are proposed to be formed. When a public charter school district is formed, the boundaries of the public charter school district are removed from the territory of the located school district.
- 1.6. **Noncharter public school**: any public school that is under the supervision and control of a **Local school board** or the state and is not operating pursuant to a **Charter Contract**.
- 1.7. **School**: a vehicle for the delivery of a complete educational program to students that has: independent leadership; dedicated staff; and defined facilities. A **Charter Governing Board** may have the authority to operate more than one **school** so long as a **Charter Contract** has been issued for each such **school**. A **school** may be housed in more than one physical **site**. The **Charter Governing Board** of a public charter school shall function as a Local Educational Agency (LEA). A public charter school is responsible for meeting the requirements of a LEA under applicable federal, state, and local laws, including those relating to special education. The **Charter Governing Board** is responsible for special education at

the school, including identification and service provisions, and is responsible for meeting the needs of enrolled students with disabilities.

- 1.8. **Site:** one of a number of facility locations for a single public charter school typically representing a grade range (for example, K-6 site, 7-8 site, or 9-12 site). A site would not be its own LEA, ESSA, or state Accountability Designation unit. More than one public charter school building tightly clustered (i.e., a campus) would operate as a “single site.”

2. Establishment of the NAME OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL.

- 2.1. Charter Agreement. This agreement (the **Charter Contract**), which specifically incorporates the following:

- 2.1.1. certain terms of operation set forth collectively and attached hereto in Exhibit A, and shall incorporate the initial charter applications or proposals of any additional schools that may hereafter be approved by the **Board of Public Education**, and which shall be hereafter referred to collectively as the Terms of Operation (the “**Terms of Operation**”);
- 2.1.2. the Monitoring Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit B (the “**Monitoring Plan**”), which shall incorporate applicable monitoring procedures which must be completed by the **Charter Governing Board**;
- 2.1.3. the Performance Framework developed by each **school** to be operated by the **Charter Governing Board** or to be developed during the first year of operation by any additional school the **Charter Governing Board** may be permitted to operate, and further described herein and set forth in Exhibit C, (the “**Performance Framework**”);
- 2.1.4. the Additional Assurances and Variances to Standards, if any, set forth in Exhibit D (the “**Additional Assurances and Variances to Standards**”);

- 2.2. Purpose. This **Charter Contract** is entered into for the purpose of authorizing the establishment of a public charter school that meets identified educational needs and promotes a diversity of educational choices. The **Charter Governing Board** shall operate a public charter school consistent with the terms of the **Charter Contract** and all applicable laws and administrative rules to create an innovative and high-performing public charter school under the general supervision of the **Board of Public Education** and under the supervision and control of the **Charter Governing Board** who are elected by the qualified electors in the community where the public charter school is located.
- 2.3. Applicable Law and Venue. Montana law governs this **Charter Contract**. Except as provided in 20-6-811, MCA, and this **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** is subject to the provisions in Title 20 of the Montana Code Annotated and any state local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to noncharter public schools within the **located school district**. The parties agree that any litigation concerning the **Charter Contract** must be brought in the First Judicial District in and for the County of Lewis and Clark, State of Montana, and each party shall pay its own costs and attorney fees.

- 2.4. Authority to Operate; Effective Date; Term. The **Board of Public Education**, as the sole entity authorized to enter into charter contracts, having approved the **Charter Governing Board** to operate a public charter school on XX, authorizes the **Charter Governing Board** to open and commence operation of a **school** on XX. This **Charter Contract** is effective upon the signing of both parties for a term of five (5) years commencing on XX, and ending on XX. The **Charter Contract** may be renewed pursuant to 20-6-809, MCA, or extended pursuant to the terms herein.

- 2.4.1. Planning Years, Effect. The **Charter Governing Board** shall continue or commence instruction, as the case may be, in conformity with the schedule set forth in the Terms of Operation for each **school** it is permitted to operate.

- 2.4.1.1. Subject to the foregoing limitation, planning years applicable to any school or schools set forth in the Terms of Operation shall not require further approval of the **Board of Public Education** or constitute a revision to the **Charter Contract**.

- 2.4.1.2. The **Charter Governing Board** may take one (1) additional planning year pursuant to 20-6-806, MCA. In this case, the **Board of Public Education** will authorize a delayed effective date commencing on XX, and ending on XX, for a term of five (5) years.
- 2.4.1.3. In the event the **Charter Governing Board** is unable to open a **school** or **schools** by such date(s) the **Charter Contract** issued that permitted the **Charter Governing Board** to operate such school(s) shall be deemed to be void *ab initio*.

3. Governance

- 3.1. Status. The **school** shall be governed by the **Charter Governing Board**, as updated by subsequent election and approval, resignation, removal, or other disposition in accordance applicable law. The **Charter Governing Board** shall have final authority for policy and operational decisions of the **school** although nothing herein shall prevent the **Charter Governing Board** from delegating decision-making authority to officers, employees, and agents of the **Charter Governing Board**. In addition:
 - 3.1.1. The **Charter Governing Board** shall establish and appoint members of an advisory board to provide recommendations and insight regarding the public charter school's operations. Members of the advisory board must include members with knowledge or experience in the mission or focus of the public charter school.
 - 3.1.2. The **Charter Governing Board** and its officers, directors, members, and partners, have a duty of care for complying with the provisions of this **Charter Contract**, all applicable laws, administrative rules, regulations, and reporting requirements.
- 3.2. Code of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest. The **Charter Governing Board**, its trustees, officers, and employees shall abide by the code of ethics and/or conflicts of interest policy set forth in existing **Local school board** approved policies, which must conform to applicable law, and include standards with respect to disclosure of conflicts of interest regarding any matter brought before the **Charter Governing Board**.
- 3.3. Bylaws. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide notice to the **Board of Public Education** within five (5) business days regarding any proposed amendment to its bylaws, policies, or operating procedures that may impact the operation of a public charter school within its geographic boundaries.

4. School Operations

- 4.1. Age; Grade Range; Number of Students. Each **school** operated by the **Charter Governing Board** shall provide instruction to pupils in such ages, grades, and numbers in each year of operation as set forth in the Terms of Operation. The **Charter Governing Board** shall annually determine the capacity of the **school** in consideration of the **Charter Governing Board's** assessment of its ability to facilitate the academic success of students, to achieve the objectives specified in the **Charter Contract**, and to ensure that student enrollment does not exceed the capacity of its designated **site**.
- 4.2. Admissions; Enrollment; Attendance; Transfer. The **Charter Governing Board** shall have in place and implement comprehensive policies for admissions, enrollment, and attendance, which policies shall be approved by the **Charter Governing Board** and shall be consistent with applicable law and regulations. Such policies shall provide in detail the procedures and practices utilized by each **school** in regard to admission, enrollment, attendance and withdrawal including, *inter alia*, the period in which applications for admission shall be timely, how to obtain an application for admission, the practices in operating the random selection process, the maintenance of a wait list, the implementation of enrollment preferences, and the taking of student attendance. With the exception of any changes in the at-risk school design factors, the **Charter Governing Board** shall have the authority to make changes to such policies and such changes shall not require the permission of the **Board of Public Education**.

or constitute a revision to the **Charter Contract**. Such changes, however, must be consistent with applicable law and regulations.

- 4.3. Marketing. The **Charter Governing Board** shall utilize reasonable outreach and marketing measures to make potential applicants aware of opportunities for enrollment at each of its schools.
- 4.4. Insurance. The **Charter Governing Board** shall, at its own expense, purchase and maintain the insurance coverage for liability and property loss for each **school** or **site** as is described in the Terms of Operation together with any other additional insurance that the **Charter Governing Board** deems necessary. Such insurance policies shall continue in effect. In the case of additional **schools**, the applicable insurance must be in effect prior to employees or students being present. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide the **Board of Public Education** with certificates of insurance or other satisfactory proof evidencing coverage including, but not limited to, renewal policies, or additions, riders or amendments thereto covering additional schools. All such insurance policies shall contain a provision requiring notice to the **Board of Public Education**, at least thirty (30) days in advance, of any material change, nonrenewal or termination. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary, the **Charter Governing Board** shall take all steps necessary to comply with any additional regulations made applicable to public schools.
- 4.5. Contracting with Educational Service Providers. Any entity that provides all or a substantial subset of all services necessary to operate and oversee any school's educational program on a fee basis and pursuant to a fee-based contract shall be known as an educational service provider ("Educational Service Provider") and the contract under which such services are provided shall be referred to as a management contract ("Management Contract"). Any other contractual arrangements including, but not limited to, leases, subleases, lease-purchase agreements, credit facilities, loan agreements, promissory notes, negotiable instruments, and other debt instruments, that are contemplated between the **Charter Governing Board** on the one hand and the Educational Service Provider, its partners, parents, subsidiaries, agents, and affiliates (including any entity that holds an economic interest in the Educational Service Provider) on the other, shall be known collectively, together with the Management Contract, as ESP Contracts ("ESP Contracts"). The following requirements and provisions relating to Educational Service Providers, Management Contracts and ESP Contracts shall apply.
 - 4.5.1. Except as otherwise provided in this **Charter Contract**, the **Board of Public Education** reserves the right to review and disapprove for good cause shown any and all ESP Contracts that the **Charter Governing Board** seeks to execute, amend, or renew during the time that this **Charter Contract** is in effect. Good cause shown includes, but is in no way limited to, a finding that the ESP Contract(s) at issue does not, under the totality of the circumstances, allow the **Charter Governing Board** effective and sufficient means to hold the Educational Service Provider accountable including means to terminate the Educational Service Provider without placing the school's further existence in peril.
 - 4.5.2. To facilitate the **Board of Public Education's** rights of review and disapproval, the **Charter Governing Board** shall provide the **Board of Public Education** with any proposed ESP Contract or proposed material amendment thereto no later than thirty (30) days prior to the proposed date of execution. In addition to the foregoing, prior to a school's first year of operation, and where no prior Management Contract has been in place for that school, the **Charter Governing Board** must submit the proposed Management Contract to the **Board of Public Education** by no later than July 1 immediately preceding the start of the school year. When submitting an ESP Contract, the **Charter Governing Board** must include a written opinion of the **Charter Governing Board's** legal counsel stating that the ESP Contract has been reviewed by legal counsel to the **Charter Governing Board**. Within thirty (30) days of receiving the proposed ESP Contract, the **Board of Public Education** shall notify the **Charter Governing Board** if

the agreement is disapproved, except that the **Board of Public Education**, at their discretion, may extend the review period an additional thirty (30) days. It is expressly understood that should the **Board of Public Education** not disapprove an ESP Contract, the **Board of Public Education** by such action(s) are in no way endorsing or approving the contract, the fee arrangements if any or any other provisions contained therein.

4.5.3. To the extent that the Terms of Operation contemplate that any of the **Charter Governing Board's** schools would be operated with the assistance of an Educational Service Provider pursuant to a Management Contract, the **Charter Governing Board** shall obtain the prior written approval of the **Board of Public Education** prior to operating the school without such Educational Service Provider's assistance. Notwithstanding the above, it is understood that circumstances may require the **Charter Governing Board** to terminate and/or not renew a Management Contract and thereafter operate a school without the services of the Educational Service Provider identified in the Terms of Operation (or otherwise subsequently approved by the **Board of Public Education**) prior to obtaining the permission of the **Board of Public Education**. Where the **Board of Public Education** determines, at their sole discretion, that such circumstances exist, and the **Charter Governing Board** has made good faith efforts to timely inform the **Board of Public Education** of the circumstances, the **Board of Public Education** may waive the **Charter Governing Board's** breach of the prior permission requirement and allow the **Charter Governing Board** to seek permission ex post facto.

4.5.4. Management Contracts shall set forth with particularity, inter alia, the extent of the Educational Service Provider's participation in the organization, operation and governance of the **Charter Governing Board** and any school, and contain a provision requiring the Educational Service Provider to provide the **Board of Public Education** access to its annual financial statements and audit.

4.6. Educational Programs.

4.6.1. The **Charter Governing Board** shall implement and provide educational programs at its school(s) that are designed to permit and do permit students to meet or exceed the performance standards adopted by the **Board of Public Education** and the goals, and measures of progress towards those goals, of the school(s) as set forth in the Performance Framework. Subject to the immediately foregoing requirements, the **Charter Governing Board** shall have the right to make any modifications to the educational programs of its schools as it deems necessary including, but not limited to, the curriculum, pedagogical approach, and staffing structure, and such modifications shall not require the permission of the **Board of Public Education** or be deemed a revision to the **Charter Contract**, provided however, that any such modifications shall be generally consistent with the Terms of Operation and applicable law, and the **Charter Governing Board** reports such modifications as part of its annual report.

4.6.2. Subject to any restraints in the Act or this **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** may offer or share programs, settings, classes, and services between and among schools including grade level programs, specialized programs such as programs for students with disabilities or English language learners, and other programs so long as each such program is described in the Terms of Operation, each student participating in such program is included in the enrollment and Performance Framework of the student's sending school, unless the **Board of Public Education**, in their sole discretion, otherwise permit.

4.7. Performance Frameworks. By October 31 of the school year in which any school first commences instruction, the **Charter Governing Board** shall ensure that such school creates school and mission specific goals as part of the a-Performance Framework, established by the Board of Public Education, which ~~plan~~ ~~upon its completion,~~ shall be incorporated into the **Charter Contract** as a Term of Operation. The Performance Framework shall replace and substitute for the assessment measures and educational goals and objectives set forth in the

school's charter application in the Terms of Operation, but shall not provide for less stringent assessment measures or educational goals and objectives than those set forth in the school's charter application. The **Charter Governing Board** understands that any school's success in meeting the goals and measures set forth in its Performance Framework shall be the predominant criterion by which the success of the school's education program will be evaluated by the **Board of Public Education** upon the **Charter Governing Board's** application for renewal of the authority to operate such school.

- 4.8. Monitoring Plan and Oversight. The **Charter Governing Board** acknowledges that the **Board of Public Education**, or their authorized agents, have the right to visit, examine into and inspect the **Charter Governing Board** as well as any school or program the **Charter Governing Board** may operate pursuant to a **Charter Contract** and any records related to any of the foregoing. To permit the **Board of Public Education** to fulfill their oversight function under the Act and ensure that the **Charter Governing Board** and each of its schools is in compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations and the terms and conditions of this **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** agrees to abide by the Monitoring Plan, the requirements of which are set forth at Exhibit B.
- 4.9. Education of Students with Disabilities. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide services and accommodations to students with disabilities as set forth for each school in the Terms of Operation and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. § 1401 et seq.) (the "IDEA"), the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq.) (the "ADA"), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794) ("Section 504"), all applicable regulations promulgated pursuant to such federal laws, and the individualized education program ("IEP") of each student as determined by the IEP Team formed consistent with 34 CFR § 300.321. Each school shall provide such appropriate and required services either directly, cooperatively with another school operated by the **Charter Governing Board**, or by contract with another provider.

5. School Personnel

- 5.1. Status. The **Charter Governing Board** shall employ and/or contract with necessary personnel. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide written notice to the **Board of Public Education** within five (5) business days of the hiring or departure (by resignation or dismissal) of the administrator, principal, or head of any school, however designated. The organizational structure of the **Charter Governing Board** and each school shall be consistent with the structures set forth in the Terms of Operation.
- 5.2. Personnel Policies; Staff Responsibilities. The **Charter Governing Board** shall make available in written form its hiring and personnel policies and procedures for the school, including the qualifications required by the **Charter Governing Board** in the hiring of teachers, school administrators, and other school employees as well as a description of staff responsibilities. Such policies and procedures shall be consistent with those set forth in the Terms of Operation, and should clearly indicate that the **Board of Public Education** shall have access to all personnel files to the extent permissible by law.
- 5.3. Background Checks; Fingerprinting. The **Charter Governing Board** shall establish, maintain, and implement procedures for conducting fingerprint-based background checks.

6. Financial Operations

6.1. Management and Financial Controls.

- 6.1.1. The **Charter Governing Board** shall at all times maintain appropriate governance and managerial procedures and financial controls and maintain the same at each public charter school, program or other activity operated by the **Charter Governing Board**.
- 6.1.2. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide a statement to the **Board of Public Education**, no later than one hundred and twenty (120) days after the date of execution of the **Charter Contract**, concerning the status of management and financial controls

- (the "Initial Statement") of the school. The Initial Statement must address whether the **Charter Governing Board** has documented adequate controls at that school relating to:
- 6.1.2.1. (i) preparing financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles ("GAAP");
 - 6.1.2.2. (ii) payroll procedures;
 - 6.1.2.3. (iii) accounting for contributions and grants;
 - 6.1.2.4. (iv) procedures for the creation and review of financial statements, which procedures shall specifically identify the individual who will be responsible for preparing and reviewing such financial statements for the **Charter Governing Board** and for each applicable public charter school; and,
 - 6.1.2.5. (v) appropriate internal financial controls and procedures.
- 6.2. The Initial Statement shall be reviewed and ratified by the **Charter Governing Board** prior to its submission to the **Board of Public Education**.
- 6.2.1 If the financial controls proposed in the **Charter Governing Board's** Initial Statement are substantially similar (i.e., no material difference) with financial controls currently in place and used by the **Local school board**, the **Charter Governing Board** shall include a copy of its most recent completed audit when submitting the Initial Statement. The **Board of Public Education** may require additional evidence to verify the correction of any deficiencies noted in the audit.
 - 6.2.2 If the financial controls proposed in the **Charter Governing Board's** Initial Statement are materially different from financial controls currently in place and used by the **Local school board**, the **Charter Governing Board** shall retain, when possible, an independent certified public accountant or independent certified public accounting firm licensed in the State to perform an agreed-upon procedures engagement. The purpose of the engagement will be to assist the **Charter Governing Board** in evaluating the Initial Statement and the procedures, policies, and practices established thereunder. The **Board of Public Education** may require additional evidence to verify the correction of all such deficiencies.
- 6.3. Financial Statements; Interim Reports. During ~~each the first~~ year of operation, the **Charter Governing Board** shall prepare and submit to the **Board of Public Education** a quarterly unaudited report of expenses for that preceding quarter in such form and electronic format as prescribed and disseminated by the **Board of Public Education**. ~~The Board of Public Education may reduce the frequency of financial reports after the first year of operation.~~
- 6.4. Audits.
- 6.4.1. For so long as the Office of Public Instruction's currently operative audit letter does not identify charter school financial statements as a category that must be audited, the **Charter Governing Board** shall retain either an independent certified public accountant or certified public accounting firm licensed in the State to perform ~~annually~~ an audit of the **Charter Governing Board's** annual financial statements related to public charter schools in accordance with 2-7-503, MCA. Should the Office of Public Instruction's currently operative audit letter identify charter school financial statements as a category that must be audited, however, the **Charter Governing Board** shall retain an independent certified public accountant or certified public accounting firm licensed in the State to perform ~~annually~~ an audit of the **Local school board's** annual financial statements in accordance with 2-7-503, MCA. The independent audit of the **Charter Governing Board's** financial statements must be performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and Government Auditing Standards issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, as well as any additional requirements and guidelines that may be provided by the **Board of Public Education**. The audited financial statements must be submitted to the **Board of Public Education** within ten (10) business days of receipt of any such complete and final audit report.

- 6.4.2. A **Charter Governing Board** that contracts with an Educational Service Provider must submit to the **Board of Public Education** audited financial statements of the Educational Service Providers by October 31 of each year.
- 6.5. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the **Charter Governing Board** shall begin on July 1 of each calendar year of the term of the initial **Charter Contract** and shall end on June 30 of the subsequent calendar year.
- 6.6. Annual Budgets and Cash Flow Projections.
- 6.6.1. Except in the first year of operation, a **Charter Governing Board** shall prepare and provide to the **Board of Public Education** a copy of its annual budgets and cash flow projections for each public charter school it has been authorized to operate each fiscal year by no later than August 30 of the ~~immediately preceding~~ fiscal year. All annual budgets and cash flow projections shall be in such form and electronic format as prescribed and disseminated by the **Board of Public Education**.
- 6.6.2. ~~All annual budgets and cash flow projections shall be in such form and electronic format as prescribed and disseminated by the **Board of Public Education**. If the annual budgets and cash flow projections of the public charter school are materially like those currently in place and used by the **Local school board**, the **Charter Governing Board** need not submit additional annual budgets and cash flow projections documentation. The **Board of Public Education** may require additional documentation beyond the Trustee Financial Summary and Preliminary Budget Data Reports, as prepared by the Office of Public Instruction, to verify information.~~
- 6.7. ~~Release of Funding. A public charter school will receive a basic entitlement in the first year of operations. In the first year of the public charter school operations, if, If after the October and February enrollment count, a public charter school does not meet the eligibility requirements for separate budget unit status and basic entitlement pursuant to 20-6-812, MCA, public charter schools will not receive a basic entitlement the following year. receiving a basic entitlement will be subject to the return of overpayment provisions under 20-9-344, MCA.~~

7. Reporting Requirements

- 7.1. Annual Reports. No later than July 1 succeeding a school year in which any public charter school provided instruction, the **Charter Governing Board** shall submit to the **Board of Public Education** an Annual Report for each such public charter school setting forth the academic program and performance of each public charter school for the preceding school year. The Annual Report shall be in such form as shall be prescribed by the **Board of Public Education** and shall include at least the following components.
- 7.1.1. A discussion of each school's progress made towards achievement of the goals set forth in the Terms of Operation including its Performance Framework.
- 7.1.2. A report on the progress of each public charter school in meeting the goals and measures of the Performance Framework during the last school year (the "Performance Framework Progress Report"). The Performance Framework Progress Report must contain data addressing each goal and measure in the school's Performance Framework and should report data as may be required by the **Board of Public Education** in order for the **Board of Public Education** to substantiate outcomes. The Performance Framework Progress Report shall be prepared pursuant to any requirements set forth by the **Board of Public Education**. Should the Performance Framework Progress Report indicate that the school has not met one or more of the goals in its Performance Framework, the **Board of Public Education** may require the **Charter Governing Board** to submit a corrective plan for the school pursuant to this **Charter Contract**.
- 7.1.3. The statement of assurances relating to compliance with requirements under the **Charter Contract** and applicable law, the form and requirements of which shall be determined by the **Board of Public Education**.

7.1.4. A brief statement setting forth changes to the school's educational program and mission as well as governing and organizational structures, during the previous fiscal and school year.

7.2. Financial Reports. The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide the financial reports required by this **Charter Contract** pursuant to the terms and dates specified therein.

8. Renewal, Corrective Action, and Termination

8.1. School Renewal. No later than June 30 of each year, the **Board of Public Education** shall issue a public charter school performance report and charter renewal application guide to the **Charter Governing Board** of any public charter school whose charter will expire the following year. The performance report must summarize the public charter school's performance record and must provide notice of any weaknesses or concerns perceived by the **Board of Public Education** that may jeopardize renewal if not rectified. The **Charter Governing Board** shall respond to the performance report and submit any corrections or clarifications within 90 days.

8.2. No later than February 1, the **Charter Governing Board** shall submit to the **Board of Public Education** a renewal application to extend the authority to operate a school (the "School Renewal Application"). The School Renewal Application shall conform to 20-6-809, MCA, and the **Board of Public Education's** guidelines and contain:

8.2.1. a report of the progress of the school in achieving the educational objectives set forth in the Terms of Operation;

8.2.2. a detailed financial statement disclosing the cost of administration, instruction, and other spending categories for the school that will allow a comparison of such costs to other schools;

8.2.3. copies of each of the Annual Reports of the school including the school report cards and certified financial statements;

8.2.4. evidence of parent and student satisfaction at the school; and

8.2.5. such other material and information as is required by the **Board of Public Education**.

8.3. Approval or Denial of School Renewal. The **Board of Public Education** shall either approve or deny the School Renewal Application. In the event that the School Renewal Application is not approved, the **Charter Governing Board** shall close the school at the end of the school year that corresponds with the end of the period the **Charter Governing Board** may operate the school pursuant to this **Charter Contract**, and the **Charter Governing Board** shall follow the procedures for school closure as established by the **Board of Public Education**. In the event that the School Renewal Application is granted in whole or part, the **Board of Public Education** shall enter into a proposed renewal **Charter Contract** to allow the **Charter Governing Board** to operate the school for an additional period of time in accordance with the **Board of Public Education's** renewal practices. Nothing herein shall obligate the **Board of Public Education** to approve a School Renewal Application.

8.4. Corrective Plans. If the **Board of Public Education** determines that the **Charter Governing Board** or any of its charter schools, programs or sites is not progressing toward one or more of the performance or education goals set forth in the **Charter Contract**, that the quality of a charter school's, program's or site's educational program or the **Charter Governing Board's** governance practices are not satisfactory, or that the **Charter Governing Board** or any of its charter schools or sites is not in compliance with the terms and conditions of the **Charter Contract** including the Monitoring Plan, then the **Board of Public Education**, in consultation with the **Charter Governing Board**, may develop and require the **Charter Governing Board** to implement a corrective plan ("Corrective Plan"). Nothing contained herein shall require the **Board of Public Education** to undertake the development of a Corrective Plan to terminate the authority to operate a charter school, site or program, place the **Charter Governing Board** on probationary status, or initiate mandatory remedial action in accordance with the Act or the **Charter Contract**. The terms and conditions of a remedial plan may include, but

are not limited to, the termination of the authority of the **Charter Governing Board** to operate a particular charter school, site, or program.

8.5. Grounds for Charter Termination or Revocation. The **Charter Contract** may be terminated and revoked:

8.5.1. by the **Board of Public Education** in accordance with the Act; or,

8.5.2. by mutual agreement of the Parties hereto.

8.6. Grounds for School Closure. The **Charter Governing Board's** authority to operate any charter school, site, or program may be terminated or revoked:

8.6.1. should the **Board of Public Education** determine that one of the grounds set forth in the Act apply to such charter school, site, or program; or

8.6.2. by mutual agreement of the Parties hereto.

8.7. Notice and Procedures.

8.7.1. Should the **Board of Public Education** determine that one of the grounds for termination or revocation of the **Charter Contract** as defined under the Act has occurred or is occurring, the **Board of Public Education** may, at their discretion, elect as follows:

8.7.1.1. to terminate the **Charter Contract**; or

8.7.1.2. terminate the **Charter Governing Board's** authority to operate one or more charter schools, programs, or sites, or any combination thereof; or,

8.7.2. Should the **Board of Public Education** elect to terminate the **Charter Contract**, the **Board of Public Education** shall provide notice of such to the **Charter Governing Board** at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of the proposed termination. Such notice shall include a statement of reasons for the proposed termination. Prior to termination of the **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** shall be provided an opportunity to be heard and present evidence in opposition to termination.

8.7.3. Should the **Board of Public Education** elect to terminate the authority of the **Charter Governing Board** to operate a charter school or site, the **Board of Public Education** shall provide notice of such to the **Charter Governing Board** at least thirty (30) days prior to the effective date of the proposed action.

8.8. Effect of Termination. In the event of termination of the **Charter Contract**, whether prematurely or otherwise, the **Charter Governing Board** agrees to follow any additional procedures required by the **Board of Public Education** to ensure an orderly dissolution or transition process, including the implementation of a school closure plan as provided by the **Board of Public Education**.

9. Other Covenants and Warranties

9.1. Indemnification and Acknowledgements

9.1.1. Indemnification: The **Charter Governing Board** shall indemnify, defend, save and hold harmless the **Board of Public Education**, the State of Montana, its departments, agencies, boards, commissions, universities and its officers, officials, agents and employees ("Indemnitee") from and against any and all claims, actions, liabilities, damages, losses or expenses (including court costs, attorneys' fees, and costs of claim processing, investigation and litigation) ("Claims") for bodily injury or personal injury (including death), or loss or damage to tangible or intangible property caused, or alleged to be caused, in whole or in part, by the negligent or willful acts or omissions of the **Charter Governing Board** or any of its owners, officers, directors, agents, employees or subcontractors. This indemnity includes any claim or amount arising out of or recovered under the Workers' Compensation Law or arising out of the failure of the **Charter Governing Board** to conform to any federal, state, or local law, statute, ordinance, administrative rule, regulation, or court decree that is applicable to the **Charter Governing Board**. It is the specific intention of the parties that the Indemnitee shall, in all instances, except for Claims arising solely from the negligent or willful acts or omissions of the Indemnitee, be indemnified by the **Charter Governing Board** from and against

any and all claims. It is agreed that the **Charter Governing Board** will be responsible for primary loss investigation, defense, and judgment costs where this indemnification is applicable. In consideration of the award of this **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** agrees to waive all rights of subrogation against the State of Montana, its officers, officials, agents, and employees for losses arising from the work performed by the **Charter Governing Board** for the State of Montana.

- 9.1.2. Immunity. The parties acknowledge that, pursuant to law, the **Board of Public Education**, its members, officers, and employees shall enjoy all immunities from liability as provided under the law. Nothing in this **Charter Contract** shall be construed as a waiver of any rights, limits, protections, or defenses provided by any sovereign or governmental immunity laws.
- 9.1.3. Debts and Financial Obligations: The parties acknowledge that neither the **Board of Public Education**, the State of Montana, or its agencies, boards, commissions, or divisions are liable for the debts or financial obligations of a public charter school or persons or entities that operate public charter schools.
- 9.2. Charter Revision. This **Charter Contract** may be revised only by written consent of the Parties hereto.
- 9.3. Assignment. This **Charter Contract** may not be assigned or delegated by the **Charter Governing Board** under any circumstances, it being expressly understood that the rights and obligations granted hereby runs solely and exclusively to the benefit of the **Charter Governing Board**.
- 9.4. Notices. Any notice, demand, request, or submission from one Party to any other Party or Parties hereunder shall be deemed to have been sufficiently given or served for all purposes if it is delivered in writing via electronic mail as an attachment thereto with a legally valid and binding electronic signature or an electronic image of a physical signature (.pdf or similar format), and as of the date upon which the sender receives receipt of confirmation generated by the recipient's electronic mail system that the notice has been received by the recipient's electronic mail system, to the Parties at the following addresses:

If to the **Charter Governing Board**:

NAME
MAILING ADDRESS
CITY, STATE ZIP
EMAIL ADDRESS

If to the **Board of Public Education**:

McCall Flynn
PO Box 200801
Helena, MT 59620
bpe@mt.gov

- 9.5. Severability. In the event that any provision of this **Charter Contract** or the Terms of Operation thereof to any person or in any circumstances shall be determined to be invalid, unlawful, or unenforceable to any extent, the remainder of this **Charter Contract** and the application of such provision to persons or circumstances other than those as to which it is determined to be invalid, unlawful or unenforceable, shall not be affected thereby, and each remaining provision of this **Charter Contract** shall continue to be valid and may be enforced to the fullest extent permitted by law.
- 9.6. Entire Charter. The **Charter Contract** supersedes and replaces any and all prior agreements and understandings between the **Board of Public Education** and the **Charter Governing Board** as it relates to the creation of a particular public charter school. To the extent that any

conflict or incompatibility exists between the Terms of Operation and the other terms of this **Charter Contract**, such other terms of this **Charter Contract** shall control.

9.7. Construction. This **Charter Contract** shall be construed fairly as to both Parties and not in favor of or against either Party, regardless of which Party prepared the **Charter Contract**.

NAME OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

By _____
XX, Chair of the Charter Governing Board

MONTANA BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

By _____
XX, Chair of the Montana Board of Public Education

Exhibit A – Terms of Operation

Part I – Specific Terms

Additional Terms of Operation will be added at a later date, based on the timeline outlined for submission above. The **Board of Public Education** will communicate this timeline and submission expectations at a later date.

The **Charter Governing Board** shall provide educational services, including the delivery of instruction, to students at the following location(s):

School Name

School Address

City, State Zip

Part II – Charter Application

The **Board of Public Education** will include the Charter Application submitted by the **Charter Governing Board** for execution of the **Charter Contract**.

Exhibit B – Monitoring Plan

Part I – Monitoring Plan

As provided in the **Charter Contract**, the **Charter Governing Board** agrees to abide by a **Monitoring Plan**, the general components of which are set forth below. The requirements of the **Monitoring Plan**, are in addition to any notification, record-keeping, or reporting requirements set forth in the **Charter Contract** or applicable law including any obligation to receive the written approval of the **Board of Public Education**, and/or to seek approval for revision of the **Charter Contract** pursuant to applicable law.

- A. The **Charter Governing Board** shall maintain the following records in its offices for inspection by the **Board of Public Education** and/or its designee:
 1. Records concerning the enrollment and admissions process including all applications received and documents concerning the lottery process if conducted;
 2. Student academic and health records;
 3. Attendance records for students including withdrawals of students from each **school** and the reason(s) for such withdrawals;
 4. Individual Education Programs and other documentation concerning the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") as well as documentation concerning section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 for children with disabilities enrolled in each school;
 5. Staff rosters including records of hiring, resignation, and termination of employees;
 6. Evidence of credentials and/or qualifications for all teachers;
 7. Evidence that required fingerprint-based background checks have been conducted for all applicable school employees;
 8. Certificates of occupancy or other facility-related certification or permits;
 9. Lease agreements and/or mortgages or deeds;
 10. Loan documents;
 11. Contracts in excess of \$1,000 including management contracts;
 12. **Charter Governing Board** or **school** policies in areas such as financial management, personnel, student discipline (including suspension and expulsion), complaints, health and safety, student privacy and transportation, Public Right to Know Laws and Open Meetings Laws and other areas required by the **Charter Contract** or law;
 13. Grievances made by students, parents, teachers, and other employees to the **Charter Governing Board** together with documentation of all actions taken in response;
 14. Inventory of all assets of the **Charter Governing Board** that have been purchased with public funds including grant funds;
 15. Documents sufficient to substantiate each **school's** progress on the measurable goals set forth in its Performance Framework; and,
 16. Student level discipline records including, but not limited to, information regarding in-school and out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions for all students (including students with disabilities) available by grade and year reflecting:
 - a. number of suspension/expulsion incidents; and,
 - b. number of different students involved in suspension/expulsion incidents.
- B. To corroborate information submitted by the **Charter Governing Board** to the **Board of Public Education**, and in order to ensure compliance with the Act and the **Charter Contract**, the **Board of Public Education** or its designee will:
 1. Make at least one visit to each **school** in its first year of operation. Such visits may include an inspection of the physical plant, all categories of records set forth in subsection A of the Monitoring Plan, interviews with the administrator of the school and other personnel, and

observation of instructional methods. Visits in later years may decrease in frequency and be conducted by **Board of Public Education** designees;

2. During the first term of authority to operate a **school**, make at least one other visit to a school, which may be announced or unannounced. In subsequent terms, the **Board of Public Education** may conduct visits on a sampling basis for schools that demonstrate high levels of academic and fiscal soundness, compliance with applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and whose academic performance makes it likely they will improve student learning and achievement;
3. Require the **Charter Governing Board** to make available necessary information in response to the **Board of Public Education's** inquiries including information necessary to prepare annual or semi-annual evaluations of each school's financial operations, academic program, future outlook, and other areas;
4. Conduct internal investigations as appropriate on its own initiative or in response to concerns raised by students, parents, employees, local school districts and other individuals or groups. Where appropriate, the **Board of Public Education** shall issue remedial orders as permitted by the **Charter Contract** or applicable law; and
5. Review as necessary the **Charter Governing Board's** and its **schools'** operations to determine whether any changes in such operations require formal revision of the **Charter Contract** and, if so, determine whether such revision should be recommended for approval.

C. The **Charter Governing Board** shall track, and maintain information regarding, the following information:

1. A copy of all minutes from each of its meetings, committee meetings and executive sessions of the meeting or session pertaining to the **school**;
2. An updated list of trustees and officers of any such person's election; removal; resignation; expiration of term without re-election; or, otherwise leaving the **Charter Governing Board**; and,
3. An updated list of each administrator, principal, or head of school for each **site** of each **school**, however designated.
4. Any and all student-level suspensions (including in-school and out-of-school suspensions of less than one-day) and expulsions including, but not limited to:
 - a. The date the disciplinary action was instituted;
 - b. The duration of any suspension;
 - c. The reason for such suspension or expulsion;
 - d. The student's status as an English Language Learner ("ELL"), a student with a disability under the IDEA or a student who qualifies for the federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program("FRPL"); and,
 - e. Other student demographic information.
5. Any and all student-level enrollment and retention information including, but not limited to:
 - a. The date of any student withdrawal, transfer or discharge;
 - b. The reason for each withdrawal, transfer or discharge;
 - c. The student's status as an ELL, student with a disability under the IDEA or a FRPL student; and,
 - d. Other student demographic information.

Exhibit C – Performance Framework

Part I – Academic Performance Framework and Evaluation

- A. The **Charter Governing Board** shall adhere to the provisions in Title 20 of the Montana Code Annotated and Title 10 of the Administrative Rules of Montana and any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to noncharter public schools within the located school district.
- B. The **Charter Governing Board** shall identify a performance framework as prescribed in 20-6-809, MCA, that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics which include:
1. school achievement goals;
 2. student academic proficiency;
 3. student academic growth;
 4. achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth between major student subgroups;
 5. attendance;
 - ~~6. dropout rate;~~
 - ~~6. support for transitions;~~
 - ~~7. student engagement;~~
 - ~~7.8.~~ recurrent enrollment from year to year;
 - ~~8.9.~~ postsecondary readiness;
 - ~~9.10.~~ financial performance and sustainability;
 - ~~10.11.~~ **Charter Governing Board** performance and stewardship, including compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the **Charter Contract**.

Exhibit D – Assurances and Variances to Standards

Part I – Assurances Regarding Students with Disabilities

- A. The **Charter Governing Board** provides the following assurances regarding the provision of education and other services to students with disabilities to be enrolled at each proposed charter school.
1. The **Charter Governing Board** will adhere to all provisions of federal law relating to students with disabilities including the IDEA, Section 504, and Title II of the ADA which are applicable to it.
 2. The **Charter Governing Board** will, consistent with applicable law, be a Local Education Agency (LEA) that will ensure that all students with disabilities that qualify under the IDEA:
 - a. have available a free appropriate public education (“FAPE”);
 - b. are appropriately evaluated;
 - c. are provided with an IEP;
 - d. receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (LRE);
 - e. are involved in the development of and decisions regarding the IEP, along with their parents; and,
 - f. have access to appropriate procedures and mechanisms, along with their parents, to resolve any disputes or disagreements related to a school’s or school district’s provision of FAPE.
 3. Unless otherwise approved by the **Board of Public Education**, the **Charter Governing Board** shall assign a qualified employee whose responsibility it is to ensure implementation of the public charter school’s responsibilities under IDEA and Section 504.
 4. Each school will make available, as required by IDEA regulations, a student’s regular and special education teachers (and other required school personnel) for meetings convened by such student’s IEP Team.
 5. Each school will abide by the applicable provisions and regulations of the IDEA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) as they relate to students with disabilities including, but not limited to, having procedures for maintaining student files in a secure and locked location with limited access.
 6. Each school will comply with the Office of Public Instruction data and reporting requirements in compliance with federal law and regulations.
 7. Each school will comply with its obligations under the Child Find requirements of IDEA including 34 C.F.R. § 300.111, and will provide appropriate notification to parents in connection therewith as applicable, including notifying them prior to potential evaluation.

Part II – Assurances Regarding Indian Education for All (IEFA)

- A. The **Charter Governing Board** provides the following assurances regarding the provision of IEFA at each proposed charter school.
1. The **Charter Governing Board** recognizes that it is the constitutionally declared policy of the State to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of the cultural heritage of American Indians.
 2. The **Charter Governing Board** shall ensure that all students utilizing educational programs provided by a charter school, whether Indian or non-Indian, learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner.
 3. The **Charter Governing Board** shall work cooperatively with Montana tribes or those tribes that are in close proximity, when providing instruction or when implementing an educational goal or adopting a rule related to the education of each Montana citizen, to include information specific to the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of

American Indians, with particular emphasis on Montana Indian tribal groups and governments.

4. Predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, the **Charter Governing Board** shall provide means by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people.

Part III – Variances to Standards

- A. Variances to Existing Standards: The **Board of Public Education** authorizes the following variances to standards to meet the intended outcomes of the proposed academic program of the **school**:
 1. TBD
 2. TBD
 3. TBD
- B. Additional variance to standards requests may be approved in accordance with ARM 10.55.604 or amendment to this Exhibit. An application for variance to standards is due in writing to the Superintendent of Public Instruction no later than the second Monday in October for the current academic year.



**Montana Board of Public Education
Variances to Standards
Charter Contract Revisions**

2024-25 Charter Schools

Billings Early College School

Variances Approved November 2025:

- 10.55.709 Library Media
- 10.55.904 Basic Program Offerings

Billings Multilingual Academy

Variances Approved November 2025:

- 10.55.709 Library Media
- 10.55.902 Basic Program Offerings

Billings Opportunity School

Variance Approved November 2025:

- 10.55.904 Basic Program Offerings

East Helena 227 Academy

Variance Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media

Frenchtown Bronc Fast Track Public Charter

Variance Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media

Missoula CONNECT Academy

Variance Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media

Missoula TEACH Academy

Variance Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media

RISE Charter and Distance Learning Academy

Variances Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media
- 10.55.710 Counseling

RISE Charter and Pathway Learning Academy

Variances Approved November 2024:

- 10.55.709 Library Media
- 10.55.710 Counseling

2025-26 Charter Schools

Hardin - Big Horn Academy

Variance Approved November 2025:

- 10.55.709 Library Media

**Lewistown - Central MT Career and Technical
Education Academy**

Variance Approved November 2025:

- 10.55.704(2) Curriculum Coordinator FTE

ITEM 9

**WORK SESSION ON THE APPROVAL AND
DENIAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Dr. Ron Slinger

Public Charter School Applicants	Is there an overall intent to create INNOVATIVE public charter schools? (Yes or No)	Is there an overall intent to create HIGH-PERFORMING public charter schools? (Yes or No)	Is there a commitment to and robust understanding of PERSONALIZED and PROFICIENCY-BASED LEARNING? (Yes or No)	Is the ACADEMIC PROGRAM consistent with a high-quality public charter school? (Consistent, Partially Consistent, or Inconsistent)	Is the SCHOOL GOVERNANCE consistent with a high-quality public charter school? (Consistent, Partially Consistent, or Inconsistent)	Is the BUSINESS OPERATIONS consistent with a high-quality public charter school? (Consistent, Partially Consistent, or Inconsistent)	Is the COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED consistent with a high-quality public charter school? (Consistent, Partially Consistent, or Inconsistent)	Has the applicant demonstrated CLEAR AND CONVINCING PROOF of the likelihood of success? (Yes or No)	Has the applicant demonstrated that they can OPEN AND OPERATE a successful public charter school? (Yes or No)	Based on your overview, would you recommend the Board approve this application? (Yes or No)	State Cost Attributable to the Basic Entitlement (FY29)
Stevensville Health Sciences Academy	6	7	6	4.5	7	6	6.5	6	7	6	\$177,991
Park Pathways School	4	6	6	6.5	6.5	6	6.5	6	6	5	\$237,321
Columbia Falls Trades Academy	6	6	6	3.5	6	4	5.5	3	3	4	\$177,991
Custer County CLASS Academy	2	5	5	5	6.5	6	5.5	5	5	3	\$237,321
Stevensville Alternative Steps Charter	3	5	5	4.5	6.5	4.5	6	4	5	3	\$177,991
Lion's Path Academy	3	7	6	5	6.5	6	4	4	5	2	\$177,991
SOAR Academy	3	6	6	3	5.5	5.5	4.5	2	4	0	\$237,321

\$415,312

\$593,303

\$1,423,927

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – (Items 10-15)**

Dr. Ron Slinger

ITEM 10

**INFORMATION ON THE TEACHER
APPRENTICESHIP GRANT AND REQUEST
FOR PROPOSAL**

**Commissioner Sarah Swanson
Crystal Armstrong**

Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Overview and Updates

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

JANUARY 15TH, 2026



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Today's Agenda

- Apprenticeship Model- the 30,000 ft view
- Why Teacher Apprenticeships?
- Apprenticeship as a recruitment and retention tool
- Key Entities in Montana Apprenticeship
- T-RAP overview
- Required Components
- RFP updates
- Timeline
- Questions



Apprenticeships from 30,000 feet

Registered Apprenticeship Programs are high-quality, industry-driven career pathways that enable employers to develop and prepare their future workforce, while providing individuals with paid work experience, structured mentorship, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential.



Industry-Led

Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards, ensuring apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.



Paid Job Apprenticeships are jobs! Apprentices earn progressive wages as their skills and productivity increase.



Structured On-the-Job Learning and Mentorship

Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare individuals for a successful career, featuring support from an experienced mentor.



Supplemental Education

Apprentices receive supplemental classroom education tailored to the employer's unique training needs, ensuring quality and success.



Credentials

Apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential, such as a certificate of apprenticeship completion, in addition to any industry-required credentials.



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Why Teacher Registered Apprenticeship?

Montana is consistently undersupplied in education. In a 2023-2024 report from OPI:

- Over **1,000** educators were needed for the 2023–2024 school year.
 - The demand for qualified educators is outpacing the supply produced by current preparation programs.
 - Emergency authorizations increased from 5 in 2014, to 90+ in 2019, and surged to **250+** in 2024.
- In 2024, **83%** of teacher vacancies occurred in rural schools, where recruitment and retention challenges are compounded by distance from educator preparation programs.

Apprenticeships offer a place-based solution an additional, complementary learning model that expands access.

- Apprenticeships help rural communities ‘grow their own’ while maintaining high standards by partnering with highly qualified EPPs, and requiring they meet the standards BPE outlines in ARM.



Apprenticeship as a Recruitment and Retention Strategy



60% of teachers live within 20 miles of where they went to high school.



Approximately **86%** of apprenticeship completers were still working for a Montana employer five years after completing their apprenticeship.



Over one-third of teachers with student loans (**36.7%**) reported working multiple jobs due to their debt.



Teachers pay an average of **\$342/month**, which exceeds the national average borrower payment (\$200–\$299).



Nationally, teacher residencies demonstrate that structured, mentored on-the-job training improves student learning and teacher retention. Apprenticeships apply this approach at scale, combining coursework, coaching, and paid employment.



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Key Entities in Montana Apprenticeship



Sponsors/Employers – Mostly the same entity; typically, single employers register and hire apprentices.



Related Technical Instruction (RTI) Providers – Colleges or Universities that provide related technical instruction, also known as coursework.



Montana Registered Apprenticeship Program– Overseen by the Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Workforce Services Division. The MT RAP department is responsible for registration, program oversight, and technical assistance.



Apprenticeship Advisory Council – Provides guidance and recommendations to strengthen and expand programs.



Education Partners and Stakeholders – Advise and support implementation assuring alignment with standards and quality.



Montana Department of
LABOR & INDUSTRY

Teacher Registered Apprenticeship in Montana

Building on the success of Montana's proven teacher residency model and integrating the “earn-and-learn” hallmark of registered apprenticeships, the MTDLI seeks to accelerate the launch and scale of Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Programs (T-RAPs).

Invest in Homegrown Talent

- Expand the full continuum of the teacher pipeline
 - From pre-apprenticeship through licensure.
- Provide opportunities for rural and nontraditional candidates to enter the profession without incurring debt.
- Ensure homegrown talent remains in and serves their local communities.

Leverage Economies of Scale

- Bridge geographic barriers with flexible, hybrid learning models for apprentices in remote and rural regions.
- Expand access to in-state EPPs (who apply and succeed in securing funding) and reduce the cost burden on future teachers.

Ensure High-Quality Preparation

- Apprentices engage in on-the-job training under the guidance of a trained mentor.
- Supplemental coursework is customized to the school district's instructional priorities, increasing apprentice effectiveness from day one.

Required Components of the MT T-RAP Standards

Term of the Apprenticeship: The term of apprenticeship is competency-based and will successfully conclude with the apprentice earning a degree and teacher certification

Ratio of Apprentices to Journey-workers (Mentor Teachers): No more than 2 Apprentices to 1 Journey-worker, 1:1 is ideal.

Progressive Wage Schedule: Apprentices shall be paid a progressively increasing schedule of wages based on either a percentage or a dollar amount of the current journey-worker wage rate (often aligned to paraprofessional pay)

Related Technical Instruction (RTI): Apprentices receive coursework provided by an approved educator preparation program.

On-the-Job Learning Work Process Schedule (Competencies): Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare individuals for a successful career, featuring support from an experienced mentor.

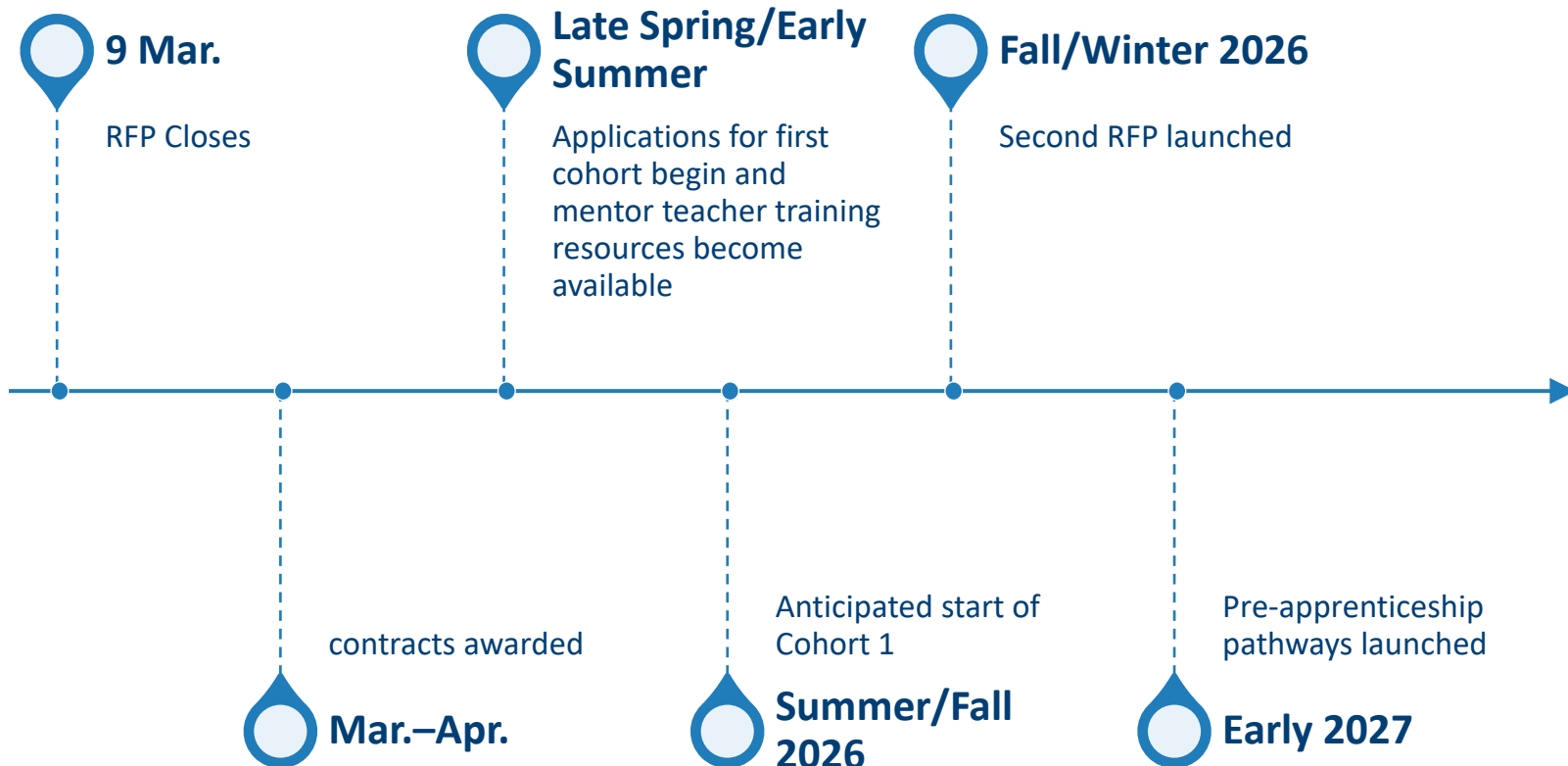
Credentials: Bachelor's degree, MT teacher licensure, and certificate of apprenticeship completion



RFP updates

- RFP Release- RFP is live!
- EPPs should begin connecting to interested districts early in the RFP drafting process. Information on interested districts will be available at [Growingteachers.mt.gov](https://growingteachers.mt.gov).
- Multiple RFP Q&A sessions available throughout rfp process. Sign-up for Zoom links also at growingteachers.mt.gov.
 - January 12th and 13th sessions to answer initial RFP questions.
 - Jan 21st general information session
 - Feb 3rd information session- last live information session during open RFP.
 - Final written questions will be due to DofA the second week of February.
 - RFP will close the second week of March.

Timeline



Questions?

Contact Information

- WSD Administrator: Crystal.Armstrong@mt.gov (406)444-6518
- Apprenticeship Lead: Logan Klein LoganKlein@mt.gov (406)883-7890

References

Darling-Hammond and Wei, “What Kind of Emergency Hires Do Well at Teaching?

García, E., Wei, W., Patrick, S. K., Leung-Gagné, M., & DiNapoli, M. A., Jr. (2023, December 26). *In debt: Student loan burdens among teachers* (Report). Learning Policy Institute. <https://doi.org/10.54300/497.986>

Montana Office of Public Instruction, “Teacher Recruitment and Retention”.

Reininger, M. (2012). *Hometown disadvantage? It depends on where you’re from: Teachers’ location preferences and the implications for staffing schools*. ***Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis***, **34**(2), 127–145. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373711420864>

Saunders, R., Fitz, J., DiNapoli, M. A., Jr., & Kini, T. (2024, August 13). *Teacher residencies: State and federal policy to support comprehensive teacher preparation* [Fact sheet]. Learning Policy Institute & EdPrepLab. <https://doi.org/10.54300/358.825>



ITEM 11

**INFORMATION ON ANNUAL EDUCATOR
LICENSURE REPORT**

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Annual Educator Licensure Report
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Accreditation and Licensure Senior Manager Office of Public Instruction
Overview	This presentation will be a review of licensure data for 2025.
Requested Decision(s)	Information Only
Related Issue(s)	None
Recommendation(s)	None



Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

OPI 2025 Educator Licensure Annual Report

This report is a summary of educator licensure activity for 2025 as identified in the areas of:

1. Emergency Authorization of Employment (EAE) Data	3
2. Internship Data	9
3. Montana Alternative Program Data	9
4. Upgrade License Data	10
5. License Renewal Data	10
6. Add Endorsement Data	10
7. Initial License Data	11
8. Class 7 Native American Language and Culture Specialist Data	11
9. Licensure History for Initial and Renewals	12
10. Licensure Denials	12
11. Unusual Case Approvals	13

Montana Educator Licenses

Montana offers eight different license types. Brief descriptions of each are noted below.

- **Class 1 – Professional Teacher’s License.** Those who hold a master’s degree in education or an endorsable teaching area from a regionally accredited college or university or obtained certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- **Class 2 – Standard Teacher’s License.** Those who hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university and completed an approved educator preparation program including appropriate supervised teaching experience and either holds a current standard, unrestricted out-of-state educator license and two years of successful teaching experience or a minimum passing score on the Praxis Subject Assessment or a passing score on a student teaching portfolio or a 3.00 or higher coursework GPA.
- **Class 3 - Administrative License.** Categories are: Superintendent; Elementary Principal; Secondary Principal; K-12 Principal; Supervisor; Special Education Supervisor.
- **Class 4 - Career and Technical Education.** These licenses are specific to career and technical education. There are three types of Class 4 licenses:

- o Class 4A. Those holding a valid Montana teaching license, but without an appropriate career and technical education endorsement.
 - o Class 4B. Issued to individuals with a certificate of completion from an apprenticeship program or associate degree, or a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, but do not hold a valid Montana teaching license with the appropriate career and technical education endorsement.
 - o Class 4C. Those individuals who hold at least a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma and meet the minimum requirements for endorsement.
- **Class 5 - Provisional License.** May be issued to applicants that need to complete course work for full licensure. Categories are: Elementary; Secondary, K-12 and P-12 Special Education Levels; Superintendent; Elementary Principal; Secondary Principal; K-12 Principal; Supervisor; Specialist. There are three types of Class 5 licenses:
 - o Class 5A. Issued to individuals seeking their initial Montana educator license who meet all licensure requirements except need successful completion of the Montana required* Praxis test.
 - o Class 5B. Issued to individuals who hold a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university but have not completed an approved educator preparation program.
 - Class 5B-A. Issued to candidates seeking an administrator licensure pending the completion of specific coursework requirements.
 - Class 5B-S. Issued to candidates seeking a specialist license pending the completion of a school counselor or school psychologist program.
 - o Class 5C (includes Class 5C-A and Class 5C-S). Issued to individuals seeking a license in Montana whose degree is more than five years old, do not hold a current standard, unrestricted educator license, and have not earned 60 professional development units within the five- year period preceding the effective date of the license.
 - Class 5C-E. Issued to an exchange teacher who is on an exchange program with a school district or university.
- **Class 6 - Specialist License.** Categories are: School Counselor and School Psychologist.
 - **Class 7 – Native American Language and Culture Specialist.** Based upon verification by the authorized representative of a tribal government that has a memorandum of understanding with the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
 - **Class 8 - Dual Credit Postsecondary Faculty License.** Required (unless already licensed as Class 1, 2 or 4) whenever a college or university faculty member is teaching a dual credit course at the institution for which one or more students will earn both high school and college credit.

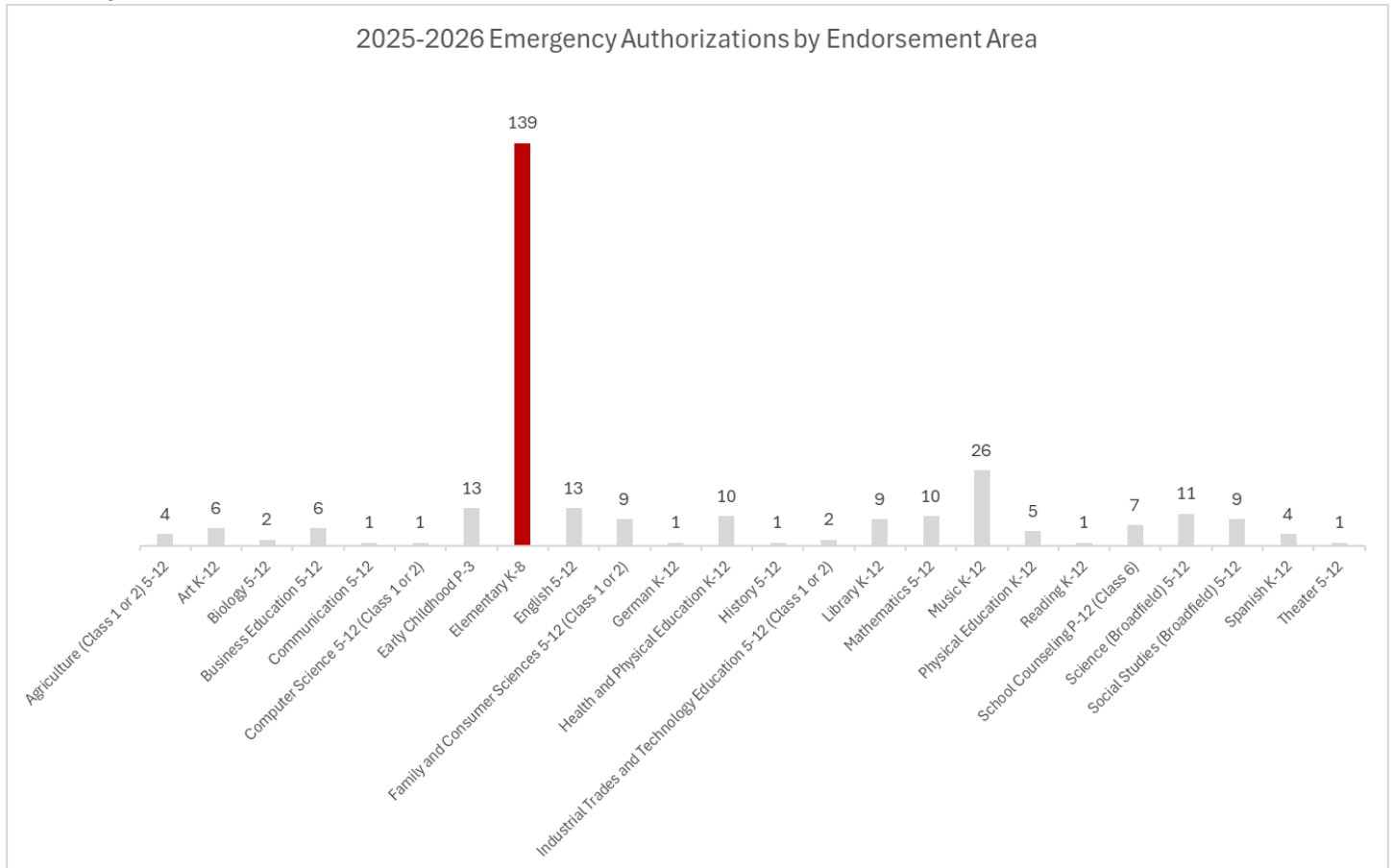
**Montana does not require the Praxis test for educator licensure, however, it is one pathway to show content knowledge for a Class 2 license.*

1. Emergency Authorization of Employment (EAE) Data

EAE's for July 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025

Approved	279
Deficient	9
Waiting for Backgrounds	23
Potential Approvals	311

EAE's by Endorsement Areas



EAE's by District

District	Total
TOTAL	279
Absarokee H S	2
Anaconda Elem	1
Anaconda H S	1
Arrowhead Elem	1
Ashland Elem	3
Augusta Elem	1
Ayers Elem	1
Bainville K-12 Schools	1
Baker K-12 Schools	1
Belgrade Elem	1
Big Sky School K-12	1
Bigfork Elem	1
Billings Elem	4
Box Elder Elem	2
Box Elder H S	1
Broadview Elem	1
Broadview H S	1
Brockton H S	1
Browning Elem	9
Browning H S	4
Centerville Elem	1
Centerville H S	1
Chester-Joplin-Inverness El	3
Chester-Joplin-Inverness HS	1
Circle Elem	2
Circle H S	1
Colstrip Elem	5
Culbertson Elem	1
Custer County H S	2
Custer K-12 Schools	1
Cut Bank Elem	7
Cut Bank H S	1
Dawson H S	1
Dupuyer Elem	3
Ekalaka Elem	4
Elder Grove Elem	1
Elysian Elem	2
Eureka Elem	2
Fairview Elem	1
Forsyth Elem	1
Frazer Elem	1
Frenchtown K-12 Schools	1
Froid Elem	1
Fromberg K-12	3
Frontier Elem	4
Garfield County H S	2
Geraldine K-12	2
Geyser K-12 Schools	2
Glendive Elem	4
Grass Range Elem	1
Great Falls Cent Cath HS	2

District	Total
TOTAL	279
Great Falls Elem	1
Great Falls H S	1
Hardin Elem	9
Harlowton K-12	4
Havre Elem	1
Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schls	2
Helena Elem	1
Helena H S	2
Hobson K-12 Schools	2
Huntley Project K-12 Schools	3
Independent Elem	1
Joliet Elem	6
Jordan Elem	1
Kalispell Elem	1
Kester Elem	1
King Colony Elem	1
Kinsey Elem	1
Lambert Elem	2
Lame Deer Elem	1
Laurel Elem	2
Lewistown Elem	1
Lincoln K-12 Schools	1
Lindsay Elem	1
Livingston Elem	1
Lockwood K-12	2
Lodge Grass H S	1
Luther Elem	1
Malta K-12 Schools	2
Medicine Lake K-12 Schools	2
Melville Elem	2
Miles City Elem	10
Missoula Elem	1
Missoula H S	1
Moore Elem	1
Nashua K-12 Schools	1
Noxon H S	1
Opheim K-12 Schools	1
Pass Creek Elem	1
Philipsburg K-12 Schools	2
Plains K-12	1
Plentywood K-12 Schools	6
Plevna K-12 Schools	2
Poplar Elem	2
Poplar H S	1
Power Elem	1
Rau Elem	3
Red Lodge H S	1
Richey Elem	2
Roberts K-12 Schools	3
Ronan Elem	1
Ronan H S	1
Rosebud K-12	1

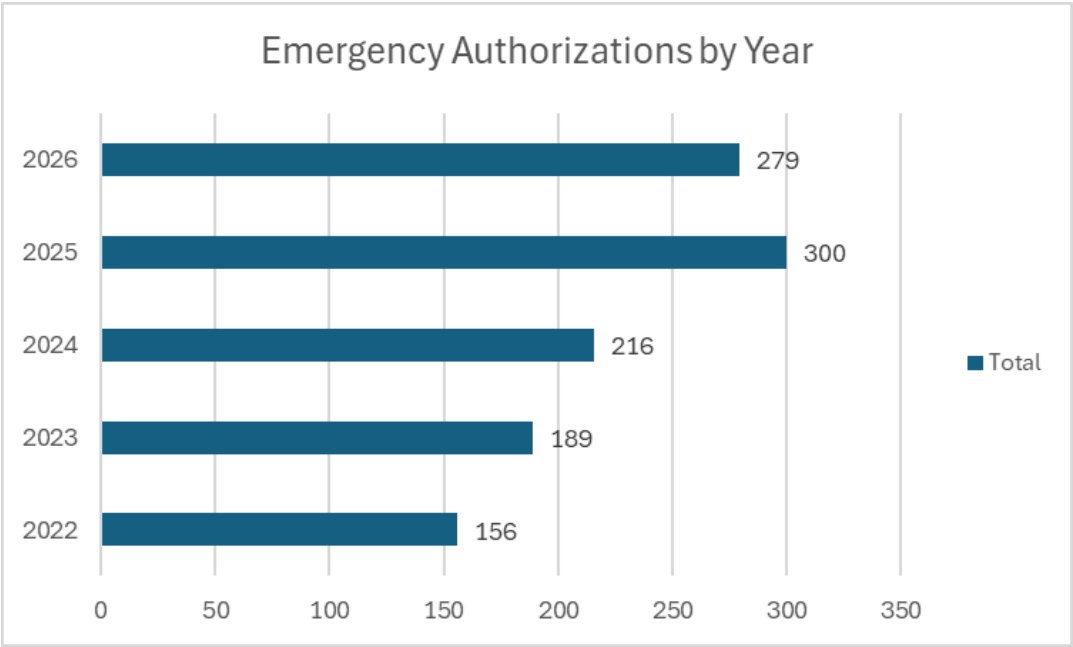
District	Total
TOTAL	279
Roundup Elementary	1
Ryegate K-12 Schools	1
Saco Elem	1
Savage Elem	1
Savage H S	1
Scobey K-12 Schools	5
Seeley Lake Elem	3
Shepherd Elem	4
Sheridan Elem	1
Sheridan H S	1
Shields Valley Elem	1
Sidney Elem	6
St Ignatius K-12 Schools	1
Sunburst K-12 Schools	2
Swan River Elem	1
Swan Valley Elem	1
Sweet Grass County H S	3
Terry K-12 Schools	6
Three Forks Elem	1
Trego Elem	1
Trout Creek Elem	3
Troy Elem	2
Troy H S	1
Turner H S	1
Valier H S	1
Vaughn Elem	1
West Yellowstone K-12	3
Westby K-12 Schools	1
White Sulphur Spgs K-12	1
Whitewater K-12 Schools	1
Wibaux K-12 Schools	4
Wise River Elem	1
Wolf Point Elem	10
Wolf Point H S	3
Yellowstone Academy Elem	1

Repeat Request by District

District	Employees with Consecutive EAE's
TOTAL	121
Absarokee H S	1
Arrowhead Elem	1
Ashland Elem	2
Augusta Elem	1
Billings Elem	2
Broadview Elem	1
Broadview H S	1
Browning Elem	5
Browning H S	2
Centerville Elem	1
Centerville H S	1
Chester-Joplin-Inverness El	2
Chester-Joplin-Inverness HS	1
Colstrip Elem	3
Culbertson Elem	1
Custer County H S	2
Cut Bank Elem	4
Dupuyer Elem	3
Fairview Elem	1
Fromberg K-12	2
Frontier Elem	3
Geraldine K-12	1
Geyser K-12 Schools	1
Glendive Elem	2
Great Falls Cent Cath HS	1
Great Falls Elem	1
Hardin Elem	5
Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schls	2
Helena H S	1
Huntley Project K-12 Schools	2
Joliet Elem	1
Lambert Elem	1
Lame Deer Elem	1
Laurel Elem	1
Livingston Elem	1
Lockwood K-12	1
Miles City Elem	4
Missoula Elem	1
Moore Elem	1
Philipsburg K-12 Schools	1
Plentywood K-12 Schools	5
Plevna K-12 Schools	1
Power Elem	1
Richey Elem	1
Roberts K-12 Schools	2
Rosebud K-12	1
Roundup Elementary	1
Ryegate K-12 Schools	1
Savage H S	1
Scobey K-12 Schools	3

District	Employees with Consecutive EAE's
TOTAL	121
Seeley Lake Elem	1
Shepherd Elem	2
Sidney Elem	3
Sweet Grass County H S	3
Terry K-12 Schools	4
Three Forks Elem	1
Troy Elem	2
Valier H S	1
West Yellowstone K-12	2
Whitewater K-12 Schools	1
Wibaux K-12 Schools	2
Wise River Elem	1
Wolf Point Elem	9
Wolf Point H S	3

5 year trend



2. Internship Data

Internship by Endorsement

Endorsement	Count
TOTAL	66
Teaching (total)	21
<i>Elementary K-8</i>	1
<i>Family and Consumer Science 5-12</i>	1
<i>Library K-12</i>	4
<i>Special Education P-12</i>	15
Principal K-12	8
Principal and Superintendent K-12	5
School Counselor K-12	2
Special Education Endorsement Project P-12	19
Special Education Supervisor P-12	1
Superintendent K-12	10

Internship by Educator Preparation Program (EPP)

EPP	Count
TOTAL	66
Montana State- Billings	14
Montana State- Bozeman	13
Rocky Mountain College	4
University of Montana	25
University of Montana- Western	10

3. Montana Alternative Program Data

Class 5 Provisional License

School Year	Total
2025	73
2026	66

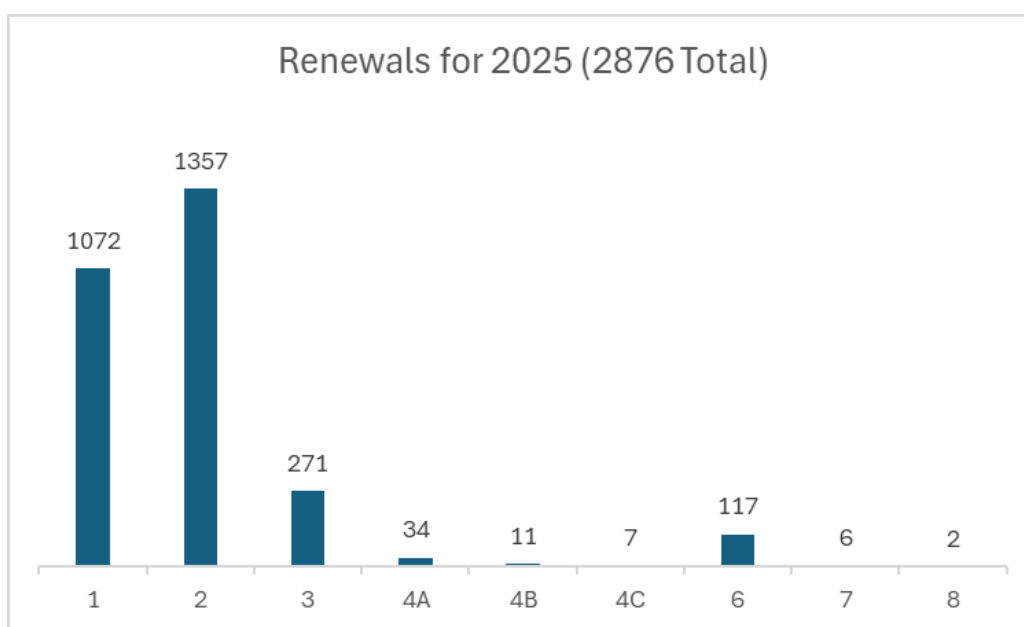
Class 2 Teaching License

School Year	Total
2025	8
2026	40

4. Upgrade License Data

License	Total
TOTAL	136
Class 3 Administrator	3
Class 6 School Counselor	2
Class 6 Specialist	18
Class 1 Professional Teaching	51
Class 2 Standard Teaching	62

5. License Renewal Data



6. Add Endorsement Data

Application Type	Total
Add Administrator Endorsement	29
Add Career and Technical Endorsement	3
Add Endorsement	231

7. Initial License Data

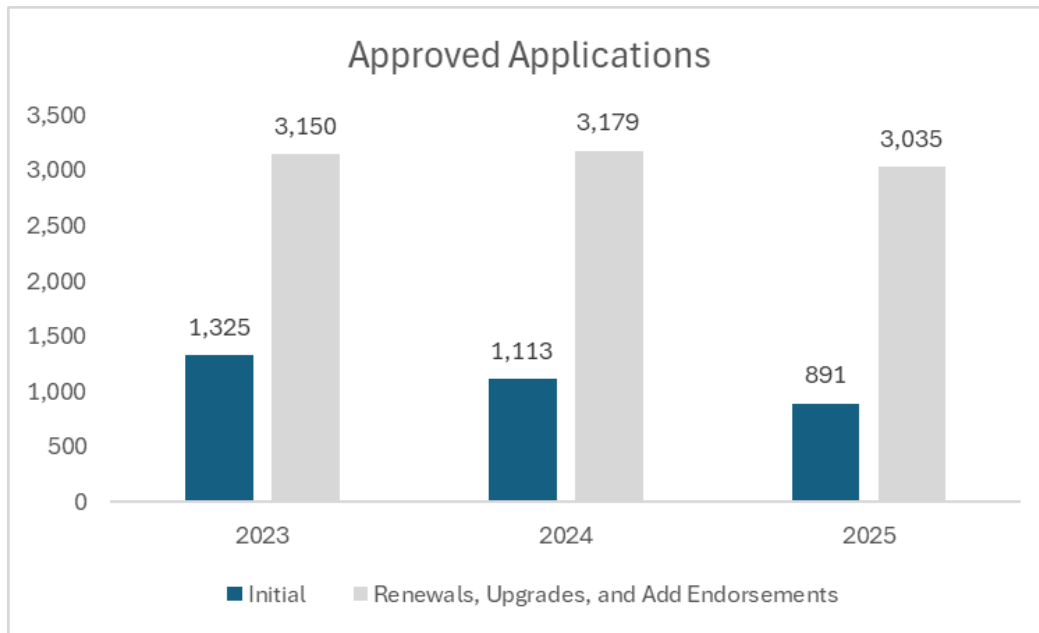
License Type	School Year 2025	School Year 2026
TOTAL	1355	1054
1	318	237
2	541	464
3	112	84
4A	27	13
4B	36	27
4C	15	10
5A	11	5
5B	161	94
5B A	1	N/A
5B S	36	36
5C	32	23
5C A	4	2
5C S	2	N/A
5C E	N/A	1
6	43	33
7	9	14
8	7	11

8. Class 7 Native American Language and Culture Specialist Data

Active Class 7 License by Year

Endorsement Area	SY2021	SY2022	SY2023	SY2024	SY2025	SY2026
<i>Grand Total</i>	24	29	38	26	24	23
Assiniboine K-12	3	4	1	2	3	3
Blackfeet K-12	10	8	8	8	4	4
Cheyenne K-12	5	4	2	1	2	4
Chippewa K-12			4		1	
Cree K-12	3	2	11	4	2	2
Crow K-12	3	5	9	4	10	9
Dakota K-12		2	1	1	1	
Gros Ventre K-12		2	1	2		1
Pend d'Oreille K-12		1				
Salish K-12		1	1	4	1	

9. Licensure History for Initial and Renewals



**Data does not include Class 5 Provisionals, Internships, or EAE's.*

10. Licensure Denials

Academic	
Reason for Denial	Cases
	0

Character	
Reason for Denial	Cases
Failed character & fitness	1
Currently on probation	1
NASDTEC hit in 3 states, not forthcoming with all info	1
TOTAL	3

11. Unusual Case Approvals

Reason for Unusual Case	ARM	Cases
EPP did not include 600 internship hours for a Class 6 license, and had multiple years experience as a counselor.	10.57.435(1)(b)	2
Bachelor's degree from an unaccredited university, EPP holds institutional accreditation.	10.57.410(3)(a) 10.57.425(4)(a)	5
Department of Justice cannot read fingerprints, utilized name-based results	10.57.201A	6
Completed the TEACH NOW licensure program which is an institutionally accredited program, program is through Moreland University which is not an accredited school.	10.57.410(3)(a) 10.57.425(4)(a)	2
Cannot obtain university recommendation, provided letter from EPP with verifying program completion	10.57.410(3)(b)	1
Upgrade to Class 1 with degree in Native American Studies, not an endorsable teaching area	10.57.412(2)	1
Master's in psychology, does not meet new ARM, completed when old ARM was in effect	10.57.415(1)(b)	1
Experience was unlicensed, however at the university level and already holds a MT license	10.57.301(3)(c)	1
Foreign application, program not recognized by an international government agency.	10.57.411(2)(c)	1
TOTAL		20

ITEM 12

INFORMATION ON ABCTE PROGRAM
APPROVAL FOR ALTERNATIVE
CREDENTIALING

Isabelle Welch, ABCTE
Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Presentation of the necessary requirements as part of initial approval for the Alternative Program- American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (American Board).
Presenter	Crystal Andrews Isabelle Welch
Position Title	Accreditation and Licensure Senior Manager Office of Public Instruction Director of Government Affairs American Board
Overview	<p>The American Board was initially approved by the BPE in March 2024. To be recommended for full program approval, American Board will need to demonstrate evidence through a final report.</p> <p>Ms. Welch will present the information found in the board packet and be available for any questions.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Information Item- No action required.
Related Issue(s)	The BPE approval process- March 2026: Recommend action
Recommendation(s)	N/A



AMERICANBOARD

Your Community. Your Teachers.

Montana Board of Public Education
January 15, 2026

INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM HISTORY

Since **2001**, American Board has been providing **flexible and affordable** teacher certification nationwide. American Board was granted initial approval in **Montana on March 18, 2024**.

PROGRAM IMPACT

American Board currently operates in **15 States** nationwide and has certified nearly **25,000 teachers**.

WHO ARE OUR CANDIDATES?

In order to participate in American Board's program, an individual must hold a **bachelor's degree** from an accredited college or university and pass a **background check**.

Average Candidate Age: **39 Years Old**



Career Changers

Professionals transitioning their expertise into the education sector.



Military Veterans

Honoring those who served and their supportive spouses.



Stay-at-Home Parents

Transitioning back to the workforce with flexible certification.



Paraprofessionals and Substitutes

Classroom staff advancing their careers to lead teachers.

36% ENROLLMENT GROWTH IN MONTANA

2024 Enrollment

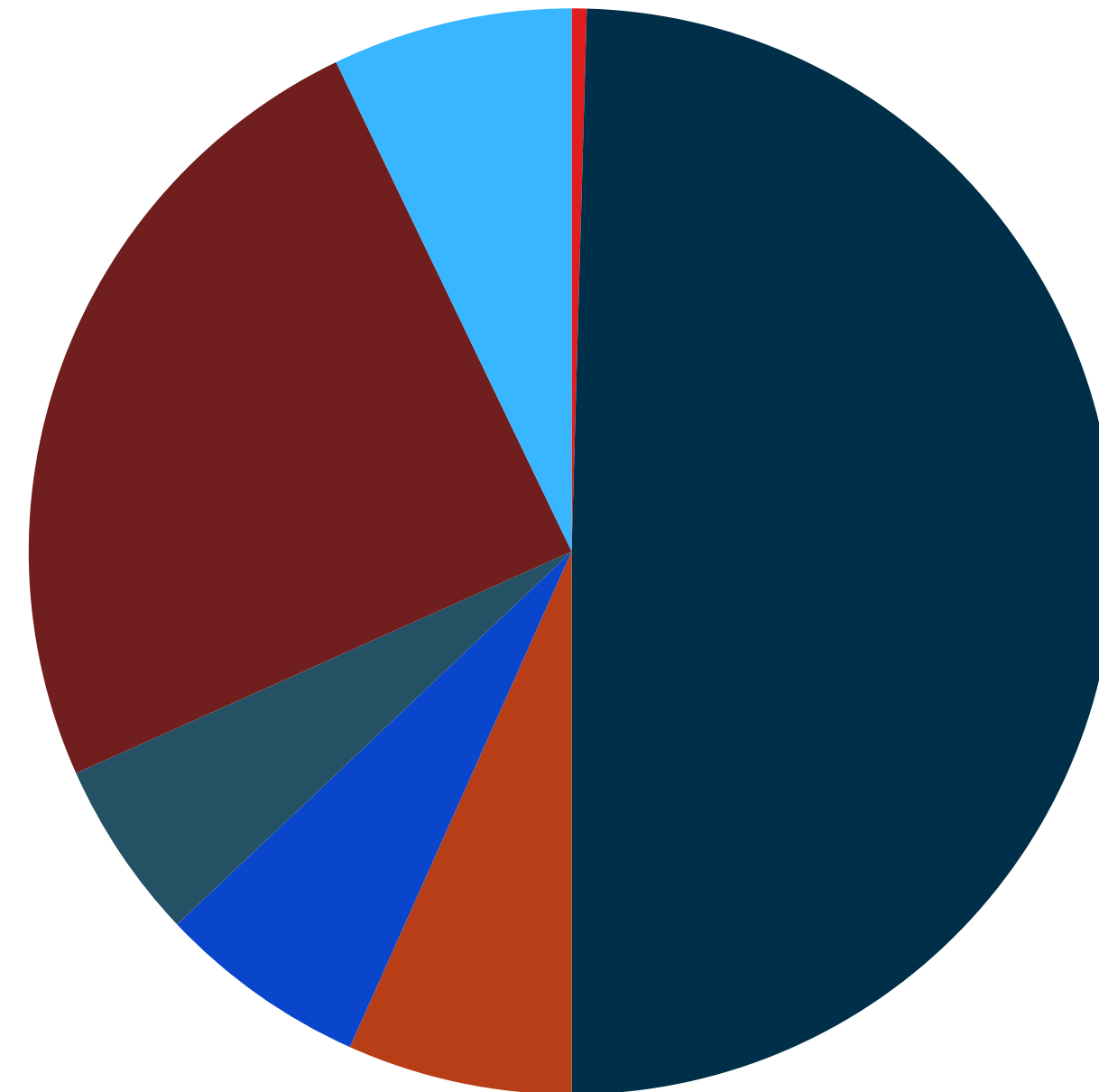
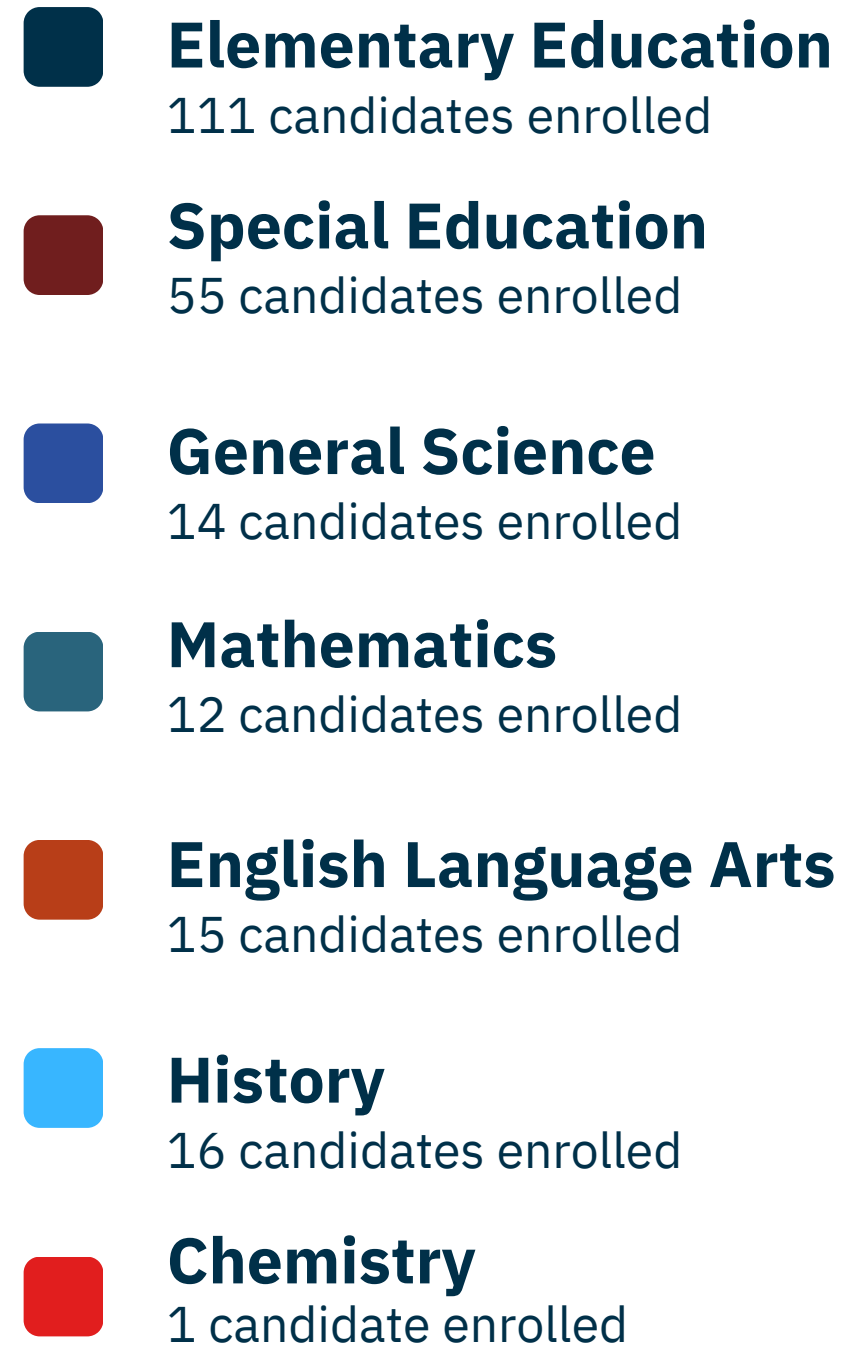
116

2025 Enrollment

158

Significant **year-over-year growth** demonstrates the **critical demand** for alternative certification pathways in Montana.

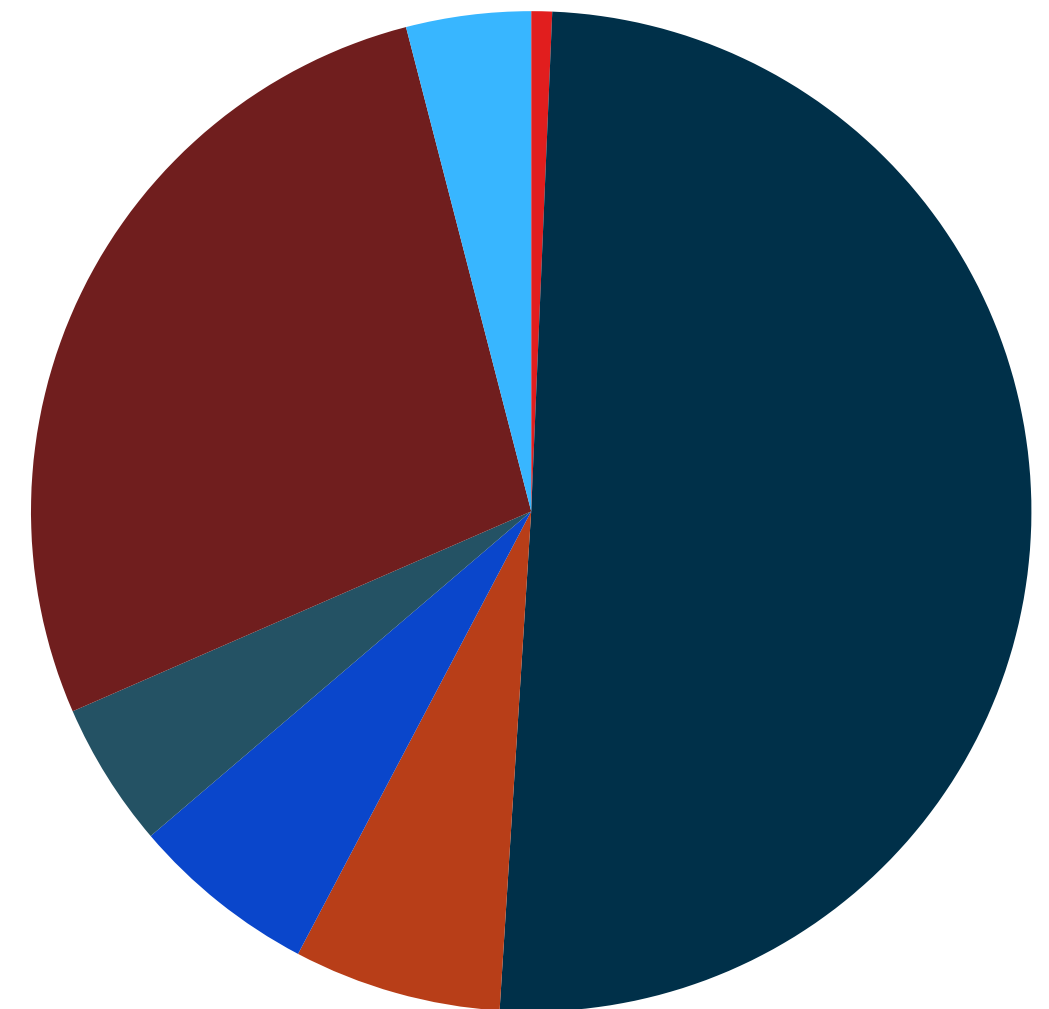
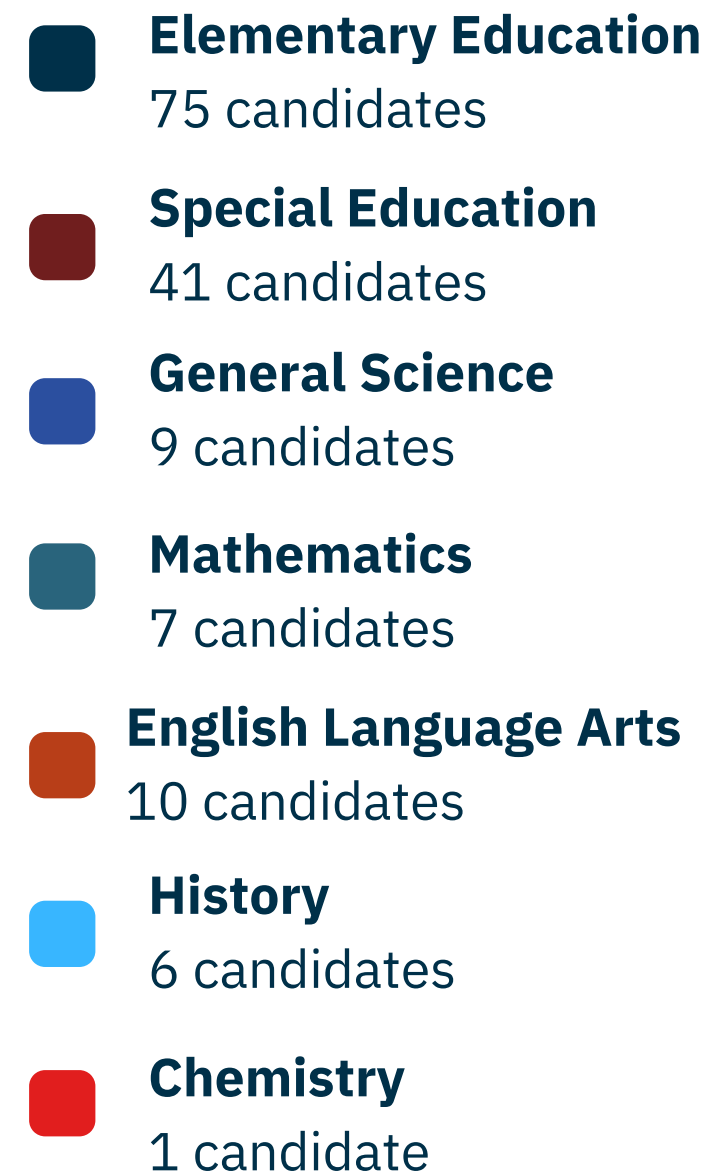
American Board Montana Enrollments 2025



CLASS 5 LICENSURE

99








Candidates currently
teaching on a
Class 5 Teaching License

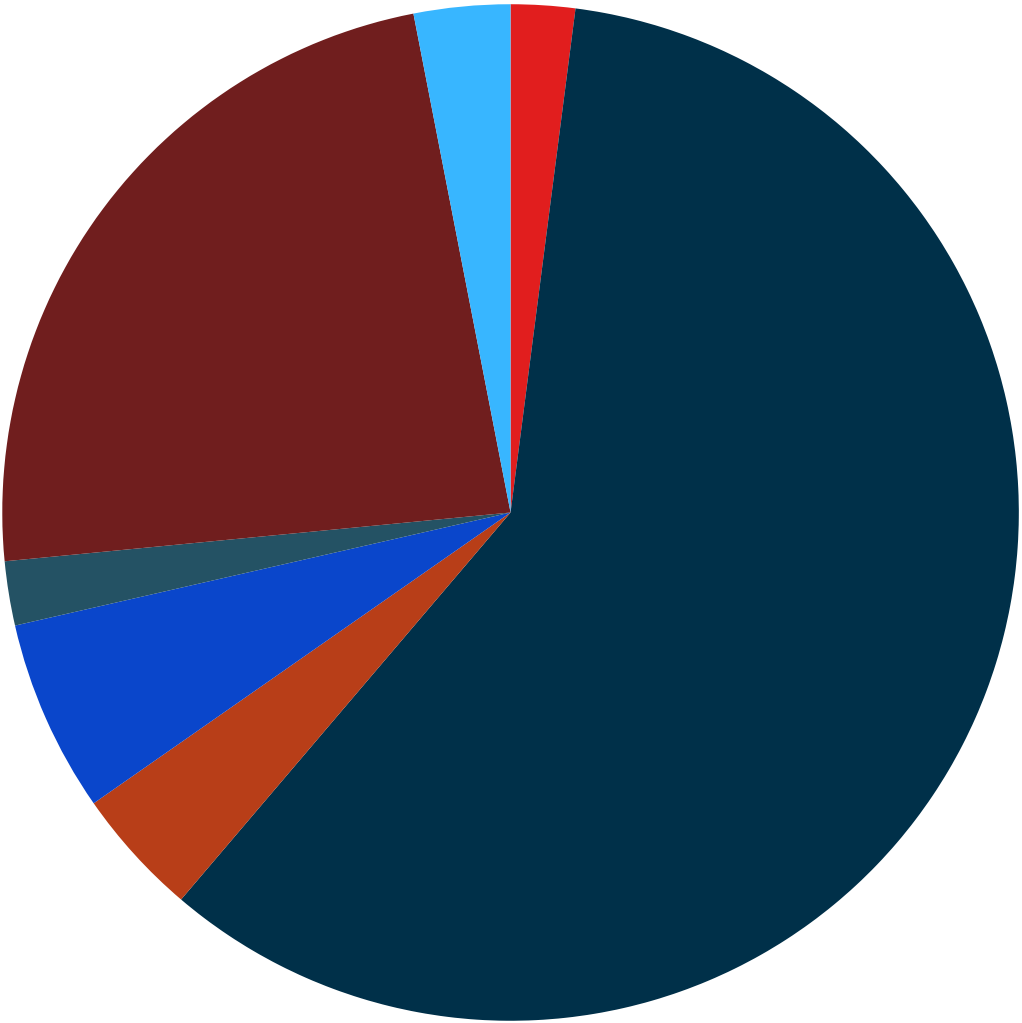


PROGRAM COMPLETERS

98

Certificates Issued

-  **Elementary Education**
58 candidates completed
-  **Special Education**
23 candidates completed
-  **General Science**
6 candidates completed
-  **Mathematics**
2 candidates completed
-  **English Language Arts**
4 candidates completed
-  **History**
3 candidates completed
-  **Biology**
2 candidates completed



PROGRAM ALIGNMENT

STATE AND NATIONAL STANDARDS

American Board's program was found to be highly aligned to Montana's standards when it was initially approved in 2024. Additionally, the program is aligned to national pedagogy and content standards, such as the InTASC standards.

THIRD-PARTY REVIEWS

American Board partners with Metriks Amerique, a psychometric, statistical, and program evaluation third party. Metriks Amerique conducts annual reviews of American Board's materials and exams, supported by an in-house academic officer.

LITERACY FOCUS

SCIENCE OF READING

Recent curriculum reviews and updates ensure every candidate is proficient in foundational literacy and the Science of Reading.

CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

“The information in the modules is very relevant to elementary education and has helped me understand and apply current best practices.”

THE MODERN CLASSROOM

TECHNOLOGY

Candidates learn to leverage technology and AI as creative instructional aids, while modeling ethical digital citizenship for students.

CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

“Most recently, I got our special education program to purchase two scanmaker pens. These can read books and papers to students who are unable to read them themselves.”

“One tech incorporation was the use of a PlayStation console to run the Odyssey Discovery mode, which allowed students learning about ancient Greece to digitally tour sites of historic significance.”

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

American Board works cooperatively with Montana's accredited school districts and P-20 stakeholders to design a pathway that meets real-time needs.

Filling Critical Vacancies

99 Candidates are providing immediate relief via on-the-job Class 5 licensing, serving as teachers of record in high-need districts.

Professional Growth

Creating a career ladder for emergency-licensed teachers, paraprofessionals, and substitutes to become fully licensed.

Direct Engagement

High-touch communication with school leaders ensures candidate success and maintains a vital program feedback loop.

"I have been sending a lot of people your direction and will continue to do so."

– Montana School Leader

WHERE ARE AMERICAN BOARD TEACHERS IN MONTANA?

74 DISTRICTS

Alberton
Anaconda
Ashland
Bainville
Baker
Belgrade
Billings
Box Elder
Bozeman
Bridger
Broadview
Brockton
Centerville
Choteau
Clinton
Colstrip
Columbia Falls
Corvallis
Darby

Dawson
Elder Grove
Elliston
Evergreen
Fair-Mont-Egan
Florence-Carlton
Fromberg
Gallatin
Glasgow
Glendive
Great Falls
Hamilton
Harlowton
Helena
Hellgate
Hinsdale
Independent
Jordan

Kalispell
Lame Deer
Laurel
Livingston
Lockwood
Lolo
Loyola-Sacred Heart
McCormick
Miles City
Missoula
Monforton
Nashua
Noxon
Opheim
Ovando
Park City
Poplar
Roy

Seeley Lake
Shelby
Shields Valley
Sidney
Somers
St. Regis
Stanford
Swan Valley
Sweet Grass County
Target Range
Thompson Falls
Three Forks
Townsend
Trout Creek
Troy
West Valley
West Yellowstone
Whitehall
Wolf Point

PROGRAM IMPACT

100% *of Montana employers surveyed confirm: American Board teachers “meet the academic, cultural, social, and emotional needs of P-12 students.”*

Employer Evidence

- *“Students benefit from her calm style mixed with her fun wit... She asks good questions and seeks to problem solve.”*
- *“Develops great relationships with students and families... preparing many hours outside of contracted time.”*
- *“Willing to adjust his teaching to meet student needs... serving multiple roles within the district.”*
- *“He can relate to students with differing ability levels... keeps students engaged.”*

Classroom Impact

- *“I plan small groups during our math block... I am able to differentiate instruction to meet specific needs.”*
- *“I established an SEL group where students solve problems effectively without conflict or tantrums.”*
- *“Currently differentiating curriculum specifically to meet the needs of students with disabilities.”*
- *“Established routines... children are working on identifying literacy deficits and building fine motor skills.”*

AMERICAN BOARD'S WEBSITE

AMERICANBOARD
Our Community. Your Teachers.

Become a Teacher in... Teach These Subjects Resources Blog How It Works Login Connect

Free T

Montana Teacher Certification

You can **become a teacher in Montana** on your own schedule, without quitting your current job or going into debt. Our program is entirely online and self-paced, so you can start any time and work towards earning teacher certification on a schedule that works for you.

Is American Board's online teacher certification program right for you? Try our free seven-day trial and see if you are ready to start earning your Montana teaching certificate. The trial allows you to review study material at your own pace, so you can get a real feel for the program's offerings. Scroll down for more information about how to use American Board to take the next step in starting your teaching career!

Teacher Certifications Offered in Montana

Choose a subject below to learn more about the requirements to teach that subject:

Biology (5-12)	Enroll in Biology Standard	Enroll in Biology Premium
Chemistry (5-12)	Enroll in Chemistry	
English Language Arts (5-12)	Enroll in English Standard	Enroll in English Premium
Elementary Education (K-8)	Enroll in Elementary Education	

How to Teach in Montana

1. Pass American Board's required pedagogy exam and subject area exam.
2. Submit your transcript(s) to American Board and pass a federal background check.
3. Receive your teaching certificate from American Board.
4. Complete any additional state requirements, including coursework related to **Indian Education for All**.
5. Apply to the **Montana Office of Public Instruction** for a class 2 standard certificate.
6. Begin teaching in a Montana school and complete the required district-based mentor program during your first year in the classroom.

CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

93%

of candidates said that
American Board's program **met
their expectations.**

93%

of candidates said they would
**recommend the program to
others.**

“I have a bachelor's in biology, and was asked to teach science in my hometown when the previous teacher left. I did not intend to become a teacher, but American Board has made that possible.”

“I had worked as a paraprofessional for years, and this program helped me take what I knew and become a licensed teacher.”

EMPLOYER FEEDBACK

100%

of principals reported that
American Board-trained
teachers met expectations.

100%

would recommend the American
Board program to others.

*“I have been nudging all of our Emergency-Licensed teachers
your way!”*

–Montana Superintendent

AMERICANBOARD

Your Community. Your Teachers.

**Thank you for your time, and I am happy to
answer any questions!**

ITEM 13

INFORMATION ON THE SITE VISIT AND
JOINT ACCREDITATION STATE EXIT
REPORT OF MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY BILLINGS EDUCATOR
PREPARATION PROVIDER IN THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Review of the Joint Accreditation State Exit Report of Montana State University- Billings Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) in the Department of Education, April 9-11, 2025.
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Accreditation and Licensure Senior Manager Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>The State Superintendent of Public Instruction presents to the Board of Public Education (BPE) the State Exit Report of Montana State University- Billings EPP programs in the Department of Education.</p> <p>Dr. Melanie Reaves, Interim Dean of Education, will be available to provide comments and respond to questions from the BPE.</p> <p>The State Exit and Narrative Reports are included in the BPE Agenda Packet from the State and CAEP components.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Information Item- No action required.
Related Issue(s)	The BPE approval process- March 2026: Recommend action
Recommendation(s)	N/A





December 12, 2025

TO: Dr. Melanie Reaves
Interim Dean
College of Education
Montana State University - Billings

FROM: Crystal Andrews
Senior Manager
School and Educator Effectiveness
Montana Office of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: **Final** State Exit Program Report 2025

From April 9-11, 2025, the Joint Accreditation review of the Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) in the College of Education Health and Human Development occurred virtually at Montana State University - Billings. This joint site review was conducted by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the Montana Office of the Public Instruction (OPI). Prior to the virtual site visit, a cadre of qualified educators including teachers, college professors, administrators and content specialists reviewed the Institutional Reports provided by Montana State University - Billings for the endorsement areas. The CAEP team reviewed documented evidence and conducted focus groups regarding the initial standards, ARM 10.58.311 to 10.58.315 and the advanced standards, ARM 10.58.605 to 10.58.609.

The purpose of the review was to verify that the Institutional Report of the EPP meets the requirements of the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) for both endorsement and initial and advanced program standards. The Final State Exit Report provides the results of the endorsement review relating to the program endorsement areas along with CAEP's report on the program standards. The Final State Exit Program Report 2025 is attached.

Below are the next steps in the Board of Public Education (BPE) approval process.

- January 2026 BPE Presentation: Upon the recommendation of the state superintendent, the final State Exit Report will be presented to the BPE as an information item.

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

- March 2026 BPE Action: The BPE will take action on the final State Exit Report, including the decision of the CAEP Accreditation Council, and the Accreditation/Approval status of the EPP in the College of Education at Montana State University- Billings (MSU-B).

For more information, contact Crystal Andrews by telephone at 406-444-6325 or by email at Crystal.Andrews@mt.gov.

cc: Jamie Corley, Accreditation Specialist, Montana Office of Public Instruction
Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer, Montana Office of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent, Montana Office of Public Instruction



DEFINITIONS WHICH PERTAIN TO THIS REPORT

Standard is met: Regular accreditation for a period of seven years.

Standard is met with notation: Regular accreditation with minor deviations with most of the components of a standard met. This could involve incomplete items in the Institutional Report or clarification/corrections needed. As those items are rectified, the recommendation to the BPE will reflect the current and corrected status.

Area for Improvement (AFI): Standard is met with weakness. The site review team identified a weakness in the evidence for a standard or component. Area for Improvement should be remediated by the next accreditation cycle, and progress toward improvement is reported annually through the annual report to the OPI/BPE. During the next accreditation review, the EPP must demonstrate that the AFIs have been corrected. If the AFIs have not been corrected, a stipulation may be cited in the same area.

Stipulation: A standard or component is not met. The site visiting team identified a deficiency related to one or more components or the BPE standard. A stipulation is of sufficient severity that a standard may be determined to be unmet. A stipulation must be addressed within two years to retain accreditation.



Initial Program Standards: ARM 10.58.311 to 10.58.315
Reviewed by CAEP

ARM	TITLE	STATUS
10.58.311	Initial Content and Pedagogical Knowledge	Met-AFI
10.58.312	Initial Clinical Partnerships and Practice	Met-AFI
10.58.313	Initial Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity	Met-AFI
10.58.314	Initial Program Impact	Met-AFI
10.58.315	Initial Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	Met-AFI

Advanced Program Standards: ARM 10.58.605 to 10.58.609
Reviewed by CAEP

ARM	TITLE	STATUS
10.58.605	Advanced Content and Pedagogical Knowledge	Met-AFI
10.58.606	Advanced Clinical Partnerships and Practice	Met-AFI
10.58.607	Advanced Candidate Quality, Recruitment and Selectivity	Met-AFI
10.58.608	Advanced Program Impact	Met-AFI
10.58.609	Advanced Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	Met-AFI



Teaching Program Standards: ARM 10.58.501 to 10.58.534

ARM	TITLE	STATUS
10.58.501	Teaching Standards Elementary Secondary	Met with Notation Met with Notation
10.58.503	Art K-12 Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.509	English/Language Arts Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.510	Special Education P-12 Undergraduate Graduate	Met Met
10.58.513	Health Enhancement Health Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.520	Physical Education Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.518	Mathematics Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met with Notation Met with Notation
10.58.519	Music K-12 Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.521	Reading Specialist K-12 Undergraduate Graduate	AFI AFI



10.58.522	Science (Broadfield Science) Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	Met Met
10.58.523	Social Studies (Government, History, Broadfield Social Studies) Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	AFI AFI
10.58.531	Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Non-degree Post Bac	AFI AFI
10.58.532	Elementary Undergraduate Graduate	Met with Notation Met with Notation

Advanced Programs Standards: ARM 10.58.604 to 10.58.707

10.58.610	School Counseling K-12	AFI
10.58.705	School Principals, Supervisors, and Curriculum Directors (Supervisor - Special Education)	AFI



COMMENDATIONS

The professional educational preparation program at Montana State University Billings received positive feedback from various programs across the university, confirming its operational effectiveness. Much of this success relies on the interdepartmental collaboration of the Education faculty, which requires dedicated time and effort. A list of specific comments is provided below.

CAEP: The EPP is commended for its ability to provide documentation on the selection and support of clinical educators. Data were provided for some assessments across three cycles for quality assurance and continuous improvement.

Teaching Standards: Candidates have frequent and varied opportunities to design meaningful learning experiences for K-8 students, and ample field experiences during which they can test the effectiveness of their lessons and activities. The evidence shared regarding children's development and exceptionality was especially thorough and well documented.

Art K-12: The coursework in this program is thorough, meaningful, relevant and aligns to PEPP Standards. Candidates gain an overall experience in the arts, further developing their own appreciation for the arts and media. The structure and sequence of the course load is outstanding and the capstone, in addition to student teaching, is an effective way to summarize all that was taught and learned.

English/Language Arts: The required literature courses are diverse and comprehensive, together meeting various sub standards of ARM, especially those concerning literature and interdisciplinary studies. Additionally, there are multiple courses that focus on writing and rhetoric in various contexts both in and out of the classroom, ensuring that pre-service ELA teachers have broad knowledge of writing and writing instruction.

Special Education K-12: The student teaching/grad practicum experience, including assessment of performance and required work products, support the direct application of course and program objectives aligned to ARM 10.58.510. All courses were clearly linked to PEPPs and other professional standards.

Health: The program facilitates a commendable effort to encourage health promoting behaviors among teacher candidates. The strength of this program is its comprehensive curriculum that is inclusive of individuals with disabilities. The Eagle Mount collaboration incorporates opportunities for teacher candidates to extend learning experiences to be inclusive of students with a variety of disabilities. The effort to focus on the adapted recreational needs of a special population provides an educational framework of how exercise and physical activity positively influences community health.

Physical Education: Remarkable effort was evident in creating meaningful learning opportunities for candidates to demonstrate mastery of the understanding of human movement through guided anatomical analysis of specific musculoskeletal joint articulations, muscle contraction, exercise prescription, and the overall human body systems approach to



understanding human movement. A strong effort is evident in preparing candidates for instructional design and delivery of physical education lessons and collaboration with community partners.

Mathematics: In terms of curricular design and transparency, the syllabi for EDU 354 and 497B stand out for their clarity, consistency, and thoughtful alignment with the PEPP standards. These syllabi explicitly define course objectives, instructional strategies, assessments, and clearly articulate their alignment with each standard. This level of detail sets a strong model for demonstrating alignment across coursework and could serve as a template for other courses. Their well-structured presentation enhances the program's ability to effectively communicate learning expectations to pre-service teachers, ensuring greater comprehensibility in teacher preparation.

Music K-12: Many standards are thoroughly addressed in multiple courses, learning is presented in multiple modes, and candidate understanding is evaluated both formally and informally in a variety of ways. Student teaching and field practicum experiences are thoughtful, organized, and focused on practical experience. The comprehensive focus on pedagogy throughout the cycle of techniques courses, conducting courses, music education specific courses, field practicum, and student teaching is acknowledged, as is recognition of the value of qualitative experiences and modeling of teaching skills in applied lessons and ensembles.

Social Studies: The EPP offers a diverse range of content coursework in history and political science to support candidate content knowledge in these endorsement areas. The breadth of survey courses in American history, world history, Montana history, and political science along with electives courses provide a strong foundation in the disciplines. The opportunity for all candidates to present a social studies lesson in a 7th grade social studies classroom shows a strong coursework-field connection. The teaching toolkit assignment includes a requirement for IEFA specific tools for each social studies content area.

Early Childhood Education: Course objectives include the understanding and classroom practice centered on social and emotional development, verbal and nonverbal communication, support for social and emotional development and growth, mental health support, and meeting diverse needs on an individual level.

Elementary: The Native Americans in Contemporary Society course provides opportunities for teacher candidates to deepen their understanding of the Indigenous Peoples of Montana by drawing from tools of historiography, literary analysis, and the traditional knowledge of today's Indigenous leaders, while examining lived practices of relationality, resilience, adaptability, and revitalization.

School Counseling K-12: Candidates are provided ample opportunities to collaborate on developing interventions for student needs with specific attention on consulting with family members, school personnel, and other professionals to enhance the development of students.



Overall: The documentation and evidence provided in the MSUB's Institutional Report demonstrates how the program comprehensively meets each endorsement area. While there were some endorsement areas that identified which course fulfilled each requirement or MSUB provided sufficient evidence in the form of assignments, evaluations, or course outcomes, there are four endorsement areas identified for improvement.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT (AFI)

- Standards R1, R2, R3, R4, R5, and RA1, RA2, RA3, RA4, and RA5 lack sufficient evidence of the effective use of data to monitor, evaluate, and make improvements to program areas.
- There was a notable lack of consistency in the way that outcomes and assessments were expressed.
- Consistency of reporting elements and integration of more programmatic processes and activities in addition to syllabi would strengthen the program.
- A thorough alignment of the standards and the courses and coursework would strengthen the program and provide a clear understanding of how standards are addressed, developed, and applied within the secondary level endorsement programs.
- Explicit intentional opportunities for candidates to connect math content knowledge with pedagogy could be embedded throughout the methods courses.
- Provide explicit, intentional instruction for candidates to obtain a comprehensive background in literacy concepts and theory. The courses show evidence of ability to design and teach evidence-based reading instruction based on guided reading and writer's workshop. The evidence for these instructional practices is not strong, especially when applied to diverse groups of learners.
- The content across the reading courses could be significantly strengthened through a shift toward a brain-based approach to reading instruction using the Science of Reading and frameworks such as the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, and the Four-part processor and Ehri's phases of development to anchor the concepts and guide candidates to teach reading.
- Details of improvements needed are in the following reviews.

STANDARDS MET WITH NOTATION

10.58.501 Teaching Standards Elementary and Secondary, 10.58.518 Mathematics undergraduate and post baccalaureate, and 10.58.532 Elementary Education in the undergraduate and graduate program.



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.501 Teaching Standards - Elementary

Validating Statement: Montana State University - Billings (MSU-B) has presented evidence that its Elementary Education candidates have been provided with many diverse opportunities to engage with Standard 10.58.501. Candidates are able to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and dispositions in relation to learner development, learning differences, learning environments, content knowledge, application of content using higher-level thinking skills, assessment methods and strategies, planning for instruction, diverse instructional methods, professional learning and reflective practice, and collaboration and leadership with P-12 learners, their caregivers, and the larger community. In addition, Indian Education for All is woven through several courses, and the integration of the history, cultural heritage, language, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana is present in its course offerings and practices. The University accomplishes the work associated with this Standard through diverse coursework and through varied practicum experiences that include methods fieldwork and student teaching in P-12 settings.

Sources of Evidence: Specific sources cited for this Standard included many and varied course syllabi, field experience “Key Assessments” completed by the Cooperating Teacher and University Supervisor, teacher education program entrance criteria, dispositions evaluations, content knowledge evaluations, and other program tools.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assessment used to align to standard were the Teacher Work Sample, Teaching Observations, Dispositions Evaluation, Assessment of Content Knowledge, and the Petition and Appeals Process.

Evaluation: Many courses were clearly aligned with the standard or indicator, however there was a notable lack of consistency in the way that outcomes and assessments were expressed. Consistency of reporting elements and integration of more programmatic processes and activities in addition to syllabi would strengthen the program.

In its reporting, MSU-B included several course references with outcomes and assessments that were well aligned to associated 501 components. For example, in standard e), the course referenced (EDU 406) contained excellent outcomes and assessments very well aligned with the standard. However, this course was the only element that was cited to show how MSU-B



encourages critical thinking and problem-based learning in its programs. For indicator b), there were three specific courses referenced for the inclusion of Indian Education in the elementary program. Following those courses, a notation was included that “all methods courses integrate IEFA (Indian Education for All)”, yet in the course outcomes and assessments shown, few references to integration of IEFA were evident in several of those courses, and there was no evidence provided for meeting the needs of English Language Learner (ELL) students.

Commendations: MSU-B, through its broad spectrum of comprehensive and well-designed field experiences and its expansive catalog of course offerings, surely addresses the 501 standards in its elementary program. In many cases, this is abundantly clear. Candidates have frequent and varied opportunities to design meaningful learning experiences for K-8 students, and ample field experiences during which they can test the effectiveness of their lessons and activities. The evidence shared regarding children’s development and exceptionality was especially thorough and well documented.

Improvements: As noted previously, greater consistency in the way outcomes and assessments are aligned to coursework would strengthen the program. In addition, the inclusion of program elements and activities beyond the course syllabi could be referenced. In some cases, more depth of reporting specific to the standards/indicators was needed.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met with Notation



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.501 Teaching Standards - Secondary

Validating Statement: The information provided through the Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) and supporting evidence demonstrated an alignment to the teaching standards for secondary education endorsements.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence was provided through course syllabi, coursework descriptions, course catalog, student handbooks, and evaluation rubrics.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Teacher Work Sample, Teaching Observations, Dispositions Evaluation, Assessment of Content Knowledge, and the Petition and Appeals Process were used as assessment tools as well as coursework described in syllabi.

Evaluation: For many of the standards, information on how the standards were practiced, demonstrated, and applied was not clearly defined. Some materials listed as evidence for specific standards were found to insufficiently address the standard when others not listed in that area were found to address it more sufficiently. For (e) “demonstrate understanding of how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues,” the single course provided as evidence seems to be largely about exposure to the issues more than the using of different perspectives to engage learners. While this course may be one part of meeting the standard, other courses are needed.

Commendations: Secondary level candidates are provided with varied opportunities to learn and apply knowledge specific to differentiated instruction through multiple courses, coursework, and assessments. Candidates are provided multiple opportunities to work with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Improvements: A thorough alignment of the standards and the courses and coursework would strengthen the program and provide a clear understanding of how standards are addressed, developed, and applied within the secondary level endorsement programs.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met with Notation



Montana State University – Billings Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review

Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.503 Art K-12

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. The K-12 Art program allows candidates to explore a variety of media and methods of art making and expression, while also providing a solid foundation of art history and world culture. The coursework supports both 2-D and 3-D pathways, and candidates can gain a thoughtful understanding of the subject matter which they are going to teach. Teaching Methods courses within this program give candidates an understanding of artistic development which is then used to develop a curriculum for appropriate grade levels with assessments to promote learning. All of this is applied during a cumulative student teaching experience and Senior Capstone. It is evident that the program consistently aligns with the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) for Art K-12 (10.58.502).

Sources of Evidence: Course syllabi, Course learning outcomes, Self Study Report, Assignments and Assessments

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Coursework, Senior Capstone, Teacher Work Sample, Teaching Observations, Dispositions Evaluation, and Assessment of Content Knowledge were used as assessment tools.

Evaluation: The Art K-12 Program is well-designed to allow for a variety of experiences that will contribute to becoming an effective art teacher. The program has an effective overall sequence of courses that broadly address the PEPP Standards. Within most course syllabi, further evidence was found that the PEPP Standards are intentionally a part of the learning outcomes.

Commendations: The coursework in this program is thorough, meaningful, relevant and aligns to PEPP Standards. Candidates gain an overall experience in the arts, further developing their own appreciation for the arts and media. The structure and sequence of the course load is exceptional and the capstone, in addition to student teaching, is an effective way to summarize all that was taught and learned.

Improvements: Explicit instruction for candidates in budgeting and purchasing, as well as censorship issues and their complexity is needed. While attention to collaborative skills is evident, the program should strengthen the practices of art in interdisciplinary curriculum and instruction with other disciplines.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met Standard



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.509 English/Language Arts

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. Supporting materials were reviewed aligned to ARM 10.58.509 and it was evident that the ELA program fully meets the standards.

Sources of Evidence: MSU Billings Catalog: English Teaching Licensure Option Bachelor of Arts Degree with a focus on required courses, Student Teaching Guidebook, Student Teaching Teacher Work Sample, Student Teaching Dispositions Continuum, and syllabi provided by the institution for required courses.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Coursework, Student Teaching Dispositions, practicums, and Student Teaching Work Sample verified the alignment of learning outcomes within the Montana PEPPs

Evaluation: The institutional review indicates that coursework is aligned with ARM 10.58.509. Through an examination of evidence, the EPP demonstrates an alignment with each standard. To strengthen the program, outcomes and learning standards should be aligned to reflect the content of the courses.

Commendations: The required literature courses are diverse and comprehensive, together meeting various sub standards of ARM, especially those concerning literature and interdisciplinary studies. Additionally, there are multiple courses that focus on writing and rhetoric in various contexts both in and out of the classroom, ensuring that pre-service ELA teachers have broad knowledge of writing and writing instruction.

Improvements: Multiple, explicit opportunities for candidates to demonstrate understanding of legal and ethical issues in English/Language Arts freedom of expression, censorship, and bias is needed. Strengthen the focus on reading comprehension strategies appropriate for reading purposes and genres. Although multiple courses may meet this standard in practice, only one course delineated reading comprehension as a focus.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.510 Special Education P-12

Validating Statement: Materials were reviewed and accountability to this standard was demonstrated through supporting evidence supplied by the institution for both the undergraduate and graduate level endorsement programs. Integration of PEPP and INTASC standards, and in some cases Danielson's Framework, was established in course syllabi at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence reviewed included online program/course catalog; undergraduate and graduate level endorsement advising worksheets; course syllabi; key assessments of competencies (Montana Assessment of Content Knowledge- MACK)- minimum required core coursework GPA, elementary and secondary education assessment of content pedagogy, Praxis cut-score; professional dispositions assessment; student teaching/grad practicum observation form; student teaching/grad practicum Teacher Work Sample project and guide; student teaching/graduate practicum guide; institutional recommendation for state certification requirements.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assignments were aligned with PEPPs, INTASC standards, and the Danielson's Framework.

Evaluation: Course objectives, including field experience requirements and program methodology, align with PEPP and INTASC standards.

Commendations: The student teaching/graduate practicum experience, including assessment of performance and required work products, support the direct application of course and program objectives aligned to ARM 10.58.510. All courses were clearly linked to PEPP and other professional standards.

Improvements: None

Accreditation Recommendation:

- **Undergraduate** - Met Standard
- **Graduate** - Met Standard



Montana State University – Billings Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review

Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.513 Health

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. The program prepares teacher candidates to apply academic training to intentional interactions with community members, students, parents, colleagues, teachers, and school administrators. The program facilitates structured opportunities for candidates to engage in and support all learners through supervised observations and intentional teaching experiences. Teacher candidates are regularly assessed through a combination of methods including peer teaching opportunities, best practice reflections, self-assessment of health to assess personal health trends, health care needs, prediction of health outcomes, and to monitor overall well-being. Candidates participate in service learning, community engagement activities related to community school health, and health promotion. Candidates participate in the collaboration of purposeful engagement with community partners to adapt recreational activities to promote healthy living for individuals with disabilities.

Sources of Evidence: Course syllabi, documentation of course content, Content knowledge requirements, Disposition Continuum, and the Student Teaching Guidebook.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: A program of alignment to standards is available in course syllabi.

Evaluation: Teacher candidates are given opportunities to utilize health-related data to promote healthy lifestyle behaviors, inclusive of American Indians and tribes in Montana. Candidates conduct needs assessments to collect data representative of the health education needs of learners of diverse populations. Candidates apply health strategies to facilitate adaptive recreational opportunities to individuals with disabilities. Through a combination of lesson planning activities, community health presentations, and unit plan development, candidates demonstrate the ability to create a logical scope and sequence plan for a health education program that includes appropriate goal-setting strategies for behavior change, the development of interpersonal communication skills, and decision-making skills to enhancing personal, community, and environmental health.

Commendations: The program facilitates an exceptional effort to encourage health promoting behaviors among teacher candidates. The strength of this program is its comprehensive curriculum that is inclusive of individuals with disabilities. The Eagle Mount collaboration incorporates opportunities for teacher candidates to extend learning experiences to be inclusive of students with a variety of disabilities. The effort to focus on the adapted recreational needs



of a special population provides an educational framework of how exercise and physical activity positively influences community health.

Improvements: Continued effort is needed in providing candidates opportunities to analyze factors affecting the successful implementation of health education and coordinated school health programs and strategies to mitigate barriers to implementation. Specific attention is needed in encouraging candidates to analyze data collected from the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey as a supportive tool in determining the prevalence of health-risk behaviors as self-reported by Montana youth.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- **Met Standard**



Montana State University – Billings Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review

Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.520 Physical Education

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. The program prepares teacher candidates to apply academic training to intentional interactions with community members, students, parents, colleagues, teachers, and administrators in public school settings. The program facilitates structured opportunities for candidates to engage in and support all learners through supervised observation and teaching experiences. Teacher candidates are regularly assessed through a combination of methods including peer teaching opportunities, best practice reflections, human movement analysis for exercise prescription, service-learning community engagement activities, and in collaboration and purposeful engagement with community partners.

Sources of Evidence: Course syllabi, documentation of course content, content knowledge requirements, Disposition Continuum, and the Student Teaching Guidebook.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: A program of alignment to standards is available in course syllabi and the Student Teaching Guidebook.

Evaluation: Physical Education teacher candidates are given opportunities to demonstrate proficiency in the identification of critical elements of motor skill performance, demonstration of skillful movement in a variety of physical activities, including the development of leadership, communication, and decision-making skills through outdoor adventure leadership projects. Candidates describe and apply bioscience and psychological concepts to skillful movement, recreational activity, and intentional exercise prescription. Candidates demonstrate knowledge and understanding of human movement analysis for sport-specific and supplemental training that is designed to improve human performance. Candidates demonstrate understanding of the development of unit and daily lesson-planning procedures that focus on clearly defined learning objectives and selection of appropriate activities to achieve those goals. Candidates are given some opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of state and national content standards, current law, including those related to American Indians and tribes in Montana.

Commendations: Exceptional effort is evident to create meaningful learning opportunities for candidates to demonstrate mastery of the understanding of human movement through guided anatomical analysis of specific musculoskeletal joint articulations, muscle contraction, exercise prescription, and the overall human body systems approach to understanding human movement. A strong effort is evident in preparing candidates for instructional design and delivery of physical education lessons and collaboration with community partners.



Improvements: Enhanced opportunities for candidates to understand state and national content standards, specifically to physical education. Focus should be centered around providing opportunities to learn how to decode the specific knowledge and technical skills expected in each content standard, per grade level, in physical education methods courses, including adapted physical education. Additionally, candidates require specific and relevant opportunities to integrate Indian Education for All into a physical education curriculum.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met Standard



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.518 Mathematics

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. Supporting materials, including course syllabi and program documentation, were examined to evaluate alignment with PEPP standards.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence provided by the university including handbooks, the course syllabi, and the online course catalog.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: For each of the standards addressed in various classes, assessments such as quizzes, exams, homework, teacher work samples, observations, portfolios, and artifacts from the student teaching experience were used to assess the knowledge, skills, and performances of the pre-service math educator. These assessments were aligned to the learning outcomes for each course.

Evaluation: Whole documentation supports the presence of PEPP standards within education courses; however, it is not always evident that mathematics-specific standards are fully addressed within the program. Many syllabi lack explicit reference to critical aspects of mathematical inquiry, modeling, reasoning, and exploration, often requiring candidates to engage in mathematical concepts beyond the standard topics (e.g., familiarity with function types), assuming candidates have a mastery of the prerequisite skills required by the mathematics coursework, making it difficult to confirm the extent to which these elements are emphasized within the coursework. Strengthening the connection between mathematical coursework and instructional expectations would improve the program's overall alignment with the PEPP standards.

Commendations: The program demonstrates a strong desire to align mathematics instruction with cultural, contextual, and community applications, particularly through the meaningful integration of Indigenous perspectives within EDU methods courses, field experiences, and student teaching.

Additionally, multiple mathematics courses provide opportunities for candidates to apply their mathematical knowledge in real-world contexts, increasing the applicability and relevancy of the content. Courses such as STAT 341 demonstrate an emphasis on interpreting statistical models across a variety of disciplines, and M 242 provides opportunities for candidates to engage in drawing conclusions and interpreting mathematical results. These applications support the development of mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills in diverse fields, including political science and philosophy.



In terms of curricular design and transparency, the syllabi for EDU 354 and 497B stand out for their clarity, consistency, and thoughtful alignment with the PEPP standards. These syllabi explicitly define course objectives, instructional strategies, assessments, and clearly articulate their alignment with each standard. This level of detail sets a strong model for demonstrating alignment across coursework and could serve as a template for other courses. Their well-structured presentation enhances the program's ability to effectively communicate learning expectations to pre-service teachers, ensuring greater comprehensibility in teacher preparation.

Improvements:

Aspects of the program that could be strengthened to ensure comprehensive alignment with PEPP standards and provide more explicit evidence of meeting expressed expectations are:

- Explicit intentional opportunities for candidates to connect math content knowledge with pedagogy which could be embedded throughout the methods courses. For example, pre-service educators are expected to use trigonometric functions and functional representations in their teaching practice but may not encounter these topics within their required mathematics coursework.
- Strengthening Technology Applications in Mathematics Instruction. While some courses reference the use of technology (e.g., Pearson MyLab, Calculators), the program lacks explicit references to current and emerging technologies as essential instructional tools. The university could improve alignment by incorporating evidence of instructional technology applications in mathematical learning and clarifying how pre-service educators are trained to integrate technology effectively within the teaching of mathematics.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met with Notation



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.519 Music K-12

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. Accountability to the Music K-12 standard was established through a variety of documents and online materials. Integration of the PEPP standards were documented, although standards are not explicitly stated in all syllabi. INTASC standards are stated in the student teaching guidebook and OPI standards are documented in the undergraduate catalog.

Sources of Evidence: Course syllabi, undergraduate catalog, juried performance assessment form, and student teaching handbook.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: A distinct program of alignment to standards is evidenced in course syllabi and course descriptions in the undergraduate catalogue.

Evaluation: The institutional review indicates that all the relevant standards (10.58.519 Music K-12) are addressed in various courses, field practicum, and student teaching experiences. Assessments of candidate learning and understanding, both quantitative and qualitative, were discussed in the institutional self-study report.

Commendations: Many standards are thoroughly addressed in multiple courses, learning is presented in multiple modes, and candidate understanding is evaluated both formally and informally in a variety of ways. Student teaching and field practicum experiences are thoughtful, organized, and focused on practical experience. The comprehensive focus on pedagogy throughout the cycle of techniques courses, conducting courses, music education specific courses, field practicum, and student teaching is acknowledged, as is recognition of the value of qualitative experiences and modeling of teaching skills in applied lessons and ensembles.

Improvements: Clear alignment of coursework with standards is needed. Of particular concern is 10.58.519(i) (demonstrate through analysis and performance knowledge of acoustics and the physics of sound as it relates to instrumental sound production, timbre, and tone quality): courses identified as addressing this standard do not reflect this statement.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met Standard



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.521 Reading Specialists K-12 - Undergraduate

Validating Statement: Supporting evidence was reviewed. General alignment to standards was documented though a lack of specificity and depth was seen throughout documentation.

Sources of Evidence: Course Syllabi were reviewed

Assessment Aligned to Standard: A broad alignment between standards and course syllabi can be seen, however, the assignments or discussion topics that were listed as assessments of the standards for most courses were not specifically aligned to the course objectives and the PEPPS.

Evaluation: While evidence was provided for all broad areas of the standards, the evidence for the specific reading standards was limited.

Commendations: Foundational reading skills and the theoretical and historical aspects of literacy instruction are extremely well covered in this coursework.

Candidates participate in two field study opportunities during this coursework that include both elementary and adolescent learners. This provides candidates with an excellent opportunity to put what they have learned into practice with the support of cooperating teachers.

Improvements: While foundational skills of reading and language, including writing, are well covered in this coursework, candidates are only taught to apply those skills through the instructional approaches of Guided Reading and Writer's Workshop. The program would be strengthened greatly by providing varied instructional approaches, so candidates have a variety of instructional approaches in their toolboxes. This is particularly true when considering instruction for K-12 students needing supplemental and intervention instruction. Guided Reading and Writer's Workshop may not be explicit or systematic enough to meet the needs of those K-12 students and including more intensive instructional practices would benefit candidates who will be leaving the program as Reading Specialists and will be more likely to enter careers where they are focused on these groups of students.

Documentation provided about the standards related to diversity appeared to be very focused on cultural diversity. While that is a critical aspect of diversity, the program would be strengthened by including additional aspects of diverse learner needs that candidates will encounter in their classrooms such as students with disabilities and English Learners.



To increase the effectiveness of the program, the following areas should be enhanced:

- Candidates receiving a minor in reading should be prepared to support colleagues and provide professional development related to selecting, administering, analyzing and interpreting assessments.
- Ensure candidates are provided learning opportunities regarding student choice and engagement to engage and motivate all learners.
- The ability for candidates to integrate digital technologies into literacy instruction.
- Provide authentic practice for candidates to support a colleague in a coaching model and have experience with establishing relationships between a mentor and mentee.
- Provide explicit instruction for candidates to practice advocating student instructional needs by using assessments for adolescent reading and sharing the data from the assessment with students, families, and colleagues.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Area for Improvement



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.521 Reading Specialists K-12 - Graduate

Validating Statement: Supporting evidence was reviewed. General alignment to standards was documented though a lack of specificity and depth was seen throughout documentation.

Sources of Evidence: Course Syllabi was reviewed

Assessment Aligned to Standard: A broad alignment between standards and course syllabi can be seen, however, the assignments or discussion topics that were listed as assessments of the standards for most courses were not specifically aligned to the course objectives and the PEPPS.

Evaluation: Documentation provided was mostly course objectives taken from a specific course. Minimal evidence was provided to demonstrate that the course covered the topic. For example, "writing" or "assessment" are clearly included in the course schedule of various syllabi, the specific topics, such as writing foundational skills, spelling, sentence construction, etc., but were not specifically addressed in program offerings.

Commendations: The diversity standards were particularly well addressed. Candidates engage in a variety of classes and coursework aimed at helping them understand the diverse nature of Montana schools and the potential impacts this could have on their instructional practices.

Improvements:

- Include additional methods and models of instruction, such as Science of Reading, outside of guided reading and writer's workshop to strengthen the coursework and ability of candidates to teach all K-12 students how to read and write.
- Provide authentic opportunities for candidates to communicate with external stakeholders regarding assessment data about student reading skills.
- Foundational writing appears to be included in the coursework, however, only one course focuses on early writing, spelling and handwriting combined, and is near the end of the course. Syntax and sentence construction do not appear to be included in the course at all. Current research indicates that writer's workshop is only beneficial for K-12 students who are already proficient with the foundational skills of writing.
- Include coursework that addresses specific components of language acquisition, structure of language, and conventions of standard English.
- Provide explicit, intentional instruction for candidates to obtain a comprehensive background in literacy concepts and theory. The courses show evidence of ability to design and teach evidence-based reading instruction are based on guided reading and writer's workshop. The evidence for these instructional practices is not strong,



especially when applied to diverse groups of learners. Including only these instructional strategies when teaching candidates how to design, select, adapt, teach and evaluate instructional approaches is very limiting and does not provide opportunities to practice instructing a variety of evidence-based approaches. A more comprehensive instructional framework would strengthen this aspect of the coursework.

- Provide candidates coursework that addresses assessment, validity, reliability, language, culture, and dialect. Many of the assessments that are listed in the syllabi, such as miscue analysis and leveled text analysis, do not meet the standard of evidence-based assessment.
- Include coursework around how data teams or PLCs should collaborate around student data to determine instruction and intervention would strengthen the program.

Areas for significant improvement include the following:

- Candidates must be taught to collaborate with peers and communicate with stakeholders regarding student reading outcomes. Candidates not only need to know about reading but also must be experts who are able to share their knowledge with others. It is essential for candidates to be taught to manage these types of interactions or lead teams of colleagues in mentoring or coaching relationships.
- While there is a course dedicated to diagnostics and intervention, consultation with families and colleagues could be strengthened in the clinical experience where candidates are working with students and write a full diagnostic report to consult with families.
- Candidates must engage critically in research to acquire the skills necessary to be literacy leaders.
- Provide coursework for authentic coaching opportunities where candidates utilize adult learning theory to work with teachers to change their instruction based on the results of the observation. Candidates need to learn how to model, solve problems together, and co-teach as needed.
- Explicit instruction for candidates to practice advocating student instructional needs by using assessments for adolescent reading and sharing the data from the assessment with students, families, and colleagues.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Area for Improvement



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.522 Science

Validating Statement: Supporting materials were reviewed for the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. Accountability to this standard was demonstrated through course syllabi, course catalogue, and supporting evidentiary documentation integrating the Professional Educator Preparation Program (PEPP) standards.

Sources of Evidence: The sources of evidence were the course syllabi, the course catalogue, and supporting evidentiary documentation integrating the PPEP standards.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: The courses, fieldwork, and practicums correlate to the PEPP Standards.

Evaluation: Evidence has been presented to verify the focus for each aspect of the program on the PEPP Standards.

Commendations: Several courses included the interrelationships between the sciences. A couple of courses mention verbiage that corresponded with the Science and Engineering practices of the Next Generation Science Standards.

For the Non-Degree Post baccalaureate, the Student Teacher Handbook recognizes the importance of student-centered learning (which is crucial for science education).

Improvements: Explicit exposure to the three-dimensional standards of crosscutting concepts and the practice of the ethical treatment of living organisms in the classroom is needed in lecture and lab coursework.

At the Post baccalaureate level, provide clear opportunities for candidates to be exposed to phenomena that foster their ability to formulate questions and design their own investigations and models.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met Standard



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.523 Social Studies

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Undergraduate and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsements. Evidence has been presented that secondary education candidates in history, government (political science), and Broadfield social studies are exposed to and provided with opportunities to demonstrate their content knowledge in social studies areas. Candidates are also provided opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills related to social studies education in a methods course, a junior field experience, and student teaching.

Sources of Evidence: MSU-B provided course syllabi for required content coursework in history and political science, along with syllabi for coursework in anthropology, sociology, geography, economics, and psychology to support the Broadfield social studies licensure program. They also included a syllabus and expanded course assignment descriptions for the secondary social studies methods course (EDU 497A 5-12 Social Studies Methods). The course assignments included a teaching philosophy statement, a teaching toolkit, unit and lesson plans, and other course-based activities including a book club.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Content coursework and related syllabi show course objectives and assessments tied to the endorsements in ARM 10.58.523(5) history and ARM 10.58.523(6) government. The EPP provided a course syllabus and supplemental assignment descriptions for the social studies methods course which included assessments in a teaching philosophy, a teaching toolkit, and unit and lesson plans to meet general social studies requirements in ARM 10.58.523(2).

Evaluation: The EPP includes both survey coursework and upper-division coursework in history and political science providing a strong content knowledge basis for their social studies licensure candidates. There was also a foundation in Montana history which included information on tribes in Montana. In general, the course syllabus and descriptions for EDU 497A lacked sufficient details to fully determine how candidates are meeting the requirements in ARM 10.58.523(2). There are references to the required components. There was insufficient evidence to determine where standards, assessment, technology, historical documents, and instructional approaches for those with diverse abilities were explicitly taught. Additional explanation is provided in the Improvements section below.



Commendations: The EPP offers a diverse range of content coursework in history and political science to support candidate content knowledge in these endorsement areas. The breadth of survey courses in American history, world history, Montana history, and political science along with electives courses provide a strong foundation in the disciplines. The opportunity for all candidates to present a social studies lesson in a 7th grade social studies classroom shows a strong coursework-field connection. The teaching toolkit assignment includes a requirement for IEFA specific tools for each social studies content area.

Improvements:

Overall, the content required and syllabi included provided a strong description as to how the EPP meets the requirements found in ARM 10.58.523(5) history and ARM 10.58.523(6) government for those endorsements. However, the references to tribal governments per ARM 10.58.523 (5)(a) and (c) needs to be included.

As stated above, the syllabus for EDU 497A Social Studies methods and supplemental assignment descriptions lacked details sufficient to meet the core components of the standard as found in ARM 10.58.523(2). Specifically, the syllabus referenced technology but lacked any assessments tied to technology per ARM 10.58.523(2)(a). Assessment is included in the lesson plan rubric, but no explanation is provided about how candidates are taught about assessment or how it is scored in the rubric. Some assignments have references to standards, but no information is provided on how standards are taught to candidates. Additionally, the Toolkit overview does not include information about selecting resources tied to standards, using inquiry or primary sources, or assessment, only that one must be an IEFA resource in each area. The lesson plan #2 assignment references multilingual learner adaptations, but there is no other clear mention of instructional approaches for those with diverse abilities. There were no references to student engagement and ties to contemporary events as required in ARM 10.58.523(2)(f). Inquiry and the use of original historic documents are referenced in the teaching toolkit (and discussed in HSTA 200 and HSTA 460) but there are no references in the assignment description and "Examining Primary and Secondary Sources In-Class Activities" describes some things they do like inquiry units, primary and secondary sources, and films with a note that candidates who actively engage receive 20 points for each in-class session but that isn't reflected in the syllabus assignments and points list. Ultimately, the syllabus and assignments lacked the details and clarity to meet this standard.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Area for Improvement



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.531 Early Childhood Education

Validating Statement: The programs reviewed were the Early Childhood and the Non-degree Post baccalaureate Endorsement. Supporting materials were limited in the assessment of each standard and its subcomponents. The evidence listed to demonstrate candidates' understanding of the standards was inconsistent.

Sources of Evidence: The evidence utilized to review the program included the courses listed in the Institutional Self-Study Report, the syllabi, the Teacher Work Sample, and Student Teaching Handbook.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Some standards are met, while other standards lack the evidence that candidates acquire the necessary skills that are aligned to the PEPPS.

Evaluation: The EPP failed to identify which course(s) and assessment(s) align with each standard/component. The ISS would be stronger if there was a clear alignment between specific assessments for each component of the Standard and the program Courses, Outcomes, and Assessments.

Commendations:

- The teacher work sample is an informative capstone assessment for candidates with a comprehensive rubric clearly stating expectations of student practicums.
- Course objectives, assignments, and assessments indicate candidates are introduced to various theories of development with expectations for candidates to analyze, summarize, and describe implications for the education of young children.
- Course objectives include understanding and classroom practice centered on social and emotional development, verbal and nonverbal communication, support for social and emotional development and growth, mental health support, and meeting diverse needs on an individual level.
- The program ensures that successful candidates identify, apply, and reflect on their knowledge of teaching and engagement. For example, play is integrated throughout numerous courses and emphasized in curriculum and practicum.

Improvements:

- Provide explicit opportunities for candidates to establish reciprocal relationships between teachers and parents/families.



- Outline within the program coursework where candidates are required to demonstrate understanding in each Montana Content Standards.
- Provide coursework and authentic opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theory and research in the areas of language, speaking and listening, reading and writing processes, literature, print and non-print texts.
- Provide authentic opportunities and course work for candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and use of the fundamental concepts of physical, life, earth, and space sciences, to design and implement age-appropriate inquiry lessons to teach science and to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts, and procedures, and reasoning processes of mathematics.
- Provide explicit opportunities for candidates to learn how to collaborate with multiple stakeholders.
- Ensure that the program prepares candidates to identify, apply, and reflect on their knowledge of professionalism by identifying and involving oneself with the distinctive history, values, knowledge base, and mission of the early childhood field; to become an informed advocate for all young children and their families and collaborate with multiple stakeholders.
- Ensure that the program ensures completion of clinical and student teaching experiences that are well-planned and sequenced in a variety of settings.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Area for Improvement



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.532 Elementary - Undergraduate

Validating Statement. Supporting materials were reviewed. Accountability to this standard was demonstrated through course syllabi and the online course catalog. Integration of the standards was documented throughout the course syllabi and other documents, including student teaching rubrics and observation forms.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence was gathered from the course syllabi and the online course catalog. Course descriptions and program outcomes stated in the course catalog match the outcomes described in the course syllabi.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Four key assessments (Teacher Work Samples, Teaching Observations, Dispositions Evaluation, and the Montana Assessment for Content Knowledge) are used to measure teacher candidates' knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Most class assignments and embedded course assessments in the required classes are aligned to the standards.

Evaluation: As indicated on the Institutional Report (IR), course work in the program is aligned to the standards. Through an examination of each syllabus, it was validated that the required course content addresses each component of the Elementary Education Standard.

Commendations:

- Course EDU 397C for Teaching Math is based on best practices for math instruction. For example, the coursework includes the development of mathematical mindsets, math discourse, honoring the math struggle, use of manipulatives, rich math tasks for family and community engagement, and analysis of errors.
- The Strategies for Managing Diverse Learners is structured to enable teacher candidates to create strong classroom learning environments and focus on fostering welcoming and engaging spaces where students feel safe, supported, and motivated to learn.
- The EDU 331 Literature course is comprehensive. The coursework table outlines topics and activities aligned to a particular piece of literature, modeling how to select texts that emphasize a particular literary element.
- The Teaching Science Methods Course EDU 379 offers an inquiry-orientated science experience for teacher candidates that is likely to lead to more infusion of inquiry into elementary school science lessons for students.



- The Native Americans in Contemporary Society course provides opportunities for teacher candidates to deepen their understanding of the Indigenous Peoples of Montana by drawing from tools of historiography, literary analysis, and the traditional knowledge of today's Indigenous leaders, while examining lived practices of relationality, resilience, adaptability, and revitalization.
- The course assignments for EDU 221 Educational Psychology and Measurement, whether it is the learning theory project or the research interview, require candidates to think critically and apply learning theories.
- Both EDU 383 and EDU 483 assessment courses provide multiple learning opportunities for candidates to understand, and practice using assessment and engage in data decision making.

Improvements:

- Reading courses could be significantly strengthened through a shift toward a brain-based approach to reading instruction using the Science of Reading and frameworks such as the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, the Four-part processor and Ehri's phases of development.
- Even though it is mentioned that all methods courses require candidates to design and deliver lesson plans that are directly aligned to the Montana Content Standards, the expectation was evident in some methods courses but not all.
- Within a few methods courses, the connection between the assignments and the objectives could be more explicitly linked.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met with Notation



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.532 Elementary - Graduate

Validating Statement: Supporting materials were reviewed. Accountability to this standard was demonstrated through course syllabi and the online course catalog. Integration of the standards were documented throughout the course syllabi and other documents, including student teaching rubrics and observation forms.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence was gathered from the course syllabi and the online course catalog. Course descriptions and program outcomes stated in the course catalog match the outcomes described in the course syllabi.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Four key assessments (Teacher Work Samples, Teaching Observations, Dispositions Evaluation, and the Montana Assessment for Content Knowledge) are used to measure teacher candidates' knowledge, dispositions, and performances. Most class assignments and embedded course assessments in the required classes are aligned to the standards.

Evaluation: As indicated on the Institutional Report (IR), course work in the program is aligned to the standards. Through an examination of each syllabus, it was validated that the required course content addresses each component of the Elementary Education Standard.

Commendations:

- Within Course EDF 530, evidence demonstrated that candidates engage in coursework to develop the knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories related to child development and learning.
- The mathematics methods course provides a strong overview for how to teach math. Candidates engage in mathematical tasks and best practices for teaching math. For example, candidates engage in using manipulatives to develop intuition, explore math misconceptions, and learn how to write effective, engaging math lessons.
- Evidence of IEFA authentic integration was provided in multiple methods courses.

Improvements:

- The content across the courses could be significantly strengthened through a shift toward a brain-based approach to reading instruction using the Science of Reading and frameworks such as the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, and the Four-part processor and Ehri's phases of development to anchor the concepts and guide candidates to teach reading.



- Ensure that understanding of how to design student learning opportunities aligned to the Montana Content Standards are embedded across all methods courses.
- Provide explicit instruction for how to develop a positive, engaging learning environment as well as supporting student behavior.
- Incorporate family and community engagement within the coursework prior to the practicum or student teaching.
- Intentionally provide opportunities for candidates to understand how to use assessment to monitor student learning, use data to determine instructional decisions, as well as how to administer and use diagnosis tools for reading.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Met with Notation



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.610 School Counseling K-12

Validating Statement: This accreditation review is only for the 48 credit K-12 School Counseling Master's in Education program. This program prepares candidates for licensure through the Office of Public Instruction (OPI), with a Class 6 specialist license in School Counseling. This accreditation review is not for the 60 credit School Counseling Licensure Option, which intends to prepare students for a LCPC license with the Board of Behavioral Health.

Sources of Evidence: Evidence was obtained from the Internal Self-Study Report, course syllabi, course catalog, rubrics, and program documents

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Key assessments for the school counseling program are the Interim and Practicum Final Evaluations and Capstone projects.

Evaluation:

Upon evaluation of the syllabi, course outcomes and content (including assignments), it appears that cited evidence minimally demonstrates alignment or adherence of standard 10.58.610. The documentation and evidence provided in the self-study MSUB's report does not accurately reflect how the program comprehensively meets each standard. While there is a narrative which speaks to the standards, MSUB insufficiently identified which course fulfilled each requirement or provided sufficient evidence in the form of assignments, evaluations, or course outcomes which would demonstrate the fulfillment of the required standard.

Commendations: Candidates are provided ample opportunities to collaborate on developing interventions for student needs with specific attention on consulting with family members, school personnel, and other professionals to enhance the development of students.

Improvements:

- Clearly align assignments, course outcomes, and evaluations with each standard and substandard, specifically in 10.58.610 1(g)(i-xii), and 1(h-i).



- Although specific coursework outlines suicide assessments, utilizing prevention and intervention programs that address each of the issues within 10.58.610 (g)(vii) was not explicitly addressed. For example, no coursework or evaluations were found for utilizing prevention and intervention programs concerning drugs and alcohol. Provide explicit instruction that enables candidates to use, both in and outside the classroom, strategies and interventions that address career counseling, school and life transitions, promotion and graduation rates, college and career readiness.
- Provide explicit practice and assessment on candidate's knowledge of characteristics, risk factors, and warning signs of students which include the signs and symptoms of substance abuse in children and adolescents.
- Provide explicit coursework and opportunities for candidates to demonstrate knowledge of health and wellness interventions that affect learning, behavior, and mood in children and adolescents.

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Area for Improvement



Montana State University – Billings
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.705 School Principals, Supervisors, & Curriculum Directors

Validating Statement: The program reviewed was the Special Education Supervisor Endorsement. The evidence provided was inconsistent across the program standards. The program incorporates five courses that are provided by three Montana accredited educator preparation programs. However, the evidence submitted did not include syllabi, coursework, or assessments from all three potential programs. There was no evidence provided for the data and decision-making course. As a result, it is difficult to determine whether every candidate pursuing the program meets the requirements outlined in the standard.

Sources of Evidence: Course syllabi and descriptions were reviewed.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: PEPP standards alignment was found in the course objectives outlined in the syllabi for the syllabi that were provided.

Evaluation: The program appears to be insufficiently designed and coordinated based on the Institutional Report and syllabi presented. Two sub standards, 10.58.705(1)(a) & (b), met the requirements. The remaining sub standards were identified as either AFI or Stipulation, because either there was no evidence or the syllabi coursework was not directly aligned to the course outcomes.

Commendations: Candidates have authentic opportunities to apply theory in practice through the internship. The program is designed to build upon a bachelor's degree in special education and provide multiple pathways for candidates to acquire the general graduate coursework for an educational supervisor. The administration and supervision course through MSU-B provides opportunities for candidates specific to special education.

Improvements: The program design and coordination of courses from multiple universities needs to be enhanced. It is recommended to design a performance metric to ensure candidates have obtained the necessary skills and knowledge prior to the internship and specific courses tied to special education supervision. For example, they have acquired the necessary knowledge of school law to branch off into special education law. Another example is evidence of the ability to work with families and community partners prior to entrance into their internship. To strengthen the program, develop a rubric specific to special education supervision that can be utilized during the internship. While the five general leadership courses align with the supervision standard, the emphasis for special education supervision needs to be strengthened. Specific special education learning opportunities could be built into existing courses, or additional coursework as part of MSU-B's special education supervision requirements.

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

Accreditation Recommendation:

- Areas for Improvement



1 ACCREDITATION ACTION REPORT

College of Education
Montana State University-Billings
Billings, Montana

Accreditation Council October 2025
Initial Accreditation Date: 10/20/2002

This is the official record of the Educator Preparation Provider's accreditation status.

The EPP should retain this document for at least two accreditation cycles.

ACCREDITATION DECISION

Initial-Licensure Level Decision: Accreditation

Accreditation Term: 10/19/2025 through 12/31/2031

Next Review Semester: Spring 2031

Advanced Level Decision: Accreditation

Accreditation Term: 10/19/2025 through 12/31/2031

Next Review Semester: Spring 2031

SUMMARY OF STANDARDS

CAEP STANDARDS: Initial-Licensure Level	Standards Decision
Standard R1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge	Met
Standard R2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice	Met
Standard R3: Candidate Recruitment, Progression, and Support	Met
Standard R4: Program Impact	Met

Standard R5: Quality Assurance System and Continuous Improvement	Met
Standard R6: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity	Met

CAEP STANDARDS: Initial-Licensure Level	Standards Decision
Standard R7: Record of Compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act	Met

CAEP STANDARDS: Advanced Level	Standards Decision
Standard RA1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge	Met
Standard RA2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice	Met
Standard RA3: Candidate Quality and Selectivity	Met
Standard RA4: Satisfaction with Preparation	Met
Standard RA5: Quality Assurance System and Continuous Improvement	Met
Standard RA6: Fiscal and Administrative Capacity	Met
Standard RA7: Record of Compliance with Title IV of the Higher Education Act	Met

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND STIPULATIONS

Areas for Improvement: Identified areas for improvement are addressed in the provider's annual report.

Stipulations: Stipulations are addressed in the provider's annual report and must be corrected within two years to retain accreditation.

INITIAL-LICENSURE LEVEL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND STIPULATIONS

R1 Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R1.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that candidates were able to apply their knowledge of content at the appropriate progression levels.	Though some data were provided for R1.2 [Praxis II scores and MACK scores], the EPP inconsistently demonstrated, through verifiable and reliable means, that candidates were able to apply their knowledge of content upon program completion. Analysis of completion data for

	continuous improvement and candidate monitoring was not presented.
--	--

R2 Clinical Partnerships and Practice

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R2.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that partners co-selected, prepared, evaluated, and supported high-quality clinical educators, both provider- and school-based, who demonstrated a positive impact on candidates' development and diverse P-12 student learning and development.	While the EPP provided documentation on the selection and support of clinical educators (IHE and P-12), there was minimal evidence of co-selection component, evaluation and training of clinical educators.

R3 Candidate Recruitment, Progression, and Support

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R3.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence of goals and progress evidence for recruitment of high-quality candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations that aligned with their mission.	While the EPP provided evidence towards partially meeting the component by providing a draft of a plan, the EPP did not address progress on the recruitment goals.
AFI - R3.3 - The EPP provided limited evidence of candidate competency at completion.	The EPP described the process (continuum) of assessment that contributed to the competency at completion, but did not share disaggregated data by program (with appropriate N's) to verify candidate quality including impact on P-12 student learning or how those assessment criteria addressed the components of proficiency at completion indicated in Question R.3.3 (B), particularly for content knowledge sufficiently to meet the state standards.

R4 Program Impact

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R4.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence to demonstrate that program completers effectively contributed to P-12 student-learning growth and apply in P-12 classrooms the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the preparation experiences were designed to achieve.	There was only one cycle of data provided in evidence for this component. Additionally, the EPP presented an incomplete analysis and demonstration of completer impact on P-12 student learning and development.

<p>AFI - R4.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that employers were satisfied with completers' preparation.</p>	<p>Although three cycles of data were provided in evidence, there was minimal analysis, and no disaggregation by program. No demonstration that the survey met the criteria for evaluation of EPP created surveys was provided. Data was unverifiable. The EPP made an insufficient case for employer satisfaction.</p>
---	---

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R4.3 - The EPP provided limited evidence that completers were satisfied with program preparation.	<p>There were only two cycles of data provided. Although each data set represents multiple years, it was only one cycle each.</p> <p>Minimal analysis, no disaggregation of data by program, and no demonstration that the survey met the criteria for evaluation of EPP-created surveys was provided.</p>

R5 Quality Assurance System and Continuous Improvement

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - R5.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence of a functioning Quality Assurance System.	While the EPP provided some evidence of meeting this CAEP component, the EPP did not provide assessment evidence, data, programmatic improvement aligned to data, or a clear understanding of the data sources. Similarly, the EPP did not present a Quality Assurance System that evaluated the impact of the continuous improvement changes.
AFI - R5.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that the EPP's Quality Assurance System relied on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative, and actionable measures to ensure interpretations of data were valid and consistent.	Data were not disaggregated across all programs to determine if the data were representative of candidates and completers of the programs. Data were provided for some assessments across three cycles except those identified in Standard R1.
AFI - R5.4 - The EPP provided limited evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed performance against its goals and relevant standards, tracked results over time, documented modifications and/or innovations and their effects on EPP outcomes.	The EPP provided inconsistent evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed its performance.

ADVANCED LEVEL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND STIPULATIONS

RA.1 Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
-----------------------	-----------

AFI - RA1.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence that candidates were able to demonstrate their proficiencies to understand and apply knowledge and skills appropriate to their professional fields of preparation.

The EPP provided limited evidence and data that the Advanced CAEP competencies were considered or discussed with candidates or assessed. In numerous instances, questionable alignment between the CAEP RA1.1 competencies and rubric indicators indicated a misalignment or potentially a lack of understanding of the

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
	CAEP RA1.1 competencies. Three competencies were not identified as areas of foci and data collection, analysis, and candidate monitoring/progress were not provided, discussed, or analyzed for growth or continuous improvement.

RA.2 Clinical Partnerships and Practice

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - RA2.2 - The EPP provided limited disaggregated data to demonstrate proficiencies through problem-based tasks or research.	There was limited evidence provided to suggest the EPP designed varied and developmentally appropriate clinical experiences culminating in the demonstration of their proficiencies through problem-based tasks or research that were characterized by the documentation from RA1.1.

RA.3 Candidate Quality and Selectivity

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - RA3.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence of goals and progress evidence for recruitment of high-quality candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations that aligned with their mission.	The provider presented a five-year plan for recruitment but did not provide baseline admissions data or evidence to reach goals.
AFI - RA3.3 - The EPP presented limited evidence of monitoring and supporting advanced candidate progression.	Some components of progress monitoring of candidate progression were in place, but not a clear system of support. Limited data were provided but not analyzed. Limited evidence was provided to indicate how and when interventions with problems in the progression of individual candidates were handled systematically. Communication of transition points was not clearly demonstrated.

RA.4 Satisfaction with Preparation

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
-----------------------	-----------

AFI - RA4.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence demonstrating that employers were satisfied with completers' preparation for their assigned responsibilities.

The EPP made an inconsistent case for the use of data and subsequent analysis of the assessment results including what conclusions and interpretations were made

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
	as it related to the satisfaction of employers (provided two cycles of data).
AFI - RA4.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that completers were satisfied with program preparation.	The EPP made an inconsistent case for the use of data and subsequent analysis of the assessment results including what conclusions and interpretations were made as it related to the satisfaction of completers (provided one cycle of data).

RA.5 Quality Assurance System and Continuous Improvement

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
AFI - RA5.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence of a functioning Quality Assurance System.	While the EPP provided some evidence of meeting this CAEP component, the EPP did not provide assessment evidence, data, programmatic improvement aligned to data, or a clear understanding of the data sources. Similarly, the EPP did not present a Quality Assurance System that evaluated the impact of the continuous improvement changes.
AFI - RA5.4 - The EPP provided limited evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed performance against its goals and relevant standards, tracked results over time, documented modifications and/or innovations and their effects on EPP outcomes.	The EPP provided inconsistent evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed its performance.

PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN REVIEW

Program Name	Licensure Level	Degree Level
Bachelor of Arts Degree Major History Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Arts Degree Major in Art Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Arts Degree Major in English Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate

Bachelor of Arts Degree Major in Music Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Science Degree Major in Broadfield Science Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate

Program Name	Licensure Level	Degree Level
Bachelor of Science Degree Major in Health and Human Performance - Teacher Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Science Degree Major in Mathematics Teaching Licensure Option	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Science in Education Degree Broadfield Major in Elementary Education	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Bachelor of Science in Education Degree Major in Special Education P-12	Initial-Licensure Level	Baccalaureate
Endorsement in Early Childhood, P-3	Initial-Licensure Level	Endorsement Only
Master of Education Curriculum and Instruction Teacher Licensure	Initial-Licensure Level	Master's
Master of Education Reading	Initial-Licensure Level	Endorsement Only
Master of Science in Special Education Generalist option	Initial-Licensure Level	Master's
Post Bacc Teacher Certification	Initial-Licensure Level	Post-Baccalaureate
Special Education Supervisor Endorsement	Initial-Licensure Level	Endorsement Only
Teaching Endorsement in Special Education (P-12)	Initial-Licensure Level	Endorsement Only
Master of Education School Counseling	Advanced Level	Master's

INFORMATION ABOUT ACCREDITATION STATUSES

Accreditation for seven (7) years is granted if the EPP meets all CAEP Standards and components, even if areas for improvement (AFIs) are identified in the final report of the Accreditation Council.

- **Areas for Improvement (AFIs)** indicate areas which must be improved by the time of the next accreditation visit. Progress reports on remediation of AFIs are submitted as part of the Annual Report. AFIs not remediated by a subsequent site visit may become stipulations.

Accreditation with stipulations is granted for 2 years if an EPP meets all standards but receives a stipulation on a component under any standard. Failure to submit a response to the stipulation within a two (2)-year time frame results in revocation. Failure to correct the condition leading to the stipulation within the specified two (2)-year period results in revocation or probation.

- **Stipulations** describe serious deficiencies in meeting CAEP Standards and/or components and must be brought into compliance in order to continue accreditation. All stipulations and relevant

evidence are reviewed by the Accreditation Council. Failure to correct the condition leading to the stipulation results in probation or revocation of accreditation.

Probationary Accreditation is granted for two (2) years when an EPP does not meet one (1) of the CAEP Standards. Failure to submit a response to the stipulation within a two (2)-year time frame results in revocation. Failure to correct the condition leading to the stipulation within the specified two (2)-year period results in revocation.

SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION

The scope of CAEP's work is the accreditation of educator preparation providers (EPPs) that offer bachelor's, master's, and/or doctoral degrees, post-baccalaureate or other programs leading to certification, licensure, or endorsement in the United States and/or internationally (2018).

CAEP does not accredit specific degree programs, rather EPPs must include information, data, and other evidence on the following in their submission for CAEP's review:

All licensure areas that prepare candidates to work in preschool through grade 12 settings at the initial-licensure level and advanced level lead to professional licensure, certification, or endorsement as defined by the state, country, or other governing authority under which the EPP operates and for which the state, country, or other governing authority has established program approval standards.

Depending on an EPP's submission, accreditation may be awarded at one or both of the following levels: Initial-Licensure Level and/or Advanced Level.

1. **Initial-Licensure Level** is provided at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels leading to initial-licensure, certification, or endorsement that are designed to develop P-12 teachers.
2. **Advanced Level Accreditation** is provided at the post-baccalaureate or graduate levels leading to licensure, certification, or endorsement. Advanced Level Programs are designed to develop P-12 teachers who have already completed an initial-licensure level program, currently licensed administrators, or other certified (or similar state language) school professionals for employment in P-12 schools/districts. CAEP's Advanced Level accreditation does not include any advanced level program not specific to the preparation of teachers or other school professionals for P-12 schools/districts; any advanced level non-licensure programs, including those specific to content areas (e.g., M.A., M.S., Ph.D.); or Educational leadership programs not specific to the preparation of teachers or other school professionals for P-12 schools/districts.

Information on accreditation status, terms, and any conditions provided within this directory is specific to the accreditation level(s) described above. CAEP-accredited EPPs are required to distinguish accurately between programs that are accredited and those that are not.

NOTE: Neither CAEP staff, evaluators, nor other agents of CAEP are empowered to make or modify Accreditation Council decisions. These remain the sole responsibility of the Council itself.

END OF ACTION REPORT

ITEM 14

**INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY
EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

Christy Mock-Stutz

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Report
Presenter	Christy Mock-Stutz
Position Title	OPI – Assistant Chief Program Officer
Overview	The Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Report for 2024 - 2025
Requested Decision(s)	Informational Item
Related Issue(s)	§ 20-5-504, MCA
Recommendation(s)	





Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program Report

[§ 20-5-504, MCA](#) expanded eligibility and limited the total amount of funding for the program. § 20-5-504, MCA removed the requirements for teachers qualifying for the Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program to be teaching in a critical quality educator shortage area. The additional cost to the state general fund for this program was \$269,000 more than the \$1.0 million currently appropriated in the 2025 Biennium. In the 2025 legislative session, [HB 509](#) passed and there are changes that will go into effect in FY2026.

The Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education reported an average distribution of funding between FY 2012 and FY 2017 of \$512,251 per year to an average of 178 applicants. No awards were distributed in FY 2018 and FY 2019 as the legislature did not provide any appropriation. In FY 2020 through FY 2023, the OPI distribute \$273,069, \$264,404, and \$453,596, \$420,289, respectively.

FY2024

<i>Appropriation</i>	\$ 603,000
<i>Distributed</i>	<u>\$ 247,000</u>
<i>Remaining Appropriation</i>	\$ 356,000

Applicants (80)

Approved (62)

<i>Year 1 (\$3,000 @ 23 Approved)</i>	\$ 69,000
<i>Year 2 (\$4,000 @ 17 Approved w/Adj_Loan Bal Less)</i>	\$ 68,000
<i>Year 3 (\$5,000 @ 22 Approved)</i>	\$ 110,000
<i>Year 4 (\$5,000 @ 5 - Paid By School District - \$25,000)</i>	

Denied (13)

FY2025

<i>Appropriation</i>	\$ 500,000
<i>Distributed</i>	<u>\$ 194,260</u>
<i>Remaining Appropriation</i>	\$ 305,740

Applicants (120)

Approved (68)

<i>Year 1 (\$3,000 @ 24 Approved)</i>	\$ 72,000
<i>Year 2 (\$4,000 @ 12 Approved)</i>	\$ 48,000
<i>Year 3 (\$5,000 @ 15 Approved w/Adj_Loan Bal Less)</i>	\$ 74,260
<i>Year 4 (\$5,000 @ 17 - Paid By School District - \$25,000)</i>	

Denied (52)

ITEM 15

**INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION ON
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57 CLASS 9 SPECIAL
EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE**

**Patrick Cates
Dr. Julie Murgel**

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Presentation on Initial Review and Work Session on Title 10, Chapter 57, Class 9 Special Education Technician License. Action Items Pertaining to ARM 10.57, Educator Licensure for the Special Education Technician Certificate
Presenter(s)	Patrick Cates Julie Murgel
Position Title	Senior Manager of Safety and Student Supports, Office of Public Instruction Chief Program Officer, Office of Public Instruction
Overview	This agenda item is presented to the BPE for action on approval of the rulemaking timeline pertaining to ARM Title 10, Chapter 57, Educator Licensure and to authorize filing of the notice, including public hearing date, with the secretary of state for publication in the Montana administrative register.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approve the timeline Approve the notice of public hearing and authorization to file the notice with SOS in MAR.





Special Education Technician ARM Proposal

ARM 10.57.439 Class 9 Special Education Technician License

- (1) A Class 9 special education technician license shall be valid for a term of five years.
- (2) To obtain a Class 9 special education technician license an applicant must submit verification of all of the following:
 - (a) hold a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma;
 - (b) completion of the approved special education technician online modules as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
 - (c) proof of 1,000 hours of documented special education work, or relevant work experience, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
 - (d) verified completion of four institutionally accredited college or university introductory courses in education, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and;
 - (e) verified completion of the online course "An Introduction to Indian Education for All in Montana."
- (3) A Class 9 special education technician license is renewable pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.57.215 with 30 professional development units.
- (4) A lapsed Class 9 special education technician license may be reinstated by earning 30 professional development units as defined in ARM 10.57.215(4) during the five-year period preceding the date of application for the new license.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – (Items 16-18)**

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 16

**ACTION ON THE TRANSFORMATIONAL
LEARNING PHASE II GRANTS**

Krystal Smith

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 2026

Presentation	Transformational Learning Phase II Applications
Presenter	Krystal Smith
Position Title	Senior Manager of Opportunities and Innovative Learning - OPI
Overview	Per HB 573 (2025), the Transformational Learning grant has moved into Phase II. Districts receiving funding in Phase I were encouraged to apply for Phase II funding to continue district-wide implementation of proficiency-based learning systems. Review the process for selecting the 5 districts recommended for Phase II.
Requested Decision(s)	Action item to approve the following Phase II cohort: Kalispell, Livingston, Lockwood, Missoula, Troy.
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that the Board approves the 5 districts recommended by the State Superintendent to continue Phase II work as outlined in the Transformational Learning grant .



Transformational Learning Phase II Report

January 2026



Process Timeline

01

Correspondence

Outreach to all eligible districts with application packet, webinars, 1-on-1 support

02

Application Window

September 1 - October 31, 2025

03

Committee Development

Diverse team with educators, legislative perspective, PBL knowledge

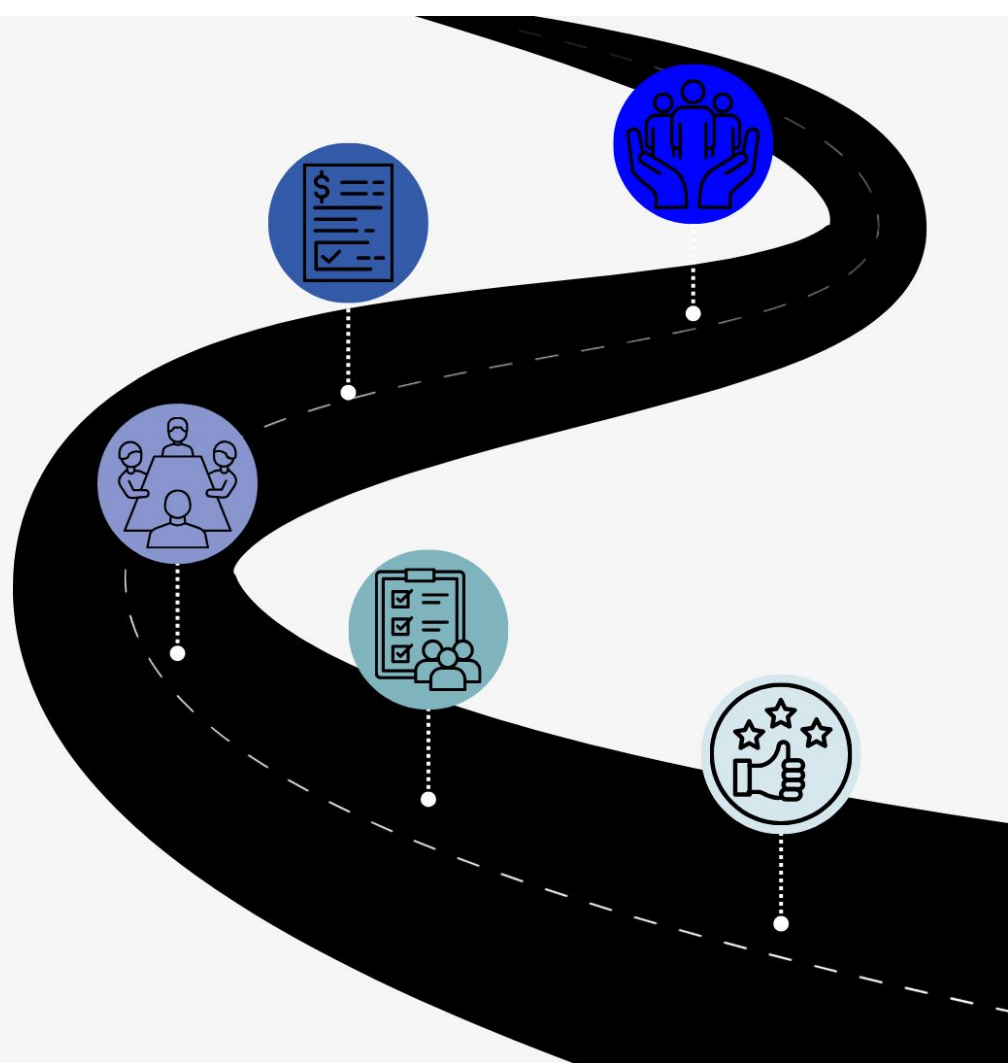
04

Evaluations

Evaluated asynchronously then met as a team to come to a consensus on recommendations

05

Superintendent Recommendations



Evaluation Committee

Heather Jarrett - Reed Point School District, superintendent

Hailey Hancock - Montana State University, assistant teaching professor

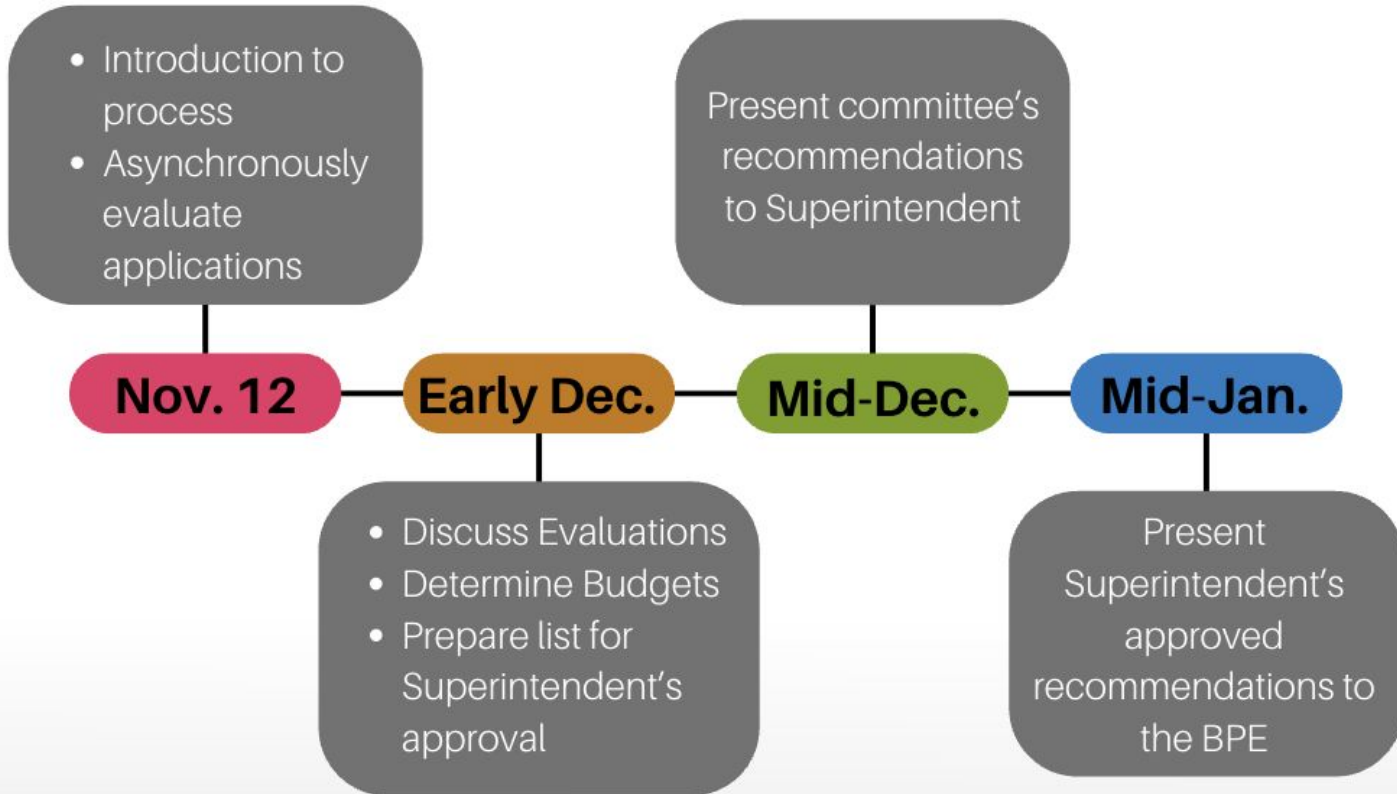
Meg Parry - Learner-center Collaborative, director of strategic partners

Katie Bloodgood - MT Office of Public Instruction, deputy chief of staff & policy director

Krystal Smith - MT Office of Public Instruction, transformational learning grant manager

*Experience with transformational, personalized, and/or proficiency-based learning

Team Timeline



Materials & Process

- Applications Folder
- [Rubric](#)
- Completed Rubrics Folder
- Compiled Scores Document
- Joint Discussion of Scores and Applications
- Consensus on 5 Districts
- Superintendent Approval
- Notification and Acceptance of Districts with Award Amount

Evaluation Synopsis

Part 1: provide evidence of the progress made by the applying district in implementing transformational and proficiency-based learning as the terms are defined in MCA 20-7-1601

Part 2: provide a detailed description of how the district plans to continue its progress toward district-wide transformational and proficiency-based learning, including cost estimates

Part 3: commit to participate in collaborative activities organized by the superintendent of public instruction for grantees and report to EIC and EIBC on progress, guidance, and recommendations for next steps.

Recommended Districts for Board Approval

1. Kalispell Public Schools: \$709,221.94
2. Livingston Public Schools: \$500,000.00
3. Lockwood Public School: \$322,500.00
4. Missoula County Public Schools: \$697,509.06
5. Troy Public Schools: \$78,000.00

Highlights of Recommended Districts

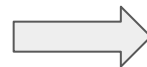
PHASE I

PHASE II

Student agency, learning flexibilities, progression tracking, staff PD, site visits, commitment to PCBL

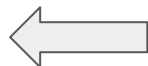


Kalispell

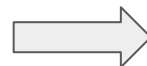


MT inquiry labs, site visits, PBCE bootcamp, consultant alignment, systems-level integration, teacher-lead launch teams

MTSS growth, whole-student approach, research and design partners, project-based learning

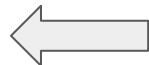


Livingston



MTSS instructor, expand inquiry-based learning, develop systemized applied-learning pathways, credit recognition

Personalized learning pathways, MTSS interventions, proficiency-based HS, staff development, stakeholder engagement

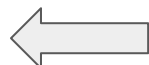


Lockwood



Data-informed differentiation, post-secondary readiness, student exhibitions, district-wide PLCs, proficiency scales, PBL

Graduate profile, language foundations, learner-centered instructional model, proficiency through Arts

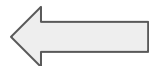


Missoula



Intradistrict alignment for Graduate Profile, learner-centered experiences, whole-learner outcomes, Future-ready pathways

Standards-based reporting, STEM labs, learner-centered opportunities, stakeholder engagement, professionals development



Troy



Work-based learning, dual enrollment, report/asynchronous learning, project-based learning

Next Steps

- Official notification to districts and revision of budgets
- Needs assessment with districts
- RFP for technical assistance support
- Collaborative schedule for 2026 meetings
- Distribution of funds by July 15, 2026

**Request to approve the State Superintendent's recommendation
for Phase II Transformational Learning grantees**

ITEM 17

ACTION ON MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANTS

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Qualify Applications**
- **Annual Reports**

Krystal Smith

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 2026

Presentation	Qualify FY27 New Montana Advanced Opportunities (MTAO) Grant Applications
Presenter	Krystal Smith
Position Title	Senior Manager of Opportunities and Innovative Learning - OPI
Overview	The purpose of this report is to review and qualify the newest applicants for the MTAO grant. The application window opened December, 1, 2025 and closes January 12, 2026. Due to STARS Act, there is no longer a cap on yearly funding for this grant.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item: Approval of the list of received applications, that are listed in order of receipt.
Related Issue(s)	LINK to received applications. The window closes at 5pm on Monday, January 12, 2026.
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that the Board approves the list of received and completed FY27 MTAO grant applications.



ITEM 18

**INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF THE
CREATION OF THE SEAL OF CIVICS
LITERACY**

**Tyler Capece
Chris Averill**

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15- 16, 2026

Presentation	Information and Review of the Creation of the Seal of Civics Literacy
Presenter	Tyler Capece Chris Averill
Position Title	Assistant Deputy Superintendent, OPI MT 250 th Commission Chair
Overview	This presentation provides information to the Board of Public Education (BPE) regarding the creation of a Seal of Civics Literacy based on the Superintendent of Public Instruction's proposal.
Requested Decision(s)	Information Item (Thursday, January 15 th) Action Item (Friday, January 16 th)
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approval of the creation of the Seal of Civics Literacy.



Montana
Office Of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov



Superintendent's Proposal for Adoption of Seal of Civics Literacy

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America. Through collaboration between the Office of Public Instruction, 250th Commission, Historical Society & Board of Public Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction intends to honor this anniversary with the establishment of a Seal of Civics Literacy. A number of states already have a Seal of Civics Literacy, and this plan incorporates elements from those state models. This plan recognizes the growing desire for robust civics education in our education system, and to celebrate the achievement on part of the students.

This proposal also helps the OPI to better fulfill [MCA 20-7-119](#), encouraging civic engagement for students and providing opportunities for student achievement and acknowledgement.

Criteria 1

A student must complete the US Citizenship & Immigration Services Naturalization exam with a score of 80% or higher.

Criteria 2

A student must successfully complete the required .5 credits of Civics courses during high school as approved by the Board of Public Education.

Criteria 3

A student may choose between the following community service requirements:

- 40 hours of community service, or
- 20 hours of community service & passing the Montana Challenge test created by the Historical Society.

Criteria 4

A student must submit their application to the Board of Public Education before the end of their final year of high school with evidence of all criteria.





Community Service Requirements:

A student interested in applying for the Seal of Civic Literacy must display dedication to their local and state community by completing required community service hours. Students are required to complete 40 hours of community service OR 20 hours of community service and successful completion of the Montana Challenge test created by the Montana Historical Society and the Sons and Daughters of Montana Pioneers. The Montana Challenge was created with a Study Guide to help ensure that all test takers are prepared with the same level of knowledge; it is anticipated that some of the hours that would have otherwise gone to community service projects will be utilized to prepare for taking the Challenge.

The OPI & the 250th Commission will create a flyer for students and parents outlining the requirements.

The following are examples that will be accepted:

Category	Examples
Education & Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer tutoring hours• Reading to children at a local library• Coaching teams for local sports programs
Environment & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cleaning a local community space• Participating in service based organizations• Volunteering at a local animal shelter
Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteering at local human services organizations (food bank, soup kitchen, shelter, etc.)• Volunteering with children/elderly
Student Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serving in a leadership position (school leadership, CTSO leader, FFA, etc.)• Serving as a youth representative on a local/statewide board



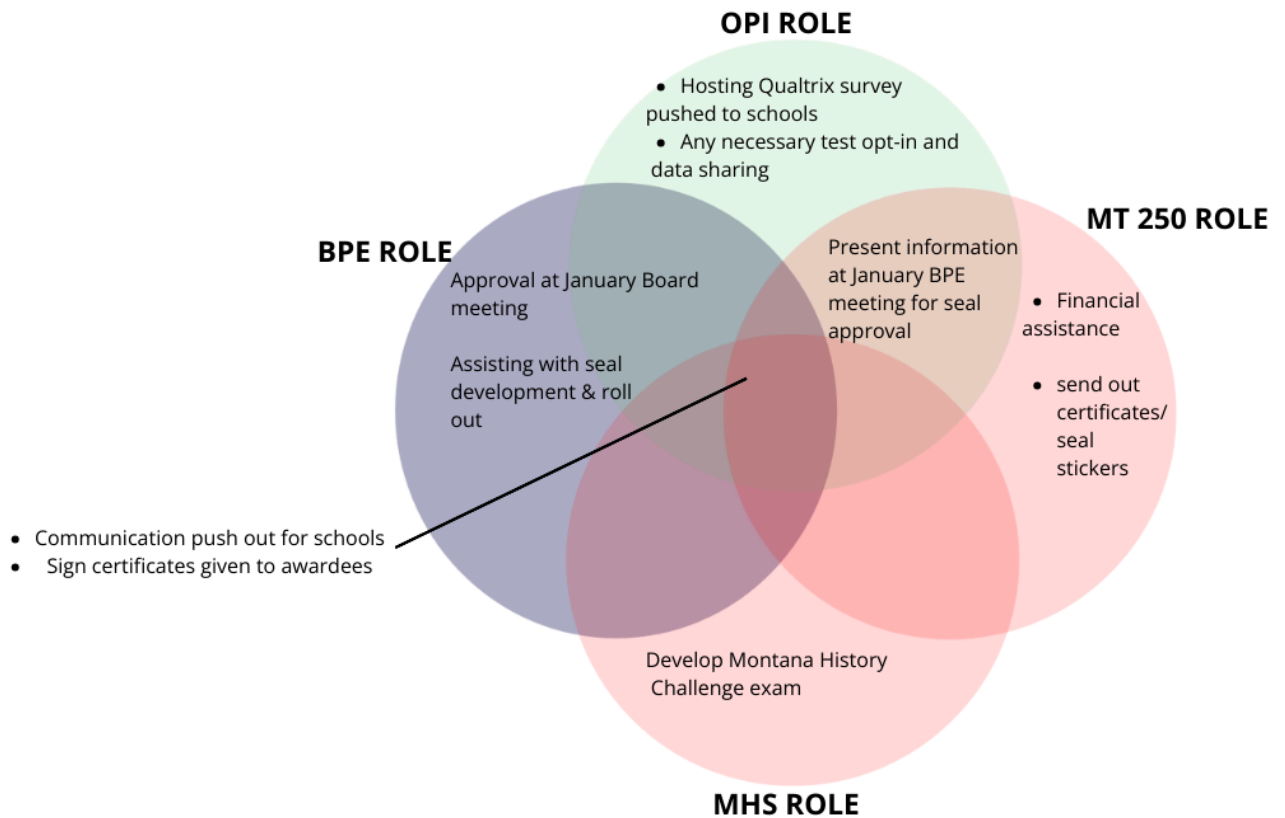
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Planning community service events
Civic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Helping at a polling station on election day

Proposed Timeline (Upon Approval from Board of Public Education)

- January 2026: OPI & MT 250th Commission present to Board of Public Education. (Day 1: Information Item, Day 2: Action Item)
- January- May 2026: Office of Public Instruction, MT 250th Commission, Board of Public Education & Montana Historical Society collaborate on marketing and outreach to schools.
 - At this time teachers will be administering USCIS exams and collecting scores, students will be completing any necessary community service and/or completing the Montana Challenge test.
- May 1st, 2026: All applications and corresponding documents are due.
- May- June 2026: Application materials will be reviewed, Seals & certificates will be sent to schools for awarded students.
- After June 2026: In accordance with MCA 20-7-119, the Superintendent of Public Instruction will annually publish a list of high schools in the state who will be considered “all-star schools” based on engagement of the administration of the USCIS Naturalization test.



Outline of Roles





***SAMPLE* Student Application for the Montana Seal of Civic Literacy**

Directions to Applicants:

1. Complete all sections of this application. Type or print all information legibly.
2. Submit application with corresponding documentation no later than May 1st.

Name of Student: _____ Today's Date: _____

Current Grade Level: _____ Expected Year of Graduation: _____

Name of School: _____

Name of School Official: _____ Position: _____

School Address: _____

Applicant Requirement Check-list:

- ☐ Provide documentation of a passing score of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Exam with a score of 80% or better (School Officials will have documentation).
- ☐ Provide documentation of a passing score of the required .5 credits of Civics.
- ☐ Fill out the following documentation outlining community service requirements:
 - ☐ 40 hours of community service
 - ☐ 20 hours of community service & a passing score on the Montana Challenge test



By signing below, I indicate I have provided accurate information and understand that school officials will verify the information before the Seal of Civic Literacy is awarded.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

School Official Signature: _____ Date: _____

Students with complete applications and corresponding documents will receive a certificate and the Seal to their school address. Please submit all application materials by May 1st.





Community Service Hours Log

[illegible]

❖ **MSDB LIAISON – (Item 19)**

Lisa Schmidt

ITEM 19

MSDB REPORT

Paul Furthmyre

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Action on Out of State Travel Requests**
 - **Action on Personnel Items**
 - **Action on 2nd Reading Policy 8210**

**Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind
Board of Public Education Report
January 2026**

Agenda Action Items:

1. [Personnel Action Report](#)
 - 2 Hires
 - 1 Resignations
2. [Flying Hooves Theatre Festival - Riverside, CA](#)
3. [Academic Bowl Regional Competition - Riverside, CA](#)
4. [Final Reading - Policy 8210: Procurement for Food Service](#)

Attached Documents:

- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes](#)
- [Interim Education Budget Committee: Quarter 1 Report](#)
- [Interim Education Budget Committee: Organizational Chart](#)
- [Interim Education Budget Committee: Educational Interpreter Chart](#)
- 26-27 Calendar 1st Reading
 - [Calendar A](#)
 - [Calendar B](#)
 - [Calendar Option Differences](#)
 - [Calendar Option Aggregate Hours](#)
 - [GFPS Calendar](#)
- [Cognia Accreditation Engagement Review Report](#)
- [HB 5 Project: Parking Lot Phase II Diagram](#)
- [December Payroll Reports](#)
- [December Complete Financial and Expense Reports](#)
- [Cottage November/December 2025 Newsletter](#)
- [Current Enrollment](#) + 5 LEAP Students
- [December Inquiry Dashboard](#)
- Journey of a Learner Presentations
 - [I Can Statements / Learning Targets](#)
 - [Importance of Brain Science](#)
- [Winter Program Instrumental Group - 1st Time For Everything!](#)
- [November Outreach Newsletter](#)

**MSDB Personnel Action for BPE Meeting
January Meeting 2026**

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

Hire

Thomas Tarnowski – Custodian 1
Adam Brickel – Para Educator

Resignation

Sabrina Lahaderne – Scheduling Secretary

Retirement

Probationary Layoff

Nonrenewal of Nontenure Teacher

Positions currently advertised

Residential Advisor I
Scheduling Secretary

Positions to be advertised

3 - Residential Advisor 1
2 - Residential Advisor 2
1 - Teacher of the Visually Impaired Consultant
1 - Teacher of the Visually Impaired
1 - Teacher of the Deaf Hard / Hearing
2 - Teacher of the Deaf Outreach Consultant
1 - Director of Student Services

Positions on hold as a result of bargaining

1 - School Psychologist

Positions Temporarily Reassigned

Cottage Counselor to Assistant Student Services Director
Residential Advisor 2 to Scheduling Secretary
Food Prep to PT Business Office Secretary

Positions Permanently Reassigned

Teacher of the Deaf to Workplace and Life Skills Teacher

STATE OF MONTANA

REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

1) Agency Number/Name		2) Division	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Jessteene Clifford, Mary Thompson, Jake Metzenroth		

5) Justification

Attending the 5th annual National Deaf High School Theater Festival in Riverside California. This is an opportunity for the students to interact with and learn from professional Deaf actors as well as other Deaf high school students who are interested in theater and acting.

6) Itinerary

Destination: Riverside School for the Deaf

Travel Dates: 3/4 to 3/8 (itinerary not confirmed)

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 3000 Meals \$ 500 Lodging \$ 0 Other \$ 500

Total estimated cost \$ 4000

Provide details to support estimated costs:

(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

Transportation: 8 flights to Riverside California, Meals: Breakfast/Lunch for 2 travel days, Other: tickets to a fun activity in Riverside, possible Uber expenses from airport to CSD/to fun activity

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Jessteene Clifford</i>	Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing	11/7/25

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.

REVISED 11/17

STATE OF MONTANA

REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

1) Agency Number/Name MSDB	2) Division
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Jennifer Wasson 007805, Tearra Donovan 039635

5) Justification

Travel to Riverside, CA for the annual Academic Bowl Regional competition at the California School for the Deaf-Riverside. Travel for 4 students and 2 coaches.

6) Itinerary

Destination: Los Angeles and Riverside, CA

Travel Dates: February 5-9, 2026

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 3940 Meals \$ 1000 Lodging \$ 600 Other \$ 1000

Total estimated cost \$ 6540

Provide details to support estimated costs:

(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

6 round trip airfare tickets, Hotel for 1 night, parking fees, 6 tickets to Universal

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Jennifer Wasson</i>	Academic Bowl Head Coach	12/4/25

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.

REVISED 11/17

Policy 8210: Procurement for Food Service

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 01/29/2025 | Last Reviewed Date: 01/29/2025

Procurement Policy for School Food Purchases and Use of Federal Funds

The School will adhere to the following requirements for any procurement related to food service:

Purchase Procedures & Thresholds:

Definition/Instructions

Micro-Purchase: Micro-purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive price or rate quotations if the non-Federal entity considers the price to be reasonable. To the maximum extent practicable, the non-Federal entity should distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers. The school is responsible for determining and documenting an appropriate micro-purchase threshold based on internal controls, an evaluation of risk, and its documented procurement procedures. Schools may use the Federal micro-purchase threshold of up to \$10,000 or may establish a higher threshold, up to \$50,000 if the school self-certifies (CFR 200.320 (a)(1)(iv)).

- The School's Micro Purchase Threshold is: \$10,000.

Definition/Instructions

Small Purchase: Informal purchase method for open competitive purchases. For purchases higher than the micro-purchase threshold (\$10,000 or SFA's higher amount if self-certified) but does not exceed the simplified acquisition threshold (\$80,000).

- If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources as determined appropriate by the non-Federal entity. Documentation of the procurement process (vendor name, contact method, name of person providing price quote, price quoted, date price quote obtained, duration of price quote).
- Small Purchases greater than \$10,000 up to \$80,000.
 - \$80,000 is the small purchase threshold for the state of Montana per Section 20-9-204, MCA.
 - Small purchases will be handled in a fair and equitable manner consistent with district policy on purchasing.
 - The School will obtain two or more quotes from qualified sources.
 - The School may enter into a cooperative purchasing contract for procurement of supplies with one or more districts or a Cooperative Services Program. This allows the School to participate in a cooperative purchasing group to purchases supplies through the group without bidding if the cooperative purchasing group has a publicly available master list of items available with pricing included and provides an opportunity at least twice yearly for any vendor, including a Montana vendor, to compete, based on a lowest responsible bidder standard.

Definition/Instructions

Formal Purchase: If the aggregate amount exceeds eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000), the contract must be awarded through a formal bid process and a call for bids or request for proposals shall be published according to 20-9-204, MCA. No contract shall be divided for the purpose of avoiding the formal procurement process.

- Formal Purchases greater than \$80,000:
 - If the aggregate amount exceeds eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000), the contract must be awarded through a formal bid process and a call for bids or request for proposals shall be published according to 20-9-204, MCA. No contract shall be divided for the purpose of avoiding the formal procurement process.
 - The School may enter into a cooperative purchasing contract for procurement of supplies with one or more districts or a Cooperative Services Program. This allows the School to participate in a cooperative purchasing group to purchases supplies through the group without bidding if the cooperative purchasing group has a publicly available master list of items available with pricing included and provides an opportunity at least twice yearly for any vendor, including a Montana vendor, to compete, based on a lowest responsible bidder standard.

Buy American:

The School will adhere to "Buy American" for the food service program 7 CFR 210.21(d). Therefore, Food Service is required to purchase, to the maximum extent possible, domestic products for use in meals served in our Child Nutrition Program. There are two limited exceptions when non-domestic foods may be purchased. These exceptions are determined by the SFA:

- The food or food product is not produced or manufactured in the United States in sufficient and reasonably available quantities of a satisfactory quality; or
- Competitive bids reveal the cost of a United States food or food product is significantly higher than the nondomestic product--Food preferences can only be met with foreign goods.
- SFA must document exceptions and keep records.

Contracting with small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms. [2 CFR 200.321(a)]:

- The non-Federal entity must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

Standards of Conduct for School Employees [2 CFR 200.318(c)(1)]:

- The School maintains the following code of conduct for any employees engaged in award and administration of contracts supported by Federal Funds:
 - No School employee will engage in any procurement when there is a conflict of interest, real or perceived, and School employees cannot solicit or accept any gratuities, favors or anything of monetary value from prospective vendors. This shall not preclude School personnel from serving on boards or participating in organizations that support the School's need to obtain quality services and supplies.
 - No School employee shall participate in the selection, award or administration of a contract when any of the following persons have a financial interest in the firm selected for award:
 - The employee
 - Any member of his/her immediate family
 - People with whom there is an intimate personal relationship
 - An organization which employs or is about to employ any of the above
 - The School would like all employees to behave with the utmost integrity and never be self-serving, be fair in all aspects of the procurement process, be alert to conflicts of interest, and avoid any compromising situations.
 - Employees found to be in violation of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
-

MSDB / BOPE Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Date: 12/19/2025

Attendees:

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide BOPE Information about all MSDB Programs
- Seek guidance from the BOPE

Future Agenda Items:

Program	Agenda Items	Items Needing Follow-Up
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personnel Action Plan • Flying Hooves Competition - Riverside, CA • Academic Bowl Competition - Riverside, CA • Policy Final Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 8210: Procurement for Food Service • Interim Education Budget Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Quarter 1 Report ◦ Organizational Chart ◦ Educational Interpreter Report • Educational Interpreters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ 9 Individuals SE 16 (Interpreter) ◦ Not Including MSDB ◦ MSDB has 8 Individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 7 Meeting the Standard • State Government Centralization and MSDB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Human Resources • Outreach Database Frustrations • 25-26 Staffing Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Extra Para from Cottage Staffing • 26-27 Staffing Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Human Resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Items Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Personnel Action ◦ Out of State Travel Requests ◦ Policy 8210 Final Reading

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education Administrator ○ Outreach Consultant ● 26-27 Calendar 1st Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calendar A ○ Calendar B ○ Calendar Option Differences ○ Calendar Option Minutes ○ GFPS Calendar ● Cognia Accreditation Update ● 2025 HB 5 Project Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Parking Lot ○ Vocational Building ○ HVAC System ● Foundation Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cottage Refresh Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Announced 60% Raised ■ \$240,000 ○ MSDB Museum 	
Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PPE 12-12-25 Expenses Only ● PPE 12-12-25 Financial Report ● PPE 12-12-25 Payroll Only ● PPE 12-12-25 Payroll Forecast ● Retirement Payouts Included in Payroll Forecast 	
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● November-December Cottage Newsletter ● Travel Update ● UFC Union LMC Developed ● Winter Formal Dinner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Shep Story ASL 	
Education: School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Current Enrollment ● December Inquiry Report ● Distance Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Braille - 4 students (460 minutes/Nov) 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ASL - 1 student started; 1 student starting in Jan; 2 potential students ● Journey of Learner Staff Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I Can Statements ○ Importance of Brain Science ● MT Reads Grant - Stephanie Lester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nov. 18-19 ● Montana Youth Transition Conference - Butte - 3 students attended ● Winter Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Whole Group ○ Instrumental Group - Mistletoes 	
Education: Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outreach Changes and Parent Concerns ● Regional Activities/Events ● November newsletter shared with schools ● MT DeafBlind Census ● APH Phase 1 	

Board of Public Ed Meeting

BOPE Meeting - Summary- December 19, 2025

Those in attendance - Paul Furthmyre, Tim Tharp, Lisa Schmidt, Donna Schmidt, McCall Flynn, Jim Kelly, Julie-Dee Alt, Miranda Briggs, Julie Maxwell

Note Taker – Paula Mix

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide BOPE information about all MSDB Programs
- Seeking guidance from the BOPE

- **Action Items Needed**
 - Personnel Action
 - Out of State Travel Requests
 - Policy 8210

Administration - Paul Furthmyre

- Paul reported the school hiring (1) custodian and (1) para educator. Residential advisor positions will be advertised, possibly requiring two hires due to potential student increases. Noting no recent resignations or retirements. Asking the board to approve the Personal Action
- Two out-of-state student travel requests, funded by the MSDB Foundation, for competitions in Riverside, California, with hopes for further advancement to nationals in D.C. Asking for the board to approve.
- Final reading on Policy 8210 Procurement for Food Service - Asking for the board approval on this policy
- Paul reported on the Interim Education Budget Committee meeting he attended; Our utilization hours were lower than expected. Organizational chart update, now better reflects position numbers, programs, funding sources, and open positions. Payroll spending is lower than expected due to open positions and timing. Retirement payouts included in forecasts. Planning for 2026-27 budget includes possible HR position, educational admin, and outreach consultant.
- The educational interpreter program report showed progress in training and certification but raised concerns about sustaining participation levels and funding beyond the current biennium.
- Discussion of potential centralized state agency services ongoing; impact unclear. A potential state initiative to centralize procurement, human resources, and IT services was discussed, though details remain unclear; the agency is considering requesting a dedicated human resources position due to current gaps in HR capacity.
- Outreach database frustrations were noted, with efforts underway to improve data collection and reporting, possibly by integrating with state systems.
- COGNIA Accreditation reports are pending,
- New 2026-2027 School calendar - Two options under review to align with Great Falls Public Schools and accommodate residential students. Staff input will be presented for

approval at the next meeting

- HB 5 Project updates - include a planned parking lot expansion and drainage improvements set for spring, HVAC upgrades, and ongoing discussions about the future of the vocational building. A museum project is underway to showcase artifacts related to deaf and visually impaired history, and a cottage refresh project has raised about 60% of needed funds.

Business Office - Donna Schmidt

- Budget reports showed spending is slightly behind projections, with personal services under budget partly due to open positions and delays in budget change documentation; projections include anticipated retirement payouts.

Residential - Jim Kelly

- Cottage Newsletter Nov-Dec. Provides updates on the various extracurricular activities such as 4H, archery, and sports participation at Great Falls High School.
- Relations between union and management regarding cottage staff have improved.

Education: School - Julie-Dee

- Julie-Dee shared that enrollment remains stable with some new referrals and applications. Braille and ASL instruction continue, and staff professional development includes training on the "Journey of a Learner" framework and brain science to enhance teaching. The Montana Reads grant supports ongoing reading instruction training, and several students participated in the Montana Youth Transition Conference, representing themselves and the school.
- The winter program featured instrumental music performances, a new program supported by the MSDB Foundation.

Education: Outreach - Miranda Briggs

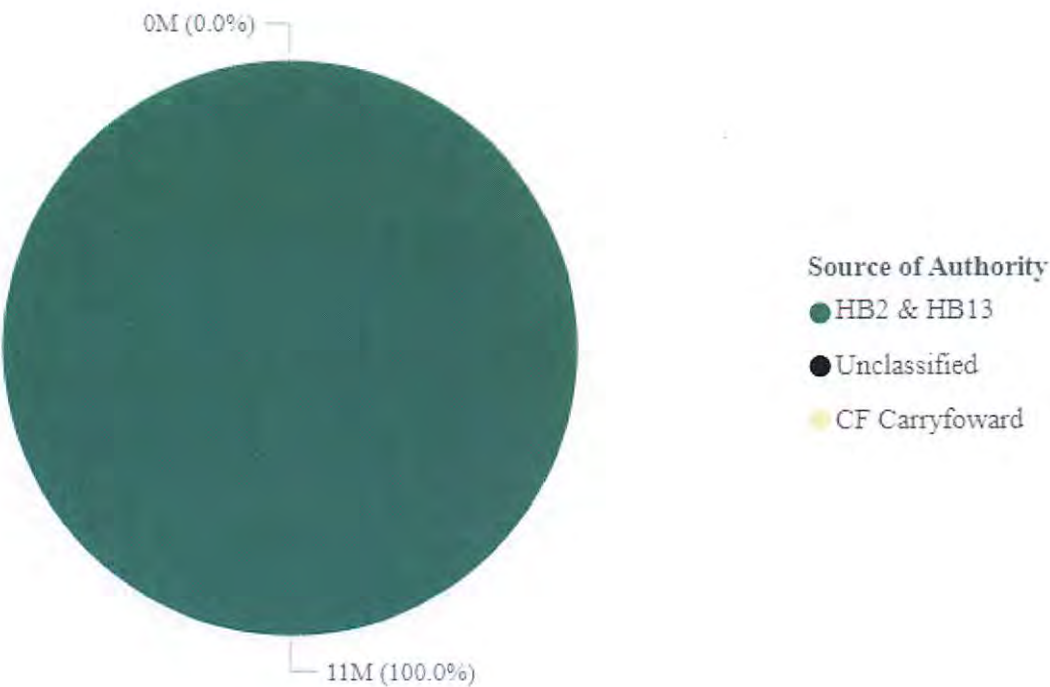
- Miranda reported Outreach services have shifted focus toward working primarily within schools rather than directly with families, which has caused some parental concerns.
- Regional outreach events have been successful, and efforts continue to address issues with the outreach database system.
- Monitoring of federal APH funding reflects some uncertainty moving forward

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

TOTAL APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The total appropriation authority for the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind is shown in the pie chart below. HB 2 and HB 13 provide nearly 100.0% of the total authority for this agency. All types of appropriation authority for this agency are described below, including total budget and the percent expended by source of authority.

Total Modified Budget by Source of Authority



Source of Authority	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
HB2 & HB13	10,915,263	4,060,503	37.2%
CF Carryforward	1,061		
Unclassified	2,150		
Total	10,918,474	4,060,503	37.2%

Carryforward Authority

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind has carryforward authority of approximately \$1,000, which is less than 0.1% of the total appropriation authority. The agency has not expended any carryforward authority as of November 30, 2025, but plans to use the authority on technology projects.

Unclassified

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind has unclassified appropriation authority of approximately \$2,200 because of lower workers' compensation premiums. Per 39-71-403(1)(b)(iv), MCA, when workers' compensation premiums are lower than the previous year, state agencies shall reduce personal services appropriations by the amount of the premium reduction. The reductions are included in the accounting system as unclassified authority that will not be spent by the agency.

HB 2 BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

The following chart shows the HB 2 budget as passed by the legislature, including the pay plan, and the HB 2 modified budget from July 1, 2025 through November 30, 2025. Net modifications to the budget include operating plan changes from one expenditure account to another, program transfers, reorganizations, and agency transfers of authority. The **positive modifications** and **negative modifications** are shown by program, expenditure account, and fund type.

Legislative Budget Compared to Modified Budget - HB 2 Only

Agency Name	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School for the Deaf & Blind	10,917,413	10,915,263	-2,150
Total	10,917,413	10,915,263	-2,150

Expenditure Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
61000 Personal Services	9,664,540	9,662,390	-2,150
62000 Operating Expenses	1,190,258	1,190,258	
68000 Transfers-out	1,000	1,000	
69000 Debt Service	61,615	61,615	
Total	10,917,413	10,915,263	-2,150

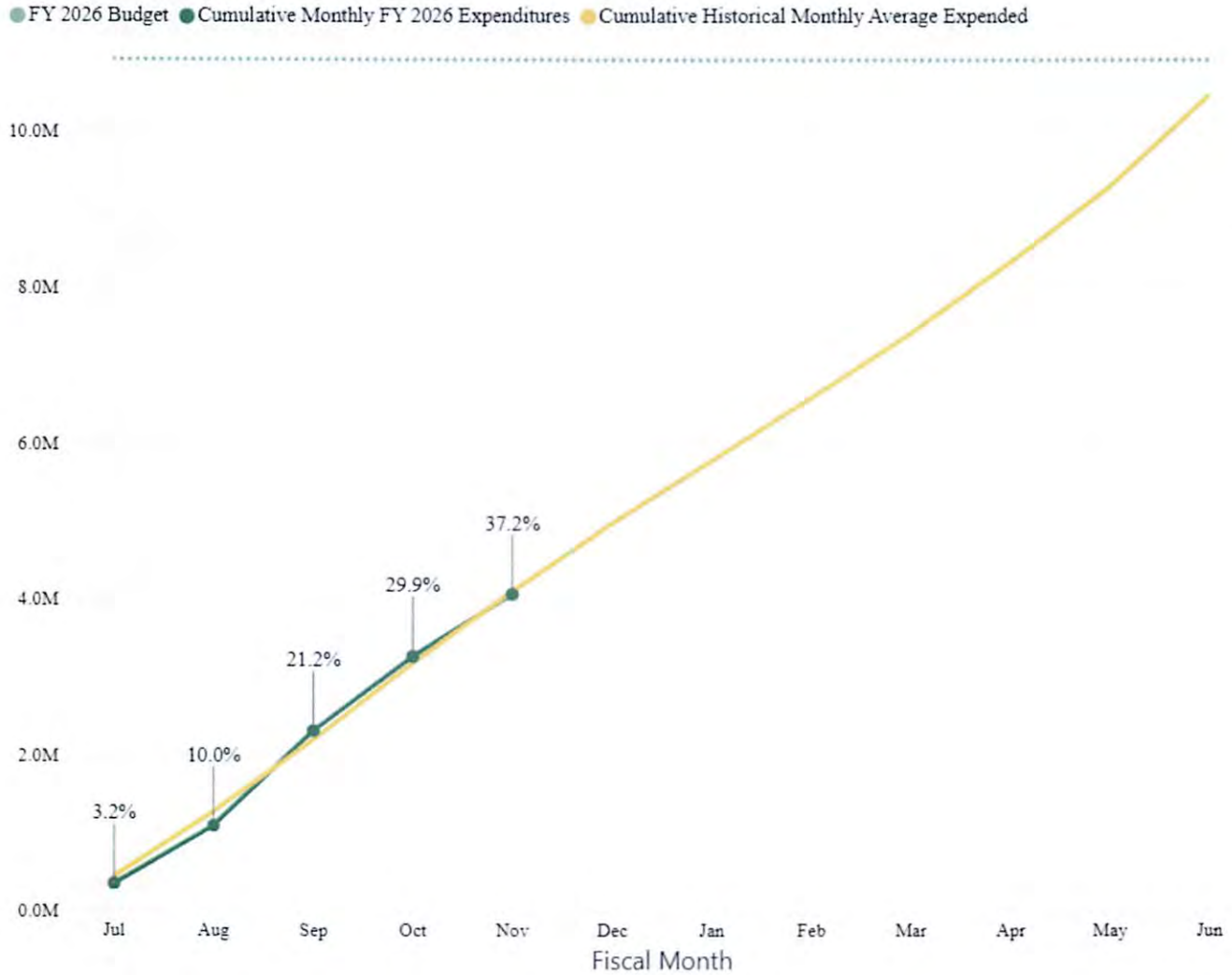
Fund Type	HB 2 Budget	Modified Budget	Net Modifications
01 General	10,404,869	10,402,736	-2,133
02 State Other Spec Rev	305,735	305,735	
03 Fed Other Spec Rev	206,809	206,792	-17
Total	10,917,413	10,915,263	-2,150

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind had no significant HB 2 budget modifications between July 1, 2025 and November 30, 2025. Net modifications to the budget amount to an approximate \$2,200 reduction due to lower workers' compensation premiums.

HB 2 APPROPRIATION AUTHORITY

The following chart shows the appropriated budget for the agency compared to expenditures through November 30, 2025.

Monthly Expenditures Compared to Historical Average



Program Name	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
- 01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM	877,829	406,683	46.3%
- 02 GENERAL SERVICES	726,374	298,080	41.0%
- 03 STUDENT SERVICES	2,290,049	779,684	34.0%
- 04 EDUCATION	7,021,011	2,576,057	36.7%
Total	10,915,263	4,060,503	37.2%

Expenditure Type	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
- Personal Services	9,662,390	3,488,068	36.1%
- Operating Expenses	1,190,258	572,435	48.1%
- Transfers-out	1,000		
- Debt Service	61,615		
Total	10,915,263	4,060,503	37.2%

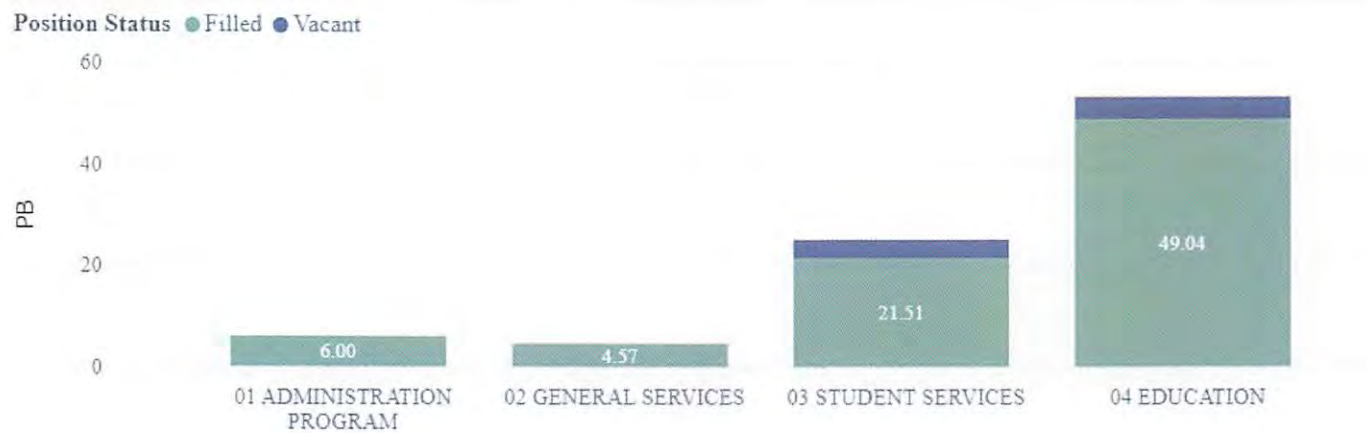
Fund Type	Modified Budget	Expended Budget	% Expended
- 01 General	10,402,736	4,057,432	39.0%
- 02 State/Other Spec Rev	305,735		
- 03 Fed/Other Spec Rev	206,792	3,071	1.5%
Total	10,915,263	4,060,503	37.2%

The Montana School for the Deaf and Blind expended 37.2% of its approximately \$10.9 million HB 2 modified budget through November 30, 2025. Overall, this is in line with the 5-year Olympic average of 37.5%.

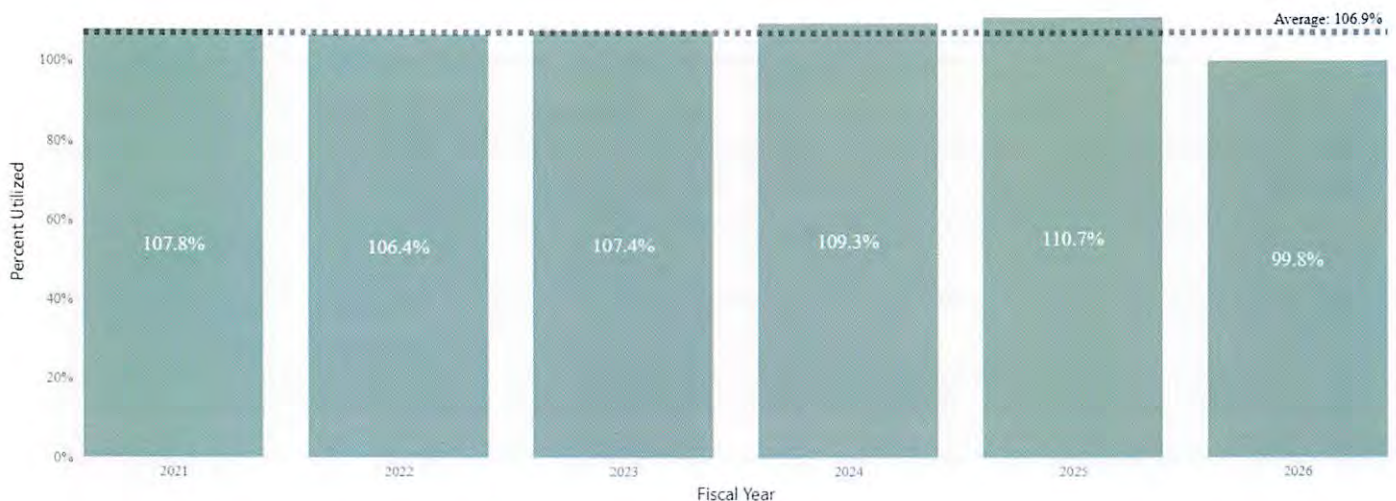
Higher spending in the administration program budget and in operating expenses is driven by expenditures for the State Information Technology Services Division (SITSD) program. As of November 30, 2025, 62.0% of the agency's approximately \$258,000 SITSD authority has been spent. These expenses are normally seen at this point in the fiscal year, as the agency reports that annual software enterprise bills arrive in July, thus driving the agency's operating expenses in the administration program up early in the fiscal year.

Personal Services

Appropriations for personal services in the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind total approximately \$9.7 million and are 36.1% expended through November 30, 2025. The following chart shows the filled and vacant positions budgeted (PB) within the agency as of November 1, 2025. At this point in time, the department had 89.28 HB 2 PB and 90.9% of these positions were filled.



The chart below shows the hourly utilization percentage for the agency for each fiscal year when compared to the available hours. Overall, the department has utilized 99.8% of the hours budgeted as of November 1, 2025, which is lower than its historical average of 106.9%. Historically, the agency's actual hourly utilization has surpassed its budgeted hourly utilization because positions in the education program are often listed as less than 1.00 PB (teachers' positions are generally budgeted as 0.73 PB) to align with the timing of the school year; however, these positions are paid throughout the fiscal year. This accounting mismatch between budgeted PB levels and actual payout has led to the hourly utilization rate consistently exceeding 100.0%. The reduction in hourly utilization from FY 2025 to FY 2026 appears to be driven by reduced hourly utilization in the administration, general services, and education programs; however, the hourly utilization percentage in the education program still exceeds 100.0% of hours budgeted.



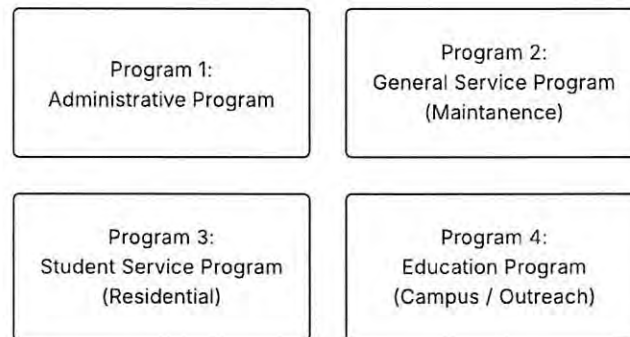
The chart below shows the vacant PB in each division, the number of months each position has been vacant and the midpoint hourly pay rate. All 8.16 vacant PB have been vacant for four months or longer. The agency reports that it is in the active hiring process for four positions and that in January 2026, it will begin recruiting to fill vacant positions in the education program for the 2026-27 school year.

Vacant Positions Report

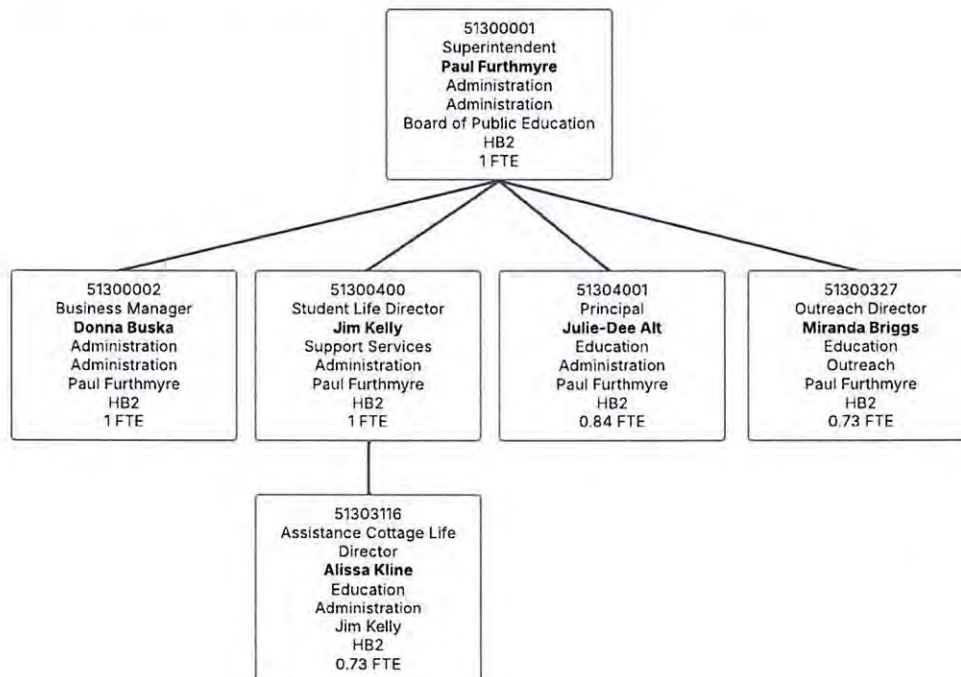
	PB	Median Months Vacant	Market Midpoint (Hourly)
⊖ 51130 SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND	8.16	4.13	
⊖ 03 STUDENT SERVICES	3.70	6.72	16.44
Residential Advisor	2.93	5.89	16.44
Residential Advisor 2	0.77	9.64	19.02
⊖ 04 EDUCATION	4.46	4.13	
Outreach Consultant	2.27	4.13	
School Psychologist	0.73	23.41	
TEACHER-MSDB	1.46	4.13	
Total	8.16	4.13	

Organizational Chart School Year 25-26

The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB) located in Great Falls, MT is governed by the Montana Board of Public Education and a state agency under the Department of Administration of the State of Montana. For budgeting purposes, MSDB has four (4) different programs. They are:



The school consists of a leadership team that is responsible for making sure that each program is meeting the biennial goals of the strategic plan, make sure human resource activities are effective, and provide the best educational services to the students served by MSDB staff. The administrative structure of MSDB is as follows:

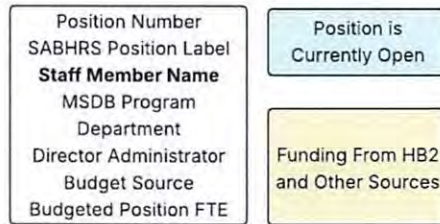


The purpose of this organizational chart is to illustrate the structure of all employees at the school. The chart contains a box for all 108 employees of MSDB. It is important to note that not all employees at the school are budgeted as a 1.0 FTE. In addition to hired employees, the organizational chart also represents five (5) budget positions for substitutes, deaf mentors, and family advisors.

Each box represents one employee at MSDB, unless identified differently. Within the box, specific information about that employee can be found. The position number for that position, SABHRS position label for that position number, staff member name filling that position, MSDB program in which position is assigned to, department staff member reports to,

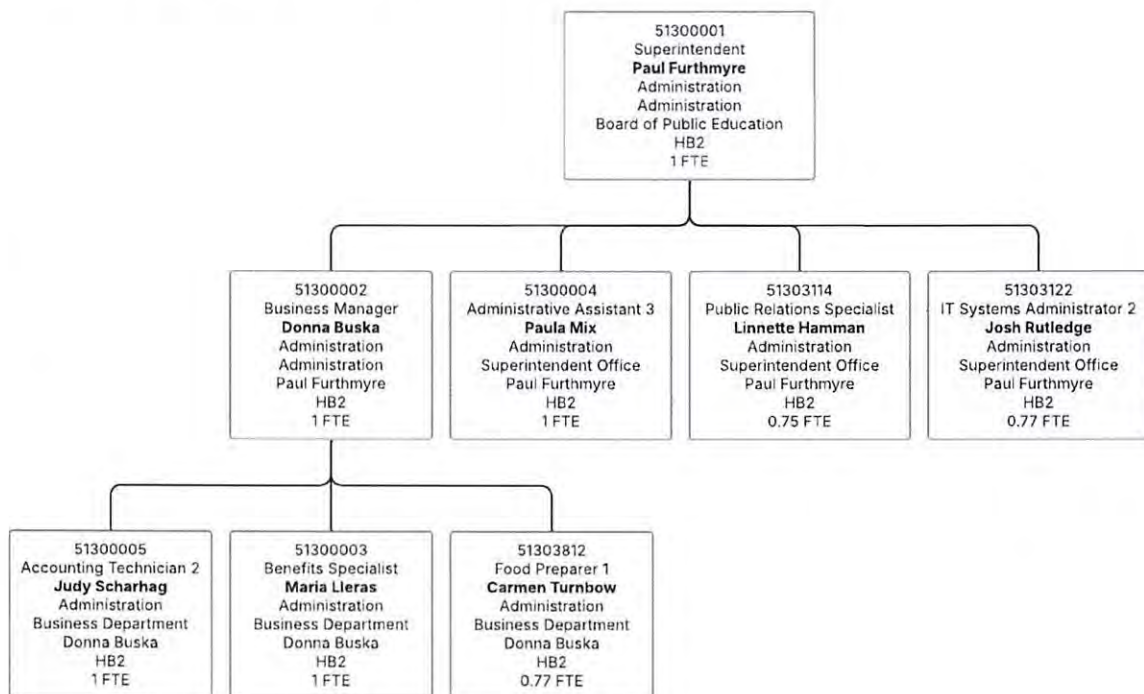
staff members direct supervisor, where the funding for the position comes from, and the budgeted position FTE for the position.

Additionally, any box that is highlighted in a light blue indicates that the position is currently unfilled. Any box highlighted in yellow indicates that the position is funded by more than HB2 funds provided by the state general fund. Below is a quick reference of what the staff boxes will look like:



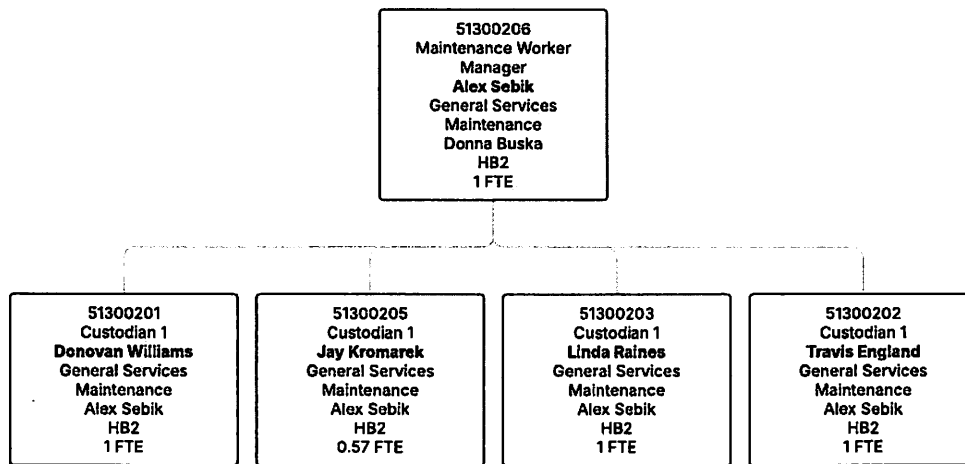
Program 1: Administration

The Administrative Program consists of the superintendent and business offices.



Program 2: General Services

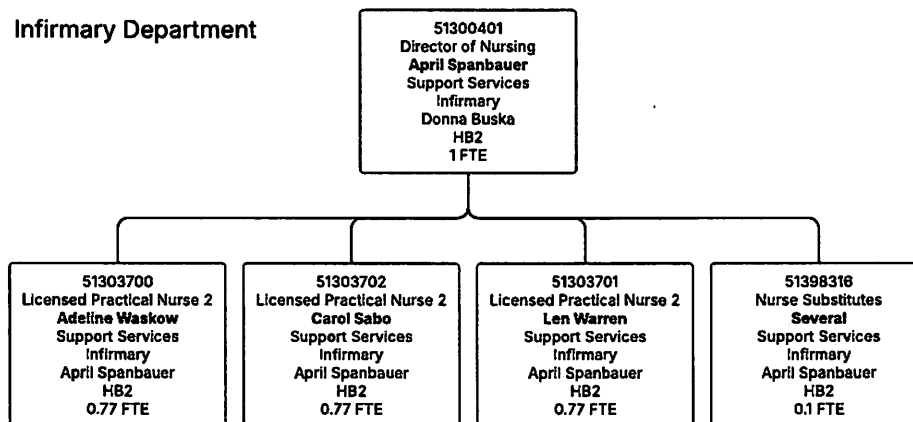
The General Services Program consists of all maintenance and custodial staff for the campus programs.



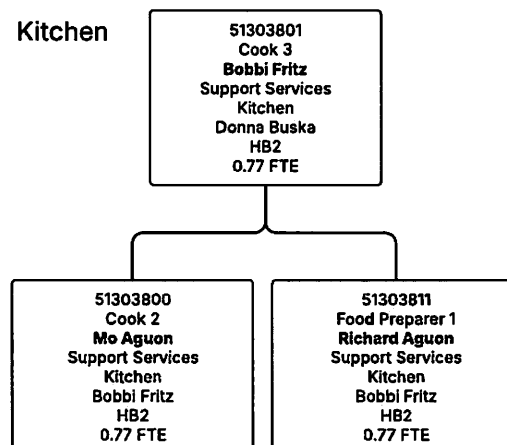
Program 3: Support Services

The Support Services Program provides necessary services to both our day and residential students at MSDB. Within the program, the kitchen and infirmary departments provide services to all campus students. Support services are also responsible for being a residential student's parent away from home. The residential program consists of residential advisors, cottage counselors, night watch, ASL mentors, and LEAP personnel.

Infirmary Department



Kitchen



Girls Cottage

51303410 Residential Advisor I Amanda Kauffman Support Services Girls Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303133 Residential Advisor I Cheyenne Tucker Support Services Girls Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303422 Residential Advisor II Amy Crachy Support Services Girls Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303210 Residential Advisor II Open Support Services Girls Cottage HB2 0.77 FTE
51303131 Residential Advisor I Open Support Services Girls Cottage Open HB2 0.62 FTE	51303102 Residential Advisor I Open Support Services Girls Cottage Open HB2 0.77 FTE	51303621 Residential Advisor I Open Support Services Girls Cottage Open HBS 0.77 FTE	

Boys Cottage

51303132 Residential Advisor I Andrew Kauffman Support Services Boys Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.62 FTE	51303521 Residential Advisor I Trevor Morse Support Services Boys Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303510 Residential Advisor II Bill Andrews Support Services Boys Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303134 Residential Advisor I Open Support Services Boys Cottage Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE
---	--	---	--

Cottage Support Staff

51300412 Behavioral Counselor Darreck Hale Support Services Cottage Counselor Jim Kelly HB2 1 FTE	51303105 Behavioral Counselor Megan DeSilva Support Services Cottage Counselor Jim Kelly HB2 0.73 FTE	51303121 Residential Advisor I Jennifer St. Pierre Support Services ASL Mentor Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303321 Residential Advisor I Open Support Services ASL Mentor Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE
51303221 Residential Advisor I Wanda Sutinen Support Services Night Watch Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51398311 Cottage Substitutes Several Support Services Student Life Jim Kelly HB2 0.08 FTE	51303622 Administrative Assistant 2 Sydney Hess Support Services Student Life Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303322 Residential Housekeeping Teresa Knotts Support Services Student Life Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE
51303522 Residential Advisor I Crystal Case Support Services Night Watch Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303100 Residential Advisor I Fran Aguon Support Services Night Watch Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE		

Program 4: Education

The Education Program is the largest budget and staffing program for the school. The education program can be split into three main functions; campus program, outreach program, and LEAP program.

Campus Program Staff

51398400 Lifeguards Max Hale Education Campus Jim Kelly HB2 0.82 FTE	51303106 Administrative Assistant 2 Kristi Rosenberg Education Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.75 FTE	51398301 Educational Substitutes Severel Education Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.34 FTE
--	--	--

School Visually Impaired Instructors

51300350 Teacher - MSDB Denise Rutledge Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300325 Teacher - MSDB Erin Barr Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300315 Teacher - MSDB Jamie Jones Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300360 Teacher - MSDB Melissa Cooper Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE
51303611 Teacher - MSDB Miche Jarvey Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 (96% of Salary) OPI IDEA PRE SCHOOL GRANT (4% of Salary) 0.73 FTE	51300302 Teacher - MSDB Naomi Witham-Travers Education VI Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 1 FTE		

School Deaf / Hard of Hearing Instructors

51300332 Teacher - MSDB Brenda Warren Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300330 Teacher - MSDB Cecelia Prefontaine Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300318 Teacher - MSDB Jen Wasson Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300326 Teacher - MSDB Jillian Young Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE
51300310 Teacher - MSDB Mikheal Rosenberg Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300353 Teacher - MSDB Morgan Makar Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300382 Teacher - MSDB Tearra Donovan Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE	51300311 Teacher - MSDB Open Education DHH Campus Julie-Dee Alt HB2 0.73 FTE

School Visually Impaired and Deaf / Hard of Hearing Instructors

51300316
Teacher - MSDB
Jessteene Clifford
Education
DHH / VI Campus
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303609
Teacher - MSDB
Joel Auers
Education
DHH / VI Campus
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51300313
Teacher - MSDB
Kelly Olson
Education
DHH / VI Campus
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51300331
Teacher - MSDB
Missie Williams
Education
DHH / VI Campus
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51300319
Teacher - MSDB
Staci Bechard
Education
DHH / VI Campus
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2 (50.7% of Salary)
OPI IDEA PART B GRANT
(49.3% of Salary)
0.73 FTE

School Specialists

51300390
Orientation and Mobility
Specialist
Geri Darko
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303113
Audiologist
Katherine Lynch
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303115
Physical Therapist
Laurie Mcrae
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303112
Speech / Language
Pathologist
Sherri Widhalm
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51300312
Occupational Therapist
Stephanie Annis
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51304013
School Counselor
Trudy Hill
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303101
Behavior Specilaist
Yvette Smail
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

51303110
School Psychologist
Open
Education
Campus Specialist
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.73 FTE

School Paraeducators

51308006
Para Educator
Andrew Metzenroth
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.61 FTE

51308002
Para Educator
Christina Haagenon
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.62 FTE

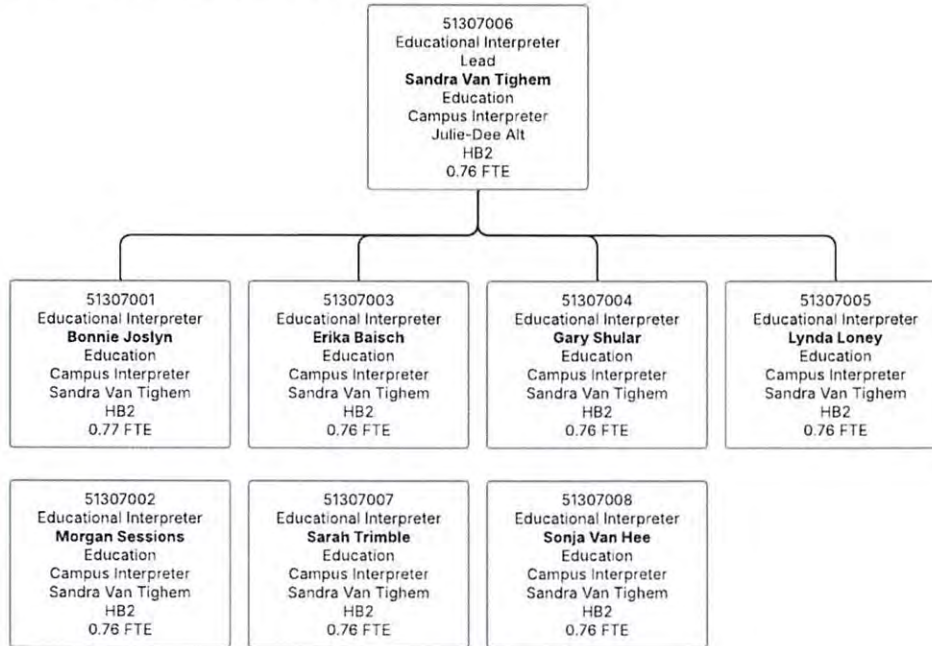
51308004
Para Educator
Mary Thompson
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.61 FTE

51308005
Para Educator
Sue Stewart
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.61 FTE

51308003
Para Educator
Tiffany Tesfay
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.61 FTE

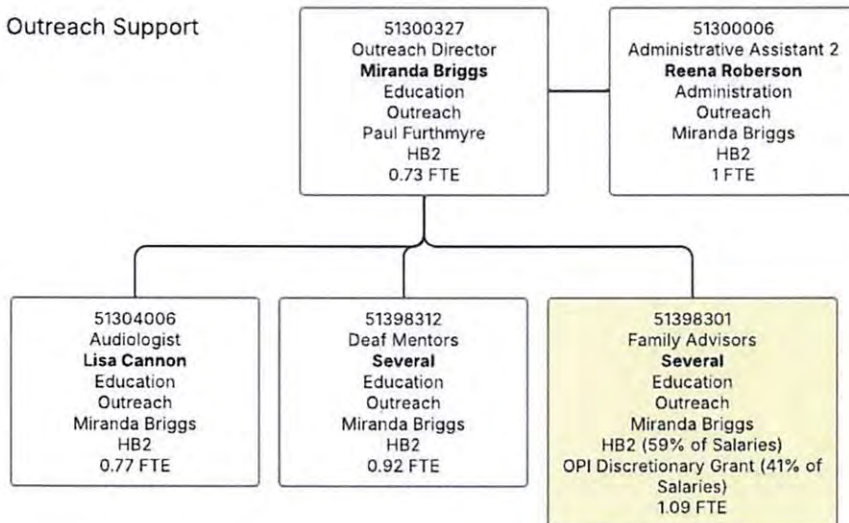
51308001
Para Educator
Open
Education
Campus ParaEducator
Julie-Dee Alt
HB2
0.61 FTE

School Educational Interpreters



Outreach Program Staff

Outreach Support



Outreach Deaf / Hard of Hearing Consultants

51304012 Consultant Alice Anderson Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304016 Consultant Amanda Vanorsdale Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304011 Consultant Amber Bateen Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304008 Consultant Desiree Tietje Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE
51300321 Consultant Lace Lesofski Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.73 FTE	51303107 Consultant Tailore Moore Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.93 FTE	51300324 Consultant Open Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.73 FTE	51304009 Consultant Open Education DHH Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE

Outreach Visually Impaired Consultants

51303108 Consultant Amy Tangen Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.73 FTE	51304014 Consultant Heather Hill Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304005 Consultant Jennifer Norlander Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304004 Consultant Kacie Wilmoth Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE
51304007 Consultant Melissa Fisher Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51300323 Consultant Michelle Cross Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.73 FTE	51304010 Consultant Susan Davis Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE	51304002 Consultant Kerri Norick Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE
51304003 Consultant Open Education VI Outreach Miranda Briggs HB2 0.77 FTE			

Living, Employment, Academic Program (LEAP)

Program 3: Support Services

Program 4: Education

Living, Employment, and Academic Program (LEAP)

51304015 Transition Specialist Sheri Devlin Education LEAP Alissa Kline HB2 0.73 FTE	51300329 Teacher - MSDB Carrie Jones Education LEAP Alissa Kline HB2 0.73 FTE	51303604 Teacher - MSDB Open Education LEAP Alissa Kline HB2 0.73 FTE
51303223 Residential Advisor I Christine Lay Support Services LEAP Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303421 Residential Advisor II Dorothy Nutter Support Services LEAP Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE	51303323 Residential Advisor I Jesse Aguon Support Services LEAP Jim Kelly HB2 0.77 FTE



Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind Educational Interpreting Professional Development December 2025 EIBC Update

Scope of Project: To provide quality professional development for educational interpreters serving students in all Montana districts. This is to be accomplished with collaboration from Rochester Technical Institute, specifically the National Technical Institute for the Deaf within the university.

Goals for Year 1

Objective 1: Provide in-person professional development to all educational interpreters in Montana with STEM interpreting concepts and terminology. The workshops are presented by RIT staff on the MSDB campus. This included workshops in the following:

Objective 1 Outcomes: A total of eight (8) Montana educational interpreters participated in the summer workshops. Seven (7) of the interpreters were connected to The Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind and one (1) from the Bozeman Area. The participants received instruction with the four (4) identified workshops. Overall impressions from the participants was that although the content was good, they had wished a deaf instructor would have presented.

All activities for Objective 1 were completed in July 2025.

Objective 1 Total Cost: \$1,425

Objective 2: Provide mentoring to educational interpreters working in Montana public schools. Interpreters will be matched up with RIT experienced interpreters for one year. The mentoring will be administered in a hybrid fashion (in-person and remote). The participants will be expected to participate in the following activities throughout the year:

1. In-Person Mentoring Program Start (August 2025)
2. Monthly Online Workshops (September 13, October 4, November 8, December 6, January 10, February 28, March 14, April 11, and May 2)
3. Bi-weekly 1:1 Supervision
4. Bi-weekly Participant Meetings

Objective 2 Anticipated Costs

EIPA Pre and Post Tests	\$4,000
Technology for Participants	\$15,000

(Includes laptops for online mentoring, equipment for videoing and self reflection)

Mentor Costs	\$10,000
Travel Costs - Mentors and Mentees (Flights, per mile reimbursement)	\$10,000
Meals during in-person trainings	\$5,000
Stipends for Interpreters	\$20,000
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$64,000</u>

Objective 2 Actual Total Costs (As of 12/5/25)

Travel Costs - Mentors and Mentees	\$242
Technology	\$10,868
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$11,110</u>
% Spent	17% of Anticipated Costs

Objective 2 Notes: Participants had to be currently working with a Montana school district to participate in the mentoring program. The program currently has 5 mentees out of the anticipated 8. Four of the mentees are MSDB educational interpreters that have EIPA scores below 3.5, per the mentoring requirement. Participants for this year's program were selected from participation in the summer workshop series.

Objective 2 Dec Update: We will begin recruiting for year 2 mentees after the first of the year. We have been in contact with a couple of larger districts that employ interpreters that seem interested in the mentoring program. Depending on the EIPA scores of the current participants, we don't anticipate that they will continue in the mentoring program as their scores will be above the 3.5 cut line.

2026-2027 MSDB SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR-A

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
Black Striped—Travel/No School
Pink—Break
Plum—Holiday
Teal—Family Learning Weekends
Red—Camps

August 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
					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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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			

April 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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

17-18 New Staff Orientation
19-21 PIR Orientation
24 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER

7 Labor Day No School
(Cottages Open)
11 Travel Home
14 Travel Return/
Classes in Session

OCTOBER

14 Travel Home
15-16 Teacher Convention
18 Travel Return

OCTOBER cont.

19 Classes Resume
*28 End of 1st Quarter

NOVEMBER

24 Travel Home
25-28 Thanksgiving Break
No School

29 Travel Return
30 Classes Resume

DECEMBER

10 Gallaudet Day
17 Winter Program
18 Travel Home
Dec 19-Jan 2 Winter Break

JANUARY

3 Travel Return
4 Classes Resume
18 MLK Jr Day No School
(Cottages Open)/ PIR
19 Classes Resume
*19 End of 2nd Quarter

FEBRUARY

12 Travel Home
15 Travel Return
School NOT in session
16 Classes Resume

MARCH

*24 End of 3rd Quarter
25 Travel Home
26-30 Spring Break
30 Travel Return/PIR ?
31 Classes Resume

APRIL

15 Travel Home
19 Travel Return/PIR ?
20 Classes Resume

MAY

7 Travel Home
10 Travel Return/
Classes in session

MAY (cont.)

28 Graduation 1:00 PM
31 Memorial Day
No School (Cottages
Open)

JUNE

3 Last Day of School/
*End of 4th Quarter
0-0 Deaf FLW
00-00 VI FLW
00-00 Deaf Camp
00-00 VI Camp

Approved by BOPE: Month 00, 2026

Updated: 12/4/2025

2026-2027 MSDB SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR-B

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
Black Striped—Travel/No School
Pink—Break
Plum—Holiday
Teal—Family Learning Weekends
Red—Camps

August 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
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 2026

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
					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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
	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			

April 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
				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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
						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 2027

SU	M	TU	W	TH	F	SA
		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

17-18 New Staff Orientation
19-21 PIR Orientation
24 First Day of School

SEPTEMBER

7 Labor Day No School
(Cottages Open)
11 Travel Home
14 Travel Return/
Classes in Session

OCTOBER

14 Travel Home
15-16 Teacher Convention
18 Travel Return

OCTOBER cont.

19 Classes Resume
*28 End of 1st Quarter

NOVEMBER

24 Travel Home
25-28 Thanksgiving Break
No School

29 Travel Return

30 Classes Resume

DECEMBER

10 Gallaudet Day
17 Winter Program
22 Travel Home
Dec 23-Jan 2 Winter Break

JANUARY

3 Travel Return
4 Classes Resume
*14 End of 2nd Quarter
18 MLK Jr Day No School
(Cottages Open)/ PIR
19 Classes Resume

FEBRUARY

12 Travel Home
15 Travel Return
School NOT in session
16 Classes Resume

MARCH

*22 End of 3rd Quarter
25 Travel Home
26-30 Spring Break
30 Travel Return/PIR ?
31 Classes Resume

APRIL

15 Travel Home
19 Travel Return/PIR ?
20 Classes Resume

MAY

7 Travel Home
10 Travel Return/
No School

MAY (cont.)

11 Classes Resume
28 Graduation 1:00 PM
31 Memorial Day
No School (Cottages Open)

JUNE

2 Last Day of School/
*End of 4th Quarter
0-0 Deaf FLW
00-00 VI FLW
00-00 Deaf Camp
00-00 VI Camp

Approved by BOPE: Month 00, 2026

Updated: 12/4/2025

2026-2027 Calendar Options
Pick either Option A or Option B

Calendar A

PIR Orientation August 19-21

First Day of School August 24

Christmas Break

Travel Home Friday, **December 18**

Travel Return Sunday, January 3

Classes Resume Monday, January 4

Easter Break

Travel Home Thursday, March 25

Travel Return Tuesday, March 30*

Classes Resume Wed., March 31

April Travel (GFPS has Friday and Monday off)

Travel Home, Thursday, April 15

Travel Return, Monday, April 19*

Classes Resume, Tuesday, April 20

May

Travel Home Friday, May 7

Travel Return **Monday, May 10 (School in Session)**

GFPS possible snow day May 21 (MSDB will be in session)

Graduation Friday, May 28

Memorial Day Monday, May 31

June

Last Day of School **Thursday, June 3**

Calendar B

PIR Orientation August 19-21

First Day of School August 24

Christmas Break

Travel Home Tuesday, **December 22**

Travel Return Sunday, January 3

Classes Resume Monday, January 4

Easter Break

Travel Home Thursday, March 25

Travel Return Tuesday, March 30*

Classes Resume Wed, March 31

April Travel (GFPS has Friday and Monday off)

Travel Home, Thursday, April 15

Travel Return, Monday, April 19*

Classes Resume, Tuesday, April 20

May

Travel Home Friday, May 7

Travel Return, **Monday May 10 (No School)**

Classes Resume **Tuesday May 11**

GFPS possible snow day May 21 (MSDB will be in session)

Graduation Friday, May 28

Memorial Day Monday, May 31

June

Last day of School **Wednesday, June 2**

Pick one for second PIR Day*

Tuesday, March 30 or Monday, April 19

2026-2027 School year A

REGULAR

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:46
2nd	8:48 - 9:34
3rd	9:36 - 10:22
4th	10:24 - 11:10
5th	11:12 - 11:58
LUNCH	12:00 - 12:45
6th	12:47 - 1:33
7th	1:35 - 2:21
8th	2:23 - 3:10

class time	passing time
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
47	

385 369 16

Early Out (WED)

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:37
2nd	8:39 - 9:16
3rd	9:18 - 9:55
4th	9:57 - 10:34
5th	10:36 - 11:13
LUNCH	11:15 - 12:00
6th	12:02 - 12:39
7th	12:41 - 1:18
8th	1:20 - 1:57

45 min lunch

class time	passing time
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2

310 296 14

TRAVEL DAY

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:29
2nd	8:31 - 9:00
3rd	9:02 - 9:31
4th	9:33 - 10:02
5th	10:04 - 10:33
6TH	10:35 - 11:04
7TH	11:06 - 11:35
8TH	11:37 - 12:06
Lunch-Students	12:08 - 12:45

class time	passing time
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2

248 232 16

MSDB Calendar 26-27 A

	Regular	Travel	wed	Total /Month
August	5	0	1	6
September	15	1	5	21
October	16	1	3	20
November	14	1	3	18
December	10	1	3	14
January	15	0	4	19
February	14	1	4	19
March	14	1	5	20
April	15	1	4	20
May	15	1	4	20
June	1	1	1	3

Total days 180 134 9 37 180

Aug	6	Oct	2
Sep	21	Nov	18
Oct	18	Dec	14
Nov	<u>11</u>	Jan	<u>11</u>
Q1	45	Q2	45

Jan	8	Mar	2
Feb	19	Apr	20
Mar	<u>18</u>	May	20
Q3	45	Jun	<u>3</u>
		Q4	45

Q1-Q4 total= 180

Agg hrs
1088.2

Q1	45	
Q2	45	
Q3	45	134*385
Q4	45	37*310
	<u>180</u>	9*248

	Total Minutes
Reg	134 51590
Wed	37 11470
travel-Last day	9 2232
	65292

2026-2027 School year B

REGULAR

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:46
2nd	8:48 - 9:34
3rd	9:36 - 10:22
4th	10:24 - 11:10
5th	11:12 - 11:58
LUNCH	12:00 - 12:45
6th	12:47 - 1:33
7th	1:35 - 2:21
8th	2:23 - 3:10

class time	passing time
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
46	2
47	

385

369	16
-----	----

Early Out (WED)

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:37
2nd	8:39 - 9:16
3rd	9:18 - 9:55
4th	9:57 - 10:34
5th	10:36 - 11:13
LUNCH	11:15 - 12:00
6th	12:02 - 12:39
7th	12:41 - 1:18
8th	1:20 - 1:57

45 min lunch

class time	passing time
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2
37	2

310

296	14
-----	----

TRAVEL DAY

PERIOD	CLASS TIME
1st	8:00 - 8:29
2nd	8:31 - 9:00
3rd	9:02 - 9:31
4th	9:33 - 10:02
5th	10:04 - 10:33
6TH	10:35 - 11:04
7TH	11:06 - 11:35
8TH	11:37 - 12:06
Lunch-Students	12:08 - 12:45

class time	passing time
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2
29	2

248

232	16
-----	----

MSDB Calendar 26-27 B

	Regular	Travel	wed	Total /Month
August	5	0	1	6
September	15	1	5	21
October	16	1	3	20
November	14	1	3	18
December	12	1	3	16
January	15	0	4	19
February	14	1	4	19
March	14	1	5	20
April	15	1	4	20
May	14	1	4	19
June	1	1	0	2

0

Total days 180 135 9 36 180

Aug 6	Oct 2
Sep 21	Nov 18
Oct 18	Dec 16
Nov 18	Jan 9
Q1 45	Q2 45

Jan 10	Mar 3
Feb 19	Apr 20
Mar 16	May 19
Q3 45	Q4 44

Q1-Q4 total= 179

Agg hrs
1089.45

Q1	45	
Q2	45	
Q3	45	135*385
Q4	44	36*310
	179	9*248

	Total Minutes
Reg	135
Wed	36
travel-Last day	9
	65367

GREAT FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GREAT FALLS, MONTANA
SCHOOL YEAR
2026-2027

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
AUGUST						JANUARY					
	3	4	5	6	7	(New Year's Day)				*	*
	10	11	12	13	14		4	5	6	7	8
(Teacher Orientation)	17	18	19	20	21		11	12	13	14	(<15>)
	#	#	FD	27	28		#	19	20	21	22
	31						25	26	27	28	29
SEPTEMBER						FEBRUARY					
(Labor Day)		1	2	3	4	(President's Day)	1	2	3	4	5
	*	8	9	10	11		8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18		*	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25		22	23	24	25	26
	28	29	30								
OCTOBER						MARCH					
				1	2		1	2	{3}	4	5
	5	6	7	8	9		8	9	10	11	12
(State Meetings)	12	13	14	#	#		15	16	17	18	19
	19	20	21	22	23		22	23	(24)	25	*
	26	27	28	29	(30)		*	#	31		
NOVEMBER						APRIL					
	2	3	4	5	6					1	2
(Thanksgiving)	9	10	11	12	13		5	6	7	8	9
	16	17	18	19	{20}		12	13	14	15	*
	23	24	#	*	*		*	20	21	22	23
	30						26	27	28	29	30
DECEMBER						MAY					
		1	2	3	4		3	4	5	6	7
(Christmas)	7	8	9	10	11	(Mem. Day)	10	11	12	13	14
	14	15	16	17	18		17	18	19	20	Δ
	21	22	*	*	*		24	25	26	27	28
	*	*	*	*	*		*				
						JUNE					
							7	1	2	3	LD
								8	9	10	11

* Holidays	<u>Student Days</u>	<u>PIR Days</u>
# PIR Days	45	4
() End of Quarter	44	2
<> End of Semester	46	1
First/Last Day	<u>45</u>	<u>0</u>
Δ Emergency Make up day	180	7



Accreditation Engagement Review

July 01, 2025 - June 30, 2026

Montana School for the Deaf and Blind

Institution #230315

3911 Central Ave
Great Falls, Montana 59405
United States of America

Accreditation Is Continuous Improvement

Cognia defines continuous improvement as "an embedded behavior rooted in an institution's culture that constantly focuses on conditions, processes, and practices to improve teaching and learning." Accreditation is a continuous improvement process that helps an institution improve teaching and learning. Using Cognia's Performance Standards, the institution examines its current effectiveness as well as its capacity and capability to achieve its vision and goals for the future.

Cognia believes all institutions can improve no matter how well they are currently performing. In the same manner that educators are expected to understand the unique needs of every learner and tailor the education experience to drive student success, every institution must be empowered

to map out and embrace their unique improvement journey. Cognia expects institutions to use the results and analyses of data from diverse sources to select and implement actions that drive improvement in education quality and student performance. Cognia recognizes that each institution's improvement journey is unique and that we can serve you best by providing key findings specific to your institution.

Around the turn of the 21st century, accreditation transformed its focus and process from a ten-year evaluation focused on the accomplishments of an institution's past decade to a forward-focused process examining what an institution is striving to accomplish in the next five years. Modern accreditation examines the current and future

capabilities and capacities of an institution in the context of its mission, purpose and direction. The Standards for Accreditation define how a good institution behaves and provides the criteria to focus improvement efforts that will lead to growing learners, teachers, and leaders.

In reality, modern accreditation is a continuous improvement process. At least every six years, the institution formally engages the Standards for Accreditation to reflect and examine its progress toward its desired future as expressed through its mission, purpose, and strategic direction.

Cognia's purpose-driven, strategic process is the most widely used continuous improvement process in the world.

Cognia Performance Accreditation and the Engagement Review

This report contains the findings of the Engagement Review. The findings of the report are organized in five sections: Assurances, Rating of Analyses, Cognia Performance Standards, Insights from the Review, and a Summary of Findings that includes Noteworthy Practices and Areas for Improvement.

Accreditation is pivotal to leveraging education quality and continuous improvement. Using a set of rigorous research-based standards, the accreditation process examines the whole institution—the program, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders—to determine how

well the parts work together to meet the needs of learners. Through the Cognia Accreditation Process, highly skilled and trained evaluators gather first-hand evidence and information pertinent to evaluating an institution's performance against research-based Cognia Performance Standards. Using these standards, evaluators assess the quality of the learning environment to gain valuable insights and target improvements in teaching and learning as well as the operation of the institution.

To build a comprehensive evaluation of your institution, our experts gain a broad understanding of institution

quality through a review of documented evidence, discussions with leadership, and community feedback. Using the standards as a framework, the report provides valuable guidance to help focus your institution's improvement journey.



Assurances

Assurances are requirements that accredited institutions must meet. The assurance statements are based on the type of institution, and the responses are confirmed by the Accreditation Engagement Review. Institutions are expected to meet all assurances and are expected to correct any deficiencies in unmet assurances.

#	ASSURANCES	YES/NO
1.	The institution has read, understands, and complies with the Cognia Accreditation and Certification Policies and Procedures.	☑ Yes
2.	The institution complies with all applicable governmental laws or regulations.	☑ Yes
3.	The institution adheres to ethical marketing and communication practices to transparently disclose current and accurate information to the public.	☑ Yes
4.	The governing authority adheres to written policies that govern its conduct, decision making, ethics, and authority; and engages in training aligned to its roles and responsibilities.	☑ Yes
5.	The institution annually submits all financial transactions for an annual audit conducted by an accounting authority external to the institution.	☑ Yes
6.	The institution annually reviews and implements written management plans for security, crisis, safety and health for onsite and virtual environments that includes expectations, communications protocols, and training for students, staff and stakeholders.	☑ Yes
7.	The institution participates in required training related to accreditation or certification by timeframes prescribed by Cognia.	☑ Yes

Evaluations of Institution Analyses

Cognia expects institutions to use a systematic process to collect data and information using quality instruments and then analyze and synthesize that information to arrive at findings. From the findings, Cognia expects institutions to develop, prioritize, and implement theories of action that will sustain high-performing areas and lead to improvement in underperforming areas.

Cognia requires institutions to complete analyses on selected data sources. Each analysis is evaluated using rubrics aligned to the main activities within the analysis process.

Stakeholder Feedback Analysis

CRITERION	YOUR SCORE
The institution has made an accurate appraisal of the quality of their data sources using the Evaluative Criteria.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.6
The institution has analyzed and synthesized information.	★★★☆☆ Network Average: 3.1
The institution has identified areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.4
The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.	★★★★ Network Average: 2.9

Network Comparison for Stakeholder Feedback Analysis



Student Performance Analysis

CRITERION	YOUR SCORE
The institution has made an accurate appraisal of the quality of their data sources using the Evaluative Criteria.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.5
The institution has analyzed and synthesized information.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.2
The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action for areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.4
The institution has demonstrated how they have used results to drive improvements to instruction and learner performance.	★★★☆☆ Network Average: 2.9

Network Comparison for Student Performance Analysis



Learning Environments Analysis

CRITERION	YOUR SCORE
The institution has made an accurate appraisal of the quality of their data sources using the Evaluative Criteria.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.5
The institution has analyzed and synthesized information.	★★★★ Network Average: 2.9
The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action for areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.3
The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.	★★★★ Network Average: 2.9

Network Comparison for Learning Environments Analysis

Your Institution	4.0
Cognia Network Avg.	3.1

Culture of Learning

CRITERION	YOUR SCORE
The narrative provides evidence for standards related to Culture of Learning.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.6
The institution has analyzed and synthesized information and responded to the prompts for Culture of Learning.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.2
The institution has identified areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.3
The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.	★★★★ Network Average: 2.9

Network Comparison for Culture of Learning

Your Institution	4.0
Cognia Network Avg.	3.2

Leadership for Learning

CRITERION	YOUR SCORE
The narrative provides evidence for standards related to Leadership for Learning.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.5
The institution has analyzed and synthesized information and responded to the prompts for Leadership for Learning.	★★★★ Network Average: 3.1
The institution has identified areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.	★★★★



Network Average: 3.2

The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.



Network Average: 2.8

Network Comparison for Leadership for Learning



Engagement of Learning

CRITERION

YOUR SCORE

The narrative provides evidence for standards related to Engagement of Learning.



Network Average: 3.5

The institution has analyzed and synthesized information and responded to the prompts for Engagement of Learning.



Network Average: 3.1

The institution has identified areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.



Network Average: 3.2

The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.



Network Average: 2.8

Network Comparison for Engagement of Learning



Growth in Learning

CRITERION

YOUR SCORE

The narrative provides evidence for standards related to Growth in Learning.



Network Average: 3.5

The institution has analyzed and synthesized information and responded to the prompts for Growth in Learning.



Network Average: 3.1

The institution has identified areas of noteworthy achievement and areas in need of improvement.



Network Average: 3.2

The institution has interpreted findings, prioritized themes, and developed theories of action.



Network Average: 2.8

Network Comparison for Growth in Learning

Your Institution

4.0

Cognia Network Avg.

3.2

Performance Standards Evaluation Results

Accreditation is based primarily on the evaluation of evidence that reflects an institution's ability to meet the expectations as defined by the Cognia Performance Standards. The Performance Standards define the elements of quality that research indicates are present in an effective institution. Accreditation standards provide the guideposts to becoming a better institution. The Engagement Review evaluators apply a four-level rubric to determine the degree to which the institution demonstrates effective practices that reflect the expectations of the standard. The rubric scale is designed to indicate the current performance of the institution.

The rubric is scored from Level 4 to Level 1. Descriptions are provided in the table below.

RATING	LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
★★★★	4	Demonstrating noteworthy systematic and systemic practices producing clear results that positively impact learners.
★★★	3	Engaging in practices that provide evidence of expected effectiveness that is reflected in the standard.
★★	2	Developing or improving practices that provide evidence that effort approaches desired level of effectiveness.
★	1	Reflecting areas with insufficient evidence and/or limited activity leading toward improvement.

Cognia Performance Standards Ratings

Culture of Learning Standards

A good institution nurtures and sustains a healthy culture for learning. In a healthy culture, learners, parents, and educators feel connected to the purpose and work of the institution as well as behave in alignment with the stated values and norms. The institution also demonstrates evidence that reflects the mission, beliefs, and expectations of the institution (e.g., student work; physical appearance of the institution; participation in institution activities; parents' attendance at institution functions).

Keys to Culture of Learning

A healthy culture is evident where:

- Stakeholders are actively engaged and supportive of the institution's mission
- Learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests are the focal point
- Stakeholders are included and supported

Standard 1

Leaders cultivate and sustain a culture that demonstrates respect and fairness for all learners and is free from bias.

YOUR RATING
★★★★
Network Average: 3.3



LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Leaders consistently model the attributes and implement practices that shape and sustain the desired institution culture, clearly setting expectations for all staff members. Leaders and professional staff members consistently implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision-making that embody the values of respect and fairness for all learners and are free from bias. |
| 3 | 3 - Leaders regularly model the attributes and implement practices that shape and sustain the desired institution culture, clearly setting expectations for all staff members. Leaders and professional staff members routinely implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision-making that embody the values of respect and fairness for all learners and are free from bias. |
| 2 | 2 - Leaders occasionally model the attributes and implement practices that shape and sustain the desired institution culture, clearly setting expectations for all staff members. Leaders and professional staff members sometimes implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision-making that embody the values of respect and fairness for all learners and are free from bias. |
| 1 | 1 - Leaders rarely model the attributes and implement practices that shape and sustain the desired institution culture, clearly setting expectations for all staff members. Leaders and professional staff members seldom implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision-making that embody the values of respect and fairness for all learners and are free from bias. |

Standard 2

Learners' well-being is at the heart of the institution's guiding principles, such as mission, purpose, and beliefs.

YOUR RATING
 ★★★★★
 Network Average: 3.4

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - Staff members continually demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. The institution's practices, processes, and decisions are documented and regularly reviewed for consistency with its stated values. |
| 3 | 3 - Staff members routinely demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. The institution's practices, processes, and decisions are documented and are consistent with and based on its stated values. |
| 2 | 2 - Staff members occasionally demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. The institution's practices, processes, and decisions are consistent with and based on its stated values. |
| 1 | 1 - Staff members seldom demonstrate commitment to learners' academic and non-academic needs and interests. The institution's practices, processes, and decisions may not be based on its stated values. |

Standard 3

Leaders actively engage stakeholders to support the institution's priorities and guiding principles that promote learners' academic growth and well-being.

YOUR RATING
 ★★★★★
 Network Average: 2.9



LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Leaders establish and sustain conditions that consistently result in support and active participation among stakeholders. Leaders consistently collaborate with stakeholders to advance identified priorities. Institutions implement a formal process to choose areas of focus based on analyzed data on learners' needs and consistent with guiding principles. |
| 3 | 3 - Leaders establish and sustain conditions that regularly result in support and active participation among stakeholders. Leaders routinely collaborate with stakeholders to advance identified priorities. Institutions choose areas of focus based on analyzed data on learners' needs and consistent with guiding principles. |
| 2 | 2 - Leaders establish conditions that occasionally result in support and participation among stakeholders. Leaders sometimes collaborate with stakeholders to advance identified priorities. Institutions choose areas of focus sometimes based on data on learners' needs and consistent with guiding principles. |
| 1 | 1 - Leaders establish conditions that rarely result in support and participation among stakeholders. Leaders seldom collaborate with stakeholders. Institutions choose areas of focus rarely based on data about learners. |

Standard 4

Learners benefit from a formal structure that fosters positive relationships with peers and adults.

YOUR RATING



Network Average: 3.1

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - A formal structure is planned and consistently implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive support from adults and peers. Peer and adult interactions and behaviors consistently demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for one another's well-being. |
| 3 | 3 - A formal structure is planned and regularly implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive support from adults and peers. Peer and adult interactions and behaviors routinely demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for one another's well-being. |
| 2 | 2 - A formal structure may be planned but is minimally implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive support from adults and peers. Peer and adult interactions and behaviors sometimes demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for one another's well-being. |
| 1 | 1 - A formal structure is not planned or implemented to promote a culture and climate in which learners receive support from adults and peers. Peer and adult interactions and behaviors rarely demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for one another's well-being. |

Standard 5

Professional staff members embrace effective collegiality and collaboration in support of learners.

YOUR RATING



Network Average: 3.0

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

4	4 - The institution's documented operating practices cultivate and set expectations for collegiality and collaboration and are monitored for fidelity of implementation. Professional staff members consistently interact with respect and cooperation, learn from one another, and consider one another's ideas. Professional staff members intentionally and consistently work together in self-formed or assigned groups to review information, identify common problems, and implement solutions on behalf of learners.
3	3 - The institution's documented operating practices cultivate and set expectations for collegiality and collaboration. Professional staff members regularly interact with respect and cooperation, often learn from one another, and routinely consider one another's ideas. Professional staff members often work together in self-formed or assigned groups to review information, identify common problems, and implement solutions on behalf of learners.
2	2 - The institution's operating practices somewhat cultivate and set expectations for collegiality and collaboration. Professional staff members generally interact with respect and cooperation, periodically learn from one another, and somewhat consider one another's ideas. Professional staff members sometimes work together in self-formed or assigned groups to review information, identify common problems, and implement solutions on behalf of learners.
1	1 - The institution's operating practices rarely cultivate and set expectations for collegiality and collaboration. Professional staff members may or may not interact with respect and cooperation, learn from one another, or consider one another's ideas. Professional staff members rarely work together in self-formed or assigned groups to review information, identify common problems, and implement solutions on behalf of learners.

Standard 6

Professional staff members receive the support they need to strengthen their professional practice.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.8

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

4	4 - Professional staff members consistently receive adequate resources and assistance based on data and information unique to the individual. A formal structure ensures that professional staff members receive personalized mentoring and coaching from leaders and peers.
3	3 - Professional staff members receive adequate resources and assistance based on data and information unique to the individual. Professional staff members receive personalized mentoring and coaching from leaders and peers.
2	2 - Professional staff members receive some resources and assistance based on data and information unique to the individual. Professional staff members periodically receive mentoring and coaching from leaders and peers.
1	1 - Professional staff members receive few or no resources and assistance based on data and information unique to the individual. Professional staff members rarely receive mentoring and coaching from leaders and peers.

Network Comparison for Culture of Learning Standards

Your Institution

3.3

Cognia Network Avg.

3.1

Leadership for Learning Standards

The ability of a leader to provide leadership for learning is a key attribute of a good institution. Leaders who engage in their own learning while tangibly supporting the learning process for learners and teachers have a significant positive impact on the success of others. Leaders must also communicate the learning expectations for all learners and teachers continuously, with consistency and purpose. The expectations are embedded in the culture of the institution, reflected by learners', teachers', and leaders' behaviors and attitudes toward learning.

Keys to Leadership for Learning

Leadership for learning is demonstrated when school leaders:

- Communicate expectations for learning
- Influence and impact the culture in positive ways
- Model and engage in learning while supporting others to do so

Standard 7

Leaders guide professional staff members in the continuous improvement process focused on learners' experiences and needs.

YOUR RATING



Network Average: 2.8

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - Leaders consistently engage professional staff members in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is based on analyzed trend and current data about learners' academic and non-academic needs and the institution's organizational effectiveness. Leaders and professional staff members consistently implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision making that improve learning and engage stakeholders.
3	3 - Leaders regularly engage professional staff members in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is based on analyzed data about learners' academic and non-academic needs and the institution's organizational effectiveness. Leaders and professional staff members routinely implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision making that improve learning and engage stakeholders.
2	2 - Leaders occasionally engage professional staff members in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is sometimes based on data about learners' academic and non-academic needs and the institution's organizational effectiveness. Leaders and professional staff members sometimes implement ongoing practices, processes, and decision making that improve learning and engage stakeholders.
1	1 - Leaders seldom engage professional staff members in developing, communicating, implementing, monitoring, and adjusting the continuous improvement process. The continuous improvement process is rarely based on data about learners' academic and non-academic needs and the institution's organizational effectiveness. Leaders and professional staff members rarely implement ongoing practices, processes, and



decision making that improve learning and engage stakeholders.

Standard 8

The governing authority demonstrates a commitment to learners by collaborating with leaders to uphold the institution's priorities and to drive continuous improvement.

YOUR RATING
★★★★☆
Network Average: 3.2

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - The governing authority's policies and decisions are regularly reviewed to ensure an uncompromised commitment to learners and the institution's identified priorities. The governing authority and institution leaders use their respective roles and responsibilities to consistently and intentionally collaborate to further the institution's improvement. |
| 3 | 3 - The governing authority's policies and decisions demonstrate a commitment to learners and support the institution's identified priorities. The governing authority and institution leaders use their respective roles and responsibilities to collaboratively further the institution's improvement. |
| 2 | 2 - The governing authority's decisions demonstrate some commitment to learners and sometimes support the institution's identified priorities. The governing authority and institution leaders use their respective roles and responsibilities to focus the institution's improvement. |
| 1 | 1 - The governing authority's decisions demonstrate minimal commitment to learners and rarely support the institution's identified priorities. The governing authority and institution leaders seldom collaborate on the institution's improvement. |

Standard 9

Leaders cultivate effective individual and collective leadership among stakeholders.

YOUR RATING
★★★★☆
Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Leaders consistently recognize and actively encourage leadership potential among stakeholders. Leaders create conditions that ensure formal and informal leadership opportunities, and provide customized support for individuals and groups to improve their leadership skills. Stakeholders show initiative and eagerness to take on individual or shared responsibilities that support the institution's priorities. |
| 3 | 3 - Leaders frequently recognize and encourage leadership potential among stakeholders. Leaders create conditions that regularly offer formal and informal leadership opportunities, and support individuals and groups to improve their leadership skills. Stakeholders demonstrate a willingness to take on individual or shared responsibilities that support the institution's priorities. |
| 2 | 2 - Leaders occasionally recognize and encourage leadership potential among stakeholders. Leaders sometimes create conditions that offer leadership opportunities and support individuals and groups to improve their leadership skills. Stakeholders sometimes volunteer to take on individual or shared responsibilities that support the institution's priorities. |

- 1 - Leaders seldom recognize and encourage leadership potential among stakeholders. Leaders rarely create conditions that offer leadership opportunities and support individuals and groups to improve their leadership skills. Stakeholders rarely volunteer to take on individual or shared responsibilities that support the institution's priorities.

Standard 10

Leaders demonstrate expertise in recruiting, supervising, and evaluating professional staff members to optimize learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- 4 - Leaders intentionally and consistently identify, develop, and retain qualified professional staff members who contribute to the institution's purpose and priorities. Leaders consistently use analyzed data from a variety of sources to forecast future staffing needs and employ best practices to attract qualified candidates from a broad range of backgrounds. Leaders implement and monitor documented practices and procedures for supervision and evaluation that improve professional staff members' performance to optimize learning.
- 3 - Leaders identify, develop, and retain qualified professional staff members who contribute to the institution's purpose and priorities. Leaders routinely use data from a variety of sources to forecast future staffing needs and employ best practices to attract qualified candidates from a broad range of backgrounds. Leaders regularly implement practices and procedures for supervision and evaluation that improve professional staff members' performance to optimize learning.
- 2 - Leaders hire qualified professional staff members who contribute to the institution's purpose and priorities. Leaders sometimes use data to forecast future staffing needs. Leaders supervise and evaluate professional staff members to improve performance.
- 1 - Leaders hire qualified professional staff members without consideration of contribution to the institution's purpose and priorities. Leaders rarely use data to forecast future staffing needs. Leaders seldom supervise and evaluate professional staff members to improve performance.

Standard 11

Leaders create and maintain institutional structures and processes that support learners and staff members in both stable and changing environments.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 3.1

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- 4 - Leaders consistently demonstrate awareness of potential influences on institution stability and engage stakeholders in planning and implementing strategies to maintain stability and respond to change. The institution's structure and processes are documented, monitored, and thoroughly communicated so that learners and staff members know what to do and expect in everyday circumstances. The institution's structure and processes include emergency and contingency plans that support agile and effective responses to both incremental and sudden change.
- 3 - Leaders regularly demonstrate awareness of potential influences on institution stability and engage stakeholders in planning and implementing strategies to maintain stability and respond to change. The

institution's structure and processes are documented and communicated so that learners and staff members know what to do and expect in everyday circumstances. The institution's structure and processes include emergency and contingency plans that support responses to both incremental and sudden change.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | 2 - Leaders sometimes demonstrate awareness of potential influences on institution stability and engage stakeholders in planning and implementing strategies to maintain stability and respond to change. The institution's structure and processes are occasionally documented and communicated so that learners and staff members know what to do and expect in everyday circumstances. The institution's structure and processes include emergency and contingency plans to respond to change. |
| 1 | 1 - Leaders seldom demonstrate awareness of potential influences on institution stability. The institution's structure and processes are not well documented or communicated so that learners and staff members know what to do and expect in everyday circumstances. The institution's structure and processes may not include emergency and contingency plans to respond to change. |

Standard 12

Professional staff members implement curriculum and instruction that are aligned for relevancy and effectiveness for each and every learner.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Professional staff members systematically implement, review, and adjust curriculum and instruction based on recognized and evidence-based content standards. Curriculum and instructional practices are regularly assessed through a formal, systematic process to assure alignment, relevancy, and effectiveness for each and every learner. |
| 3 | 3 - Professional staff members implement, review, and adjust curriculum and instruction based on recognized and evidence-based content standards. Curriculum and instructional practices are regularly assessed to assure alignment, relevancy, and effectiveness for each and every learner. |
| 2 | 2 - Professional staff members implement curriculum and instruction based on recognized and evidence-based content standards. Curriculum and instructional practices are sometimes assessed to assure alignment, relevancy, and effectiveness for each and every learner. |
| 1 | 1 - Professional staff members implement locally adopted curriculum and instruction. Curriculum and instructional practices are rarely or not assessed to assure alignment, relevancy, and effectiveness for each and every learner. |

Standard 13

Qualified personnel instruct and assist learners and each other in support of the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 3.0

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - All staff members demonstrate commitment to enhancing their professional practice over and above the required knowledge and skills for their positions. Staff members work collaboratively to instruct and assist |
|---|---|

learners and colleagues in support of the institution's guiding principles. Staff members' individual and collective decisions and behaviors consistently demonstrate alignment and coherence with the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 | 3 - All staff members demonstrate the required knowledge and skills for their positions. Staff members work cooperatively to instruct and assist learners and colleagues in support of the institution's guiding principles. Staff members' individual and collective decisions and behaviors demonstrate alignment and coherence with the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs. |
| 2 | 2 - Most staff members demonstrate the required knowledge and skills for their positions, and a plan is being implemented to ensure that all staff members are qualified for their positions. Staff members sometimes work cooperatively to instruct and assist learners and colleagues in support of the institution's guiding principles. Staff members' individual and collective decisions and behaviors sometimes demonstrate alignment and coherence with the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs. |
| 1 | 1 - Some staff members do not demonstrate the required knowledge and skills for their positions, and a plan does not exist to ensure that all staff members are qualified for their positions. Staff members rarely work cooperatively to instruct and assist learners and colleagues in support of the institution's guiding principles. Staff members' individual and collective decisions and behaviors rarely demonstrate alignment and coherence with the institution's mission, purpose, and beliefs. |

Standard 14

Curriculum and instruction are augmented by reliable information resources and materials that advance learning and support learners' personal interests.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - Professional staff members consistently suggest and provide thoughtfully selected information resources and materials for learners that broaden and enrich the learning process and support learners' personal interests. A systematic process is used to identify and verify that information resources and materials are selected from credible sources. |
| 3 | 3 - Professional staff members suggest and provide thoughtfully selected information resources and materials for learners that broaden and enrich the learning process and support learners' personal interests. These information resources and materials are selected from credible sources and based on verifiable information. |
| 2 | 2 - Professional staff members sometimes suggest and provide information resources and materials for learners that broaden and enrich the learning process and/or support learners' personal interests. These information resources and materials are usually selected from credible sources and based on verifiable information. |
| 1 | 1 - Professional staff members rarely suggest and provide information resources and materials for learners that broaden and enrich the learning process or support learners' personal interests. These information resources and materials are rarely selected from credible sources or may not be based on verifiable information. |

Standard 15

Learners' needs drive the allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources.

YOUR RATING




LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
4	4 - Professional staff members engage in a systematic process to analyze learners' needs and current trend data to adjust the allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources to ensure each and every learner's needs are met. Adjustments to resource allocation are consistently based on current data at any point in time.
3	3 - Professional staff members routinely analyze learners' needs and current trend data to adjust the allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources to ensure each and every learner's needs are met. Adjustments to resource allocation are routinely based on current data and at predetermined points in time.
2	2 - Professional staff members sometimes analyze learners' needs, current, and trend data to adjust the allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources to ensure each and every learner's needs are met. Adjustments to resource allocation are sometimes based on current or updated data.
1	1 - Professional staff members rarely analyze learners' needs and trend data to adjust the allocation and management of human, material, digital, and fiscal resources. Resources are rarely allocated in alignment with documented learners' needs or to ensure each and every learner's needs are met.

Network Comparison for Leadership for Learning Standards



Engagement of Learning Standards

A good institution ensures that learners are engaged in the learning environment. Learners who are engaged in the learning environment participate with confidence and display agency over their own learning. A good institution adopts policies and engages in practices that support all learners being included in the learning process.

Keys to Engagement of Learning

Engagement is demonstrated when all learners:

- Are included in the learning process
- Participate with confidence
- Have agency over their learning

Standard 16

Learners experience curriculum and instruction that emphasize the value of different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities reflective of the global community.

YOUR RATING
 ★★☆☆
 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

4	4 - Respect for different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities is embedded in every aspect of the institution's culture and learning environments. The presence and contributions of the global community are authentically integrated in the curricular content and instructional practices.
3	3 - Respect for different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities is clearly present in the institution's culture and learning environments. The presence and contributions of the global community are intentionally included in the curricular content and instructional practices.
2	2 - Respect for different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities is somewhat present in the institution's culture and learning environments. The presence and contributions of the global community are inconsistently included in the curricular content and instructional practices.
1	1 - Respect for different cultures, backgrounds, and abilities is rarely present in the institution's culture and learning environments. The presence and contributions of the global community are not included in the curricular content and instructional practices.

Standard 17

Learners have the support and opportunities to realize their learning potential.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 3.0

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - Professional staff members develop relationships with and understand the needs and well-being of individual learners. Academic and non-academic experiences are tailored to the needs and well-being of individual learners. Learners are challenged and supported to strive toward maximal levels of achievement and self-efficacy without barriers or hindrances by schedules or access to academic and non-academic offerings.
3	3 - Professional staff members know their learners well enough to develop and provide a variety of academic and non-academic experiences. Learners have access and choice in most academic and non-academic opportunities available according to grade levels or through expected sequencing of courses. Learners rarely encounter barriers when accessing academic and non-academic experiences most suited to their individual needs and well-being. Learners are challenged and supported to strive toward individual achievement and self-efficacy.
2	2 - Professional staff members consider varying learner needs and well-being when developing and providing academic and non-academic experiences. Learners have access to some variety in academic and non-academic opportunities available according to grade levels or through expected sequencing of courses. Learners may encounter barriers when accessing some academic and non-academic experiences most suited to their individual needs and well-being. Learners are sometimes challenged and supported to strive toward individual achievement and self-efficacy.
1	1 - Professional staff members give little or no consideration to individual learner needs and well-being when developing and providing academic and non-academic experiences. Academic and non-academic opportunities are limited and standardized according to grade levels or a predetermined sequencing of courses. Learners frequently encounter a variety of barriers when accessing academic and non-academic offerings that would be well-suited to their individual needs and well-being. Learners are rarely challenged to strive toward individual achievement and self-efficacy.

Standard 18



Learners are immersed in an environment that fosters lifelong skills including creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - Conditions across all aspects of the institution promote learners' lifelong skills. Learners engage in ongoing experiences that develop the non-academic skills important for their next steps in learning and for future success. A formal structure ensures that learning experiences collectively build skills in creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking.
3	3 - Conditions within most aspects of the institution promote learners' lifelong skills. Learners engage in experiences that develop the non-academic skills important for their next steps in learning and for future success. Collectively, the learning experiences build skills in creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking.
2	2 - Conditions within some aspects of the institution promote learners' lifelong skills. Learners engage in some experiences that develop non-academic skills important for their next steps in learning and for future success. Some learning experiences build skills in creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, and design thinking.
1	1 - Learners engage in environments that focus primarily on academic learning objectives only. Little or no emphasis is placed on non-academic skills important for next steps in learning and for future success. Learning experiences rarely build skills in creativity, curiosity, risk taking, collaboration, or design thinking.

Standard 19

Learners are immersed in an environment that promotes and respects student agency and responsibility for their learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.6

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - Conditions across all aspects of the institution promote learners' active discovery and expression of their needs and interests. Learners give input into the instructional and learning activities they pursue and the methods in which they learn. Learners consistently identify their learning targets and monitor their progress.
3	3 - Conditions within most aspects of the institution are learner-centered and promote learners' active discovery and expression of their needs and interests. Learners give input into most of the instructional and learning activities available to them. Learners are frequently involved in identifying their learning targets and monitoring their progress.
2	2 - Conditions within some aspects of the institution are learner-centered and promote learners' active discovery and expression of their needs and interests. Learners have some opportunity for input into the instructional and learning activities available to them. Learners are sometimes involved in identifying their learning targets and monitoring their progress.
1	1 - Learners engage in environments that are heavily instructor-centered. Learners have little or no input into the instructional and learning activities available to them. Learners are rarely expected to monitor their learning progress.

Standard 20



Learners engage in experiences that promote and develop their self-confidence and love of learning.

YOUR RATING
★★★★☆
Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Learners consistently pursue challenging opportunities that may not always result in success, knowing that they will be supported when needed. Learners readily and consistently show motivation, curiosity, and excitement about their learning. |
| 3 | 3 - Most learners pursue opportunities that may not always result in success, knowing they will be supported. Most learners show motivation, curiosity, and excitement about their learning. |
| 2 | 2 - Some learners pursue opportunities that may not always result in success, but only with significant, individual support. Some learners show motivation, curiosity, and excitement about their learning. |
| 1 | 1 - Most learners primarily pursue opportunities they believe to be risk-free or heavily guaranteed to be successful. Most learners show little motivation, curiosity, or excitement about their learning. |

Standard 21

Instruction is characterized by high expectations and learner-centered practices.

YOUR RATING
★★★★☆
Network Average: 2.8

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Learners engage in instructional activities, experiences, and interactions based on their individual needs and interests. Professional staff members consistently deliver instruction designed for learners to reach their potential. |
| 3 | 3 - Most learners engage in instructional activities, experiences, and interactions based on their individual needs and interests. Professional staff members routinely deliver instruction designed for learners to reach their potential. |
| 2 | 2 - Learners engage in instructional activities, experiences, and interactions based on needs and interests typical of most students. Professional staff members infrequently deliver instruction designed for learners to reach their potential. |
| 1 | 1 - Instructional activities are primarily designed around curriculum objectives with little or no focus on learner needs and interests. Professional staff members rarely deliver instruction designed for learners to reach their individual potential. |

Standard 22

Instruction is monitored and adjusted to advance and deepen individual learners' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

YOUR RATING
★★★★☆
Network Average: 2.7



LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

4	4 - Professional staff members consistently monitor and adjust instruction based on each learner's response to instruction and achievement of desired learning targets. Professional staff members use a formal, systematic process for analyzing trend and current data to deepen each learner's understanding of content at increasing levels of complexity.
3	3 - Professional staff members regularly monitor and adjust instruction based on each learner's response to instruction and achievement of desired learning targets. Professional staff members routinely analyze trend and current data to deepen each learner's understanding of content.
2	2 - Professional staff members sometimes monitor and adjust instruction based on each learner's achievement of desired learning targets. Professional staff members sometimes analyze data to deepen each learner's understanding of content.
1	1 - Professional staff members rarely monitor and adjust instruction. Professional staff members rarely analyze data to deepen each learner's understanding of content.

Standard 23

Professional staff members integrate digital resources that deepen and advance learners' engagement with instruction and stimulate their curiosity.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.7

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

4	4 - Professional staff members seamlessly and deliberately integrate digital resources that add value to the learning process and encourage learners' active engagement in the learning process. Digital resources consistently support learners' pursuit of interests and deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners' curiosity.
3	3 - Professional staff members intentionally select and integrate digital resources that add value to the learning process and encourage learners' active engagement in the learning process. Digital resources routinely support learners' pursuit of interests and deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners' curiosity.
2	2 - Professional staff members occasionally select and integrate digital resources that add value to the learning process or encourage learners' active engagement in the learning process. Digital resources sometimes support learners' pursuit of interests and deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners' curiosity.
1	1 - Professional staff members select and integrate few or no digital resources or select digital resources that rarely add value to the learning process or encourage learners' active engagement in the learning process. Digital resources rarely support learners' pursuit of interests or deepen or extend curriculum topics to stimulate learners' curiosity.

Network Comparison for Engagement of Learning Standards



Growth in Learning Standards

A good institution positively impacts learners throughout their journey of learning. A positive impact on the learner is reflected in readiness to engage in and preparedness for the next transition in their learning. Growth in learning is also reflected in learners' ability to meet expectations in knowledge and skill acquisition.

Keys to Growth in Learning

Growth is evident when:

- Learners possess non-academic skills that ensure readiness to learn
- Learners' academic achievement reflects preparedness to learn
- Learners demonstrate growth in meeting expectations of learning as defined by the institution
- Learners attain knowledge and skills necessary to achieve goals for learning

Standard 24

Leaders use data and input from a variety of sources to make decisions for learners' and staff members' growth and well-being.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - Leaders consistently demonstrate skill and insight in considering a variety of information, choosing relevant and timely information, and interpreting data. Leaders make intentional decisions by consistently taking into account data and additional factors that have an impact on learners and staff members, such as institution history, recent experiences, and future possibilities.
3	3 - Leaders regularly demonstrate skill and insight in considering a variety of information, choosing relevant and timely information, and interpreting data. Leaders make decisions by routinely taking into account data and additional factors that have an impact on learners and staff members, such as institution history, recent experiences, and future possibilities.
2	2 - Leaders sometimes demonstrate skill and insight in considering and choosing information and interpreting data. Leaders make decisions that occasionally take into account data and additional factors that have an impact on learners and staff members, such as institution history, recent experiences, and future possibilities.
1	1 - Leaders rarely demonstrate skill and insight in considering and choosing information and interpreting data. Leaders make decisions that rarely take into account data and additional factors that have an impact on learners and staff members, such as institution history, recent experiences, and future possibilities.

Standard 25



Leaders promote action research by professional staff members to improve their practice and advance learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.5

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - Leaders intentionally create and preserve a culture that invites inquiry, reflection, and dialogue about instructional problems and issues relevant to the institution and/or individual learning environments. Professional staff members, as a group or as individuals, consistently engage in action research using an inquiry-based process that includes identifying instructional areas of improvement, collecting data, and reporting results to make informed instructional changes. Leaders provide and engage in learning opportunities customized for professional staff members about action research. |
| 3 | 3 - Leaders regularly create and preserve a culture that invites inquiry, reflection, and dialogue about instructional problems and issues relevant to the institution and/or individual learning environments. Professional staff members, as a group or as individuals, routinely engage in action research using an inquiry-based process that includes identifying instructional areas of improvement, collecting data, and reporting results to make informed instructional changes. Leaders provide and engage in learning opportunities for professional staff members to implement action research. |
| 2 | 2 - Leaders occasionally create and preserve a culture that invites inquiry, reflection, and dialogue about instructional problems and issues relevant to the institution and/or individual learning environments. Professional staff members, as a group or as individuals, sometimes engage in action research using an inquiry-based process that includes identifying instructional areas of improvement, collecting data, and reporting results to make informed instructional changes. Leaders provide and engage in some learning opportunities for professional staff members to implement action research. |
| 1 | 1 - Leaders rarely create a culture that invites inquiry, reflection, and dialogue about instructional problems and issues relevant to the institution or learning environments. Professional staff members seldom engage in action research to make informed instructional changes. Leaders provide and engage in few or no learning opportunities for professional staff members about action research. |

Standard 26

Leaders regularly evaluate instructional programs and organizational conditions to improve instruction and advance learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.7

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 | 4 - Leaders consistently implement a documented process to determine the effectiveness of the institution's curriculum and instruction, including staffing and resources. Leaders use a formal, systematic process for analyzing current and trend data and stakeholder input to make decisions about retaining, changing, or replacing programs and practices. |
| 3 | 3 - Leaders routinely implement a documented process to determine the effectiveness of the institution's curriculum and instruction, including staffing and resources. Leaders use analyzed current and trend data and stakeholder input to make decisions about retaining, changing, or replacing programs and practices. |
| 2 | 2 - Leaders occasionally implement a process to determine the effectiveness of the institution's curriculum and instruction, including staffing and resources. Leaders sometimes use data and stakeholder input to make decisions about retaining, changing, or replacing programs and practices. |

- 1 1 - Leaders rarely implement a process to determine the effectiveness of the institution's curriculum and instruction, including staffing and resources. Leaders seldom use data and stakeholder input to make decisions about retaining, changing, or replacing programs and practices.

Standard 27

Learners' academic and non-academic needs are identified and effectively addressed through appropriate interventions.

YOUR RATING



Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- 4 4 - The institution consistently addresses the range of developmental, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs to support learners' ability to learn. Strategies and interventions for these needs are formally and systematically planned and implemented based on analyzed information, data, and instructional best practices to ensure learners' success.
- 3 3 - The institution routinely addresses the range of developmental, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs to support learners' ability to learn. Strategies and interventions for these needs are regularly planned and implemented based on analyzed information, data, and instructional best practices to ensure learners' success.
- 2 2 - The institution sometimes addresses the range of developmental, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs to support learners' ability to learn. Strategies and interventions for these needs are occasionally planned and implemented based on information, data, and instructional best practices to ensure learners' success.
- 1 1 - The institution rarely addresses the range of developmental, physical, emotional, and intellectual needs to support learners' ability to learn. Strategies and interventions for these needs are seldom planned and implemented based on information, data, or instructional best practices.

Standard 28

Learners pursue individual goals including the acquisition of academic and non-academic skills important for their educational futures and careers.

YOUR RATING



Network Average: 2.9

LEVEL DESCRIPTION

- 4 4 - Professional staff members consistently engage with learners to help them recognize their talents and potential and to identify meaningful, attainable goals that support academic, career, personal, and social skills. Learners consistently choose activities and monitor their own progress, demonstrating active ownership of their stated goals.
- 3 3 - Professional staff members regularly engage with learners to help them recognize their talents and potential and to identify meaningful, attainable goals that support academic, career, personal, and social skills. Learners routinely choose activities and monitor their own progress, demonstrating active ownership of their stated goals.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 | 2 - Professional staff members sometimes engage with learners to help them recognize their talents and potential and to identify meaningful, attainable goals that support academic, career, personal, and social skills. Learners occasionally choose activities and monitor their own progress, demonstrating active ownership of their stated goals. |
| 1 | 1 - Professional staff members rarely engage with learners to help them recognize their talents and potential and to identify meaningful, attainable goals that support academic, career, personal, and social skills. Learners do not choose activities or monitor their own progress toward goals. |

Standard 29

Understanding learners' needs and interests drives the design, delivery, application, and evaluation of professional learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.6

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - Professional learning is learner-centered, customized around the needs of individual or groups of professional staff members, and focuses on improving pedagogical skills and knowledge to better address learners' needs and interests. A documented process to select, deliver, implement, and evaluate professional learning is fully implemented and monitored for fidelity. |
| 3 | 3 - Professional learning is learner-centered, designed around the principle that professional staff members need opportunities to focus on improving pedagogical skills and knowledge to better address learners' needs and interests. A documented process to select, deliver, implement, and evaluate professional learning is being fully implemented. |
| 2 | 2 - Professional learning is occasionally learner-centered designed around the principle that professional staff members need opportunities to focus on improving pedagogical skills and knowledge to better address learners' needs and interests. A documented process to select, deliver, implement, and evaluate professional learning exists but is not fully implemented. |
| 1 | 1 - Professional learning is rarely learner-centered and may or may not focus on improving pedagogical skills and knowledge to better address learners' needs and interests. A documented process to select, deliver, implement, and evaluate professional learning does not exist. |

Standard 30

Learners' progress is measured through a balanced system that includes assessment both for learning and of learning.

YOUR RATING

 Network Average: 2.8

LEVEL	DESCRIPTION
-------	-------------

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 | 4 - Professional staff members and learners collaborate to determine learners' progress toward and achievement of intended learning objectives based on assessment data gathered through formal and informal methods. Assessment data are systematically used for ongoing planning, decision making, and modification of curriculum and instruction. |
|---|--|

3	3 - Professional staff members and learners regularly use assessment data gathered through formal and informal methods to determine learners' progress toward and achievement of intended learning objectives. Assessment data are routinely used for ongoing planning, decision making, and modification of curriculum and instruction.
2	2 - Professional staff members occasionally use assessment data gathered through formal and informal methods to determine learners' progress toward and achievement of intended learning objectives. Assessment data are sometimes used for ongoing planning, decision making, and modification of curriculum and instruction.
1	1 - Professional staff members seldom use assessment data to determine learners' progress toward and achievement of intended learning objectives. Assessment data are rarely or inconsistently used for ongoing planning, decision making, and modification of curriculum and instruction.

Standard 31

Learners demonstrate growth in their academic performance based on valid and reliable assessments.

YOUR RATING



LEVEL DESCRIPTION

4	4 - The institution consistently sustains high levels of learner performance over time and/or shows consistent trends of improvement in low-performing areas. The institution continually monitors and uses results from multiple required and/or selected valid and reliable assessments of student learning and implements formal plans to address areas of low performance. The institution consistently communicates results and plans for improving learner performance with stakeholders.
3	3 - The institution routinely sustains high levels of learner performance over time and/or shows trends of improvement in low-performing areas. The institution regularly monitors and uses results from multiple required and/or selected valid and reliable assessments of student learning and implements plans to address areas of low performance. The institution routinely communicates results and plans for improving learner performance with stakeholders.
2	2 - The institution occasionally sustains high levels of learner performance over time and/or shows trends of improvement in low-performing areas. The institution sometimes monitors results from multiple required and/or selected assessments of student learning and implements plans to address areas of low performance. The institution occasionally communicates results and plans for improving learner performance with stakeholders.
1	1 - The institution rarely sustains high levels of learner performance over time or shows trends of improvement in low-performing areas. The institution inconsistently monitors or uses results from multiple required and/or selected assessments of student learning and implements plans to address areas of low performance. The institution seldom communicates results or plans for improving learner performance with stakeholders.

Insights from the Review

The evaluators engaged in professional discussions and deliberations about the effectiveness of the processes, programs, and practices within the institution to arrive at the findings of the report. Guided by evidence, the evaluators arrived at findings that will inform your institution's continuous improvement efforts. The findings are aligned to research-based criteria designed to improve student learning and organizational effectiveness.

The findings are organized into narratives around four Key Characteristics critical to the success of any educational institution: culture of learning, leadership for learning, engagement of learning, and growth in learning. The narratives also provide the next steps to guide your institution's improvement journey in its efforts to improve the quality of educational opportunities for all learners. The feedback provided in this Accreditation Engagement Review Report will assist your institution in reflecting on its current improvement efforts and adapting and adjusting your plans to continuously strive for improvement.

Culture of Learning

Learner well-being anchors a respectful culture.

The vision, mission, and beliefs of Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB) actively drive a system grounded in fairness and respect. These guiding documents do not sit on a shelf or appear only on a poster; they shape decisions and guide learner-centered processes such as the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework and the "I Do, We Do, You Do" instructional model, which foster whole-child learning and growth. Stakeholder surveys showed 100% of responding parents and 93% of all stakeholders indicated strong alignment and satisfaction with the school's guiding principles and mission. One parent affirmed, "The school considers the well-being of my child, not just the academic." The school demonstrates strong internal support for its priorities, yet it identified engaging external stakeholders as a strategic priority. Interviews revealed that parents strongly support the school but remain largely unaware of its continuous improvement goals or progress toward meeting them.

The school's Executive Summary states, "The school operates with the core belief that all children are capable and confident." Classroom observations and student interviews confirmed this belief, as the

accreditation team encountered confident learners who enjoy their school environment. Student attendance rates have been increasing, indicating that students want to attend school. Students also report feeling safe, with 93% of survey respondents agreeing that the school provides a safe environment. A parent shared, "My son likes school; he wants to come to school. He has friends, and he likes to be here." Staff interviews reinforced this caring culture with comments such as "We treat our kids like they are our kids" and "We care for them like a parent." A visiting literacy coach observed: "The most consistent and powerful positive trend is the universal success in establishing a positive, safe, and affirming classroom environment. This is not an isolated success but a widespread cultural trend in your school."

Staff and students build positive relationships even without a formal structure to foster them. The school's small size and favorable student-to-staff ratio enable close connections. Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) ensure students receive additional support beyond academics, strengthening relationships with classroom teachers and other professionals. Survey data show that 75% of stakeholders agree that the school has a structure to ensure each student is "well-known by at least one adult advocate."

MSDB adopted the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Plus model to guide staff collaboration. PLC structures include outreach, transition, cottage, and campus PLCs, involving staff from all areas of the institution. Since implementation, administration has welcomed feedback and adjusted the model, so PLCs focus on one topic for the entire year. This structure empowers teams to select topics, analyze data, and make decisions collaboratively. Teachers report moving from "lone wolves" in siloed environments toward a culture of collegiality. Staff interviews highlighted comments such as "Everybody works really hard for the kids," "Everybody jumps in," and "We're willing to help each other out." However, staff acknowledged the presence of "cliques" and noted that fostering respectful relationships among adults remains an ongoing need.

The school offers professional learning opportunities to strengthen collaboration and support continuous improvement priorities. These include a mentoring and induction program for new staff, with artifacts showing agendas and planning. Evaluation of the induction program yielded a satisfaction rate of 9.1 on



a 10-point scale, and staff turnover declined after implementation. The school has not yet embedded coaching, and staff do not receive regular feedback on professional practice from peers or administration. Staff noted that professional development “helps us understand roles, how we work with each other and look at the whole child,” and that training “is helping us look at some skill sets and how that contributes to the whole kid.” They also expressed that collaboration has made them “the strongest that we have been,” with hopes of evolving into a systematic model. To build on the current professional learning structure, the accreditation team suggests creating a multi-year professional development plan aligned with strategic goals and reinforced through regular feedback on instructional practices.

Leadership for Learning

Continuous improvement characterizes the institution. The institution maintains a comprehensive continuous improvement plan that was initially developed by a broad group of stakeholders and aligned with Board Policy 1610, which requires a process for formulating annual objectives. Leadership monitors the plan’s priorities and reports progress to staff and stakeholders through an annual report. However, the report for the previous year was not completed, partly due to staffing shortages. Despite the absence of a formal printed report, the superintendent complied with policy by reporting to the board on the school’s progress toward achieving its objectives. A comprehensive needs assessment informs the strategic plan, and leadership implements and monitors its elements, adjusting based on analysis of perception, performance, program, and demographic data.

The Montana State Board of Education, which serves as the governing board, receives regular updates on progress toward strategic goals. Board Policy 1521, Board/Superintendent Relationship, states that the board “adopts policies necessary to provide the general direction for the School and to encourage achievement of School goals.” The board has supported administrative requests to the legislature for supplemental funding to address critical needs and ensure student success. The board approves policies included in a manual developed with guidance from the Montana School Boards Association, and these policies appear to have been recently reviewed or adopted.

School leaders prioritize learner needs when planning for future staffing, facilities, and resources. Leaders

use data to forecast staffing requirements and advocate for legislative funding to meet those needs. The school advertises open positions statewide, regionally, and nationally, attracting many new staff from outside Montana. Despite challenges in hiring and retaining mission-driven professionals with specialized skills, the school employs qualified and dedicated staff who deliver high-quality, individualized services to students. The mentoring and induction program has contributed positively to staff retention.

The school has supervision and evaluation tools for different employee groups; however, staff report that evaluations are infrequent, and feedback on professional practice is limited. Staff expressed a desire for administrators to visit classrooms more often to validate instructional practices and provide constructive suggestions for improvement.

Curriculum planning and implementation remain inconsistent. Staff reported that prior to five years ago, the school lacked an adopted curriculum in any content area. Since then, leadership facilitated a thorough and inclusive process to study and adopt English language arts (ELA) curricula for grades K–12, and implementation was monitored and reported. A part-time curriculum coordinator has developed documents outlining grade-level expectations across content areas, but evidence suggests these documents do not consistently guide instructional delivery. Curriculum revision occurs in isolated areas; for example, the secondary social studies curriculum was recently updated based on new state standards and Great Falls Public Schools’ adoption of standards-aligned curricula. A campus PLC is currently reviewing the math curriculum. Teachers expressed a preference for core resources rather than independently sourcing standards-aligned programs. The accreditation team did not find evidence of a curriculum review cycle or a formal process for adopting new resources when needed.

Staff augment curricula with supplemental resources to meet individual student needs. For example, the high school social studies teacher researched and integrated additional materials to make the new curriculum accessible to MSDB students. A comprehensive curriculum plan could ensure consistent review and alignment with state standards across all content areas. The accreditation team suggests developing such a plan with input from staff.

Engagement of Learning

Learners at MSDB thrive in a supportive

environment that fosters lifelong skills. Students take responsibility for their learning by understanding their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals and actively participating in developing and monitoring those goals. Interviews revealed that students gradually assume greater ownership and voice in IEP goal-setting activities. While younger students attend meetings with support, older students—particularly those preparing for postsecondary transition—lead their own IEP meetings. One student explained, “We participate in our IEPs. We are learning about our IEPs. We do most of it, but it depends on the grade level.” Students also demonstrated awareness of daily learning targets in their classrooms. However, there is little evidence that students regularly track their progress toward meeting these daily targets. On the Effective Learning Environments Observation Tool® (eleot®) utilized by the accreditation team, one of the lowest scoring indicators was “students monitor their own learning progress or have mechanisms whereby their learning is monitored.”

MSDB promotes student success, which builds self-confidence and self-efficacy. The school provides experiences that integrate academic learning with life skills, challenging students to develop independence. Accreditation team members observed staff supporting students without enabling them. A parent affirmed this approach, stating, “They aren’t babied. They have a higher standard to be held to.” The Living, Employment, Academic Planning (LEAP) program, guided by the provisions of the LEAP handbook, outlines postsecondary transition expectations. The program is spearheaded by a dedicated director who supports and advises students in the transition process.

The school collaboratively created the Journey of a Learner document, which defines lifelong skills and traits expected of all students, including becoming an “independent person” and a “responsible learner.” Digital resource integration is a notable strength, as MSDB employs tools that make curriculum accessible and teach students to use technology effectively. Developing “digital citizens” is a core component of the Journey of a Learner. The school culture encourages students and staff to take healthy risks and explore innovative practices. One staff member noted, “Administration allows us to think outside the box. They don’t tell us we have to do it this way. They give you the freedom to try things that are not traditional.” Another added that leadership is “willing to accept new ideas that I have.”

Because staff members know students well, instruction is often learner-centered and follows the “I Do, We Do, You Do” model to promote engagement. The accreditation team observed students engaged in learning scoring a remarkable 3.92 of 4.0 on the eleot. The school’s own Learning Environment Observations Analysis notes a concern that “general engagement is high, but it is not consistently sustained during the transition to full independence and higher cognitive tasks.” They surmise that reducing verbal cues and prompts as well as increasing wait time may promote sustained independence and move students from guided practice to problem solving and self-correction.

However, the absence of a well-articulated, standards-aligned curriculum across all content areas and grade levels makes it difficult to ensure consistently high expectations for every student. Without a clear curriculum, setting rigorous learning targets aligned to grade-level standards remains a challenge. Additionally, evidence suggests that instruction is not consistently monitored or adjusted based on data. The school’s Engagement of Learning narrative identifies systematic use of data for instructional adjustment as a critical improvement area in its continuous improvement plan. The needs assessment revealed that 32% of staff rated the practice of “ensuring all staff use student data to address unique learning needs” as either Basic Implementation or Unsure/Not Implemented. One of the school’s theories of action is to hold mandatory weekly data team meetings to systematically analyze student performance data, implement differentiation strategies collaboratively, and adjust instructional delivery. The accreditation team suggests implementing this strategy of regularly reviewing student data to promote consistent and effective monitoring and adjustment of instruction.

Growth in Learning

MSDB demonstrates a strong commitment to supporting students throughout their learning journey. According to the school’s Self-Assessment, MSDB maintains “a deep commitment to providing individualized support and a whole-child approach” to address both academic and non-academic needs. The Stakeholder Feedback Analysis revealed that non-instructional services are the most consistently and highly rated area across the school community, with 86% of respondents favorably rating support services such as counseling, referrals, and career planning. Additionally, the accreditation team’s eleot observations identified supportive learning as the

highest-rated domain, with an average score of 3.77 out of 4.

MSDB employs a balanced assessment system that integrates formative, benchmark, and summative assessments. Staff members collect and analyze longitudinal data, and the low staff-to-student ratio enables frequent informal data collection through personalized interactions and ongoing progress monitoring.

Student growth, as measured by the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), is consistently positive from fall to spring administrations, confirming that students learn during the school year as a result of the instruction and support provided. However, this growth does not consistently translate into retention and application on other assessments, such as the ACT. The school remains concerned about its composite ACT average of 12.13. Furthermore, spring-to-spring MAP scores fluctuate and occasionally decline. The school's Learning Environment Observation Analysis states that "instruction needs to be strengthened to ensure students move beyond surface-level participation to genuine, deep cognitive engagement and develop long-term retention," emphasizing the need for students to independently apply knowledge and skills in new contexts.

State assessment results indicate that MSDB students are capable of meeting rigorous state-mandated standards and, in some cases, achieving at an advanced level. The school's Student Performance Analysis notes that "given the unique learning challenges inherent in a specialized school for students with sensory disabilities, performance at the Proficient or Advanced level on state-mandated, grade-level tests is a strong indicator of achievement significantly above expected levels of performance for this student population."

Staff analyze these mixed results to inform professional development and other operational aspects of the school. Leaders strive to foster a culture of professional inquiry through the PLC Plus collaboration model and targeted professional development designed to improve teaching and learning. Creating and sustaining an organizational culture that promotes continuous learning for all staff is an organizational effectiveness goal in the strategic plan. Over the past several years, professional development has included both schoolwide initiatives and targeted sessions for specific employee groups.

Leaders incorporate staff input and identify needs when designing and delivering relevant professional learning opportunities. A review of professional development agendas indicates that staff sometimes have choice in their learning, as multiple options are provided. Staff members also reported that individual learning needs are addressed through attendance at conferences, workshops, or specialized training. One staff member stated, "We get a lot of support to go to what we need." An induction program orients new staff members and complements mentoring provided by experienced employees.

Staff members reported frequent surveys regarding the effectiveness of professional development offerings. The school provided evidence of collecting and analyzing these data and adjusting professional learning based on the results. Evaluating programs and processes is a strength of MSDB. The accreditation team examined comprehensive needs assessments that included input from diverse stakeholder groups and evaluated numerous programs and processes, such as communication; instructional strategies, practices, and interventions; quality of instruction; data-driven decision-making; and resource allocation. After implementing the PLC Plus process, MSDB conducted an evaluation and adjusted based on findings. Similarly, the school evaluated its mentoring and induction program and revised it based on feedback. The accreditation team also reviewed an MTSS needs assessment conducted by an external entity, which included staff surveys, interviews, and classroom observations to measure implementation fidelity.

The accreditation team suggests that MSDB provide professional development focused on evidence-based strategies that help students synthesize and apply knowledge and skills, increasing retention over time, and ensuring readiness for postsecondary transition.



Summary of Findings

The review process focused on establishing evidence of effective practice and performance of the institution in relation to the accreditation standards.

Noteworthy Practices

In conducting the review, the evaluator identified Noteworthy Practices that reflect significant areas of strength in the work of the institution. Although there are numerous examples of the institution's level of quality, the recognition of Noteworthy Practices reflects the greatest strengths of the institution.

- 1 MSDB is relentlessly focused on each learner's academic and non-academic well-being. Interviews and classroom observations confirmed a supportive learning environment characterized by positive staff-student relationships, where students are encouraged to take risks, engage with content, and complete tasks successfully.**

Standard 1 Standard 2 Standard 18

Areas for Improvement

Using the information collected and reviewed, the evaluator identified the following Areas for Improvement that will help the institution improve. The Areas for Improvement will be revisited when the institution conducts Cognia's Progress Report.

- 1 Develop and implement a standards-aligned curriculum framework with a regular review cycle to ensure instructional consistency and rigor.**

Standard 12 Standard 26

RATIONALE

If existing curriculum documents are updated and revised to create a K–12 standards-aligned curriculum framework, then students may be better prepared to meet grade-level expectations, demonstrate deeper understanding, and achieve consistent academic growth.

- 2 Create and deploy a system where staff members receive timely, actionable feedback to improve professional practice.**

Standard 10

RATIONALE

If a system is devised to provide feedback to staff members on professional practice, then educators may refine instructional strategies, strengthen effectiveness, and enhance student learning.

- 3 Establish and implement a formal data analysis protocol to support consistent use of student performance data for instructional planning and modification.**

Standard 22 Standard 30

RATIONALE

If a formal data analysis process is implemented systemwide, then staff may consistently use assessment results to plan instruction, adjust strategies, and improve student learning outcomes through data-driven decision-making.



Accreditation Status and Index of Education Quality®

Cognia will review the results of the Accreditation Engagement Review to make a final determination concerning the accreditation status of your institution based on these findings. Cognia provides the Index of Education Quality (IEQ) as a holistic measure of overall performance.

Your Institution's IEQ	STATUS AND SCORE	DESCRIPTION
304 Cognia's IEQ Network Average: 297	Accredited with Distinction Above 360	An Index of Education Quality® above 360 indicates that the institution substantially exceeds Cognia's expectations for accreditation in almost all areas and exemplifies educational excellence. While the accreditation team still may identify Areas for Improvement, the review findings indicate several Noteworthy Practices.
	Accredited with Merit 320 to 360	An Index of Education Quality of 320 to 360 indicates the institution exceeds Cognia's expectations for accreditation and includes one or more Areas for Improvement and one or more Noteworthy Practices.
	Accredited 280 to 319	An Index of Education Quality in the range of 280 to 319 suggests the institution has a limited number of Areas for Improvement and may include one or more Noteworthy Practices.
	Accredited Needing Improvement 240 to 279	An Index of Education Quality in the range of 240 to 279 indicates the institution has several Areas for Improvement that must be addressed to meet expectations.
	Accredited Under Review* Below 240	An Index of Education Quality score below 240 indicates that the institution has many Areas for Improvement and should focus its improvement efforts on those areas and the related Standards and/or Assurances. The institution will be required to present Cognia with evidence of improvement within one year via a Monitoring Review. Additional Progress Reports will be required if satisfactory improvement is not achieved.

**Accredited Under Review status also can be conferred if an institution is in noncompliance with policies and Assurances impacting the effective operations of the institution or system.*



Your Next Steps

Accreditation is a continuous improvement process. The Engagement Review provides independent, objective guidance in relation to the Performance Standards and the institution's improvement journey. Upon receiving the Accreditation Engagement Review Report, the institution is expected to implement the following steps:

- Review and share the findings in this report with stakeholders.
- Use the findings from the report to guide and strengthen your institution's improvement efforts.
- Celebrate the successes noted in the report.
- Continue the improvement journey.
- Report to Cognia on your progress toward improvement.

Evaluator Roster

The Engagement Review is conducted by professionals with varied backgrounds and professional experiences. All evaluators complete Cognia training and elect certification to ensure knowledge and understanding of the Cognia tools and processes. The following professional(s) served on the Engagement Review:

EVALUATOR NAME	BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
Paige Fenton Hughes Lead Evaluator	Dr. Paige Fenton Hughes recently served as the Interim Executive Director of the Wyoming Community College Commission and was superintendent at Converse County School District #1 in Douglas, Wyoming. She previously served as the coordinator for the Wyoming State Board of Education and as superintendent in Lander, Wyoming, and Harding County, South Dakota. Dr. Fenton Hughes has a varied educational background, serving as an English teacher, coach, counselor, principal, athletic director, and assistant superintendent. She has consulted with districts on strategic planning, curriculum alignment, systems development, and process management. Dr. Fenton Hughes has led and served on accreditation teams across the nation and the world, in addition to presenting at state, regional, and national conferences. She holds a doctorate in educational leadership from the University of South Dakota, a principal's endorsement from the University of Montana, a master's degree in school counseling from Montana State University-Billings, and bachelor's degrees in English and history/political science from Rocky Mountain College.
Joette Hayden	

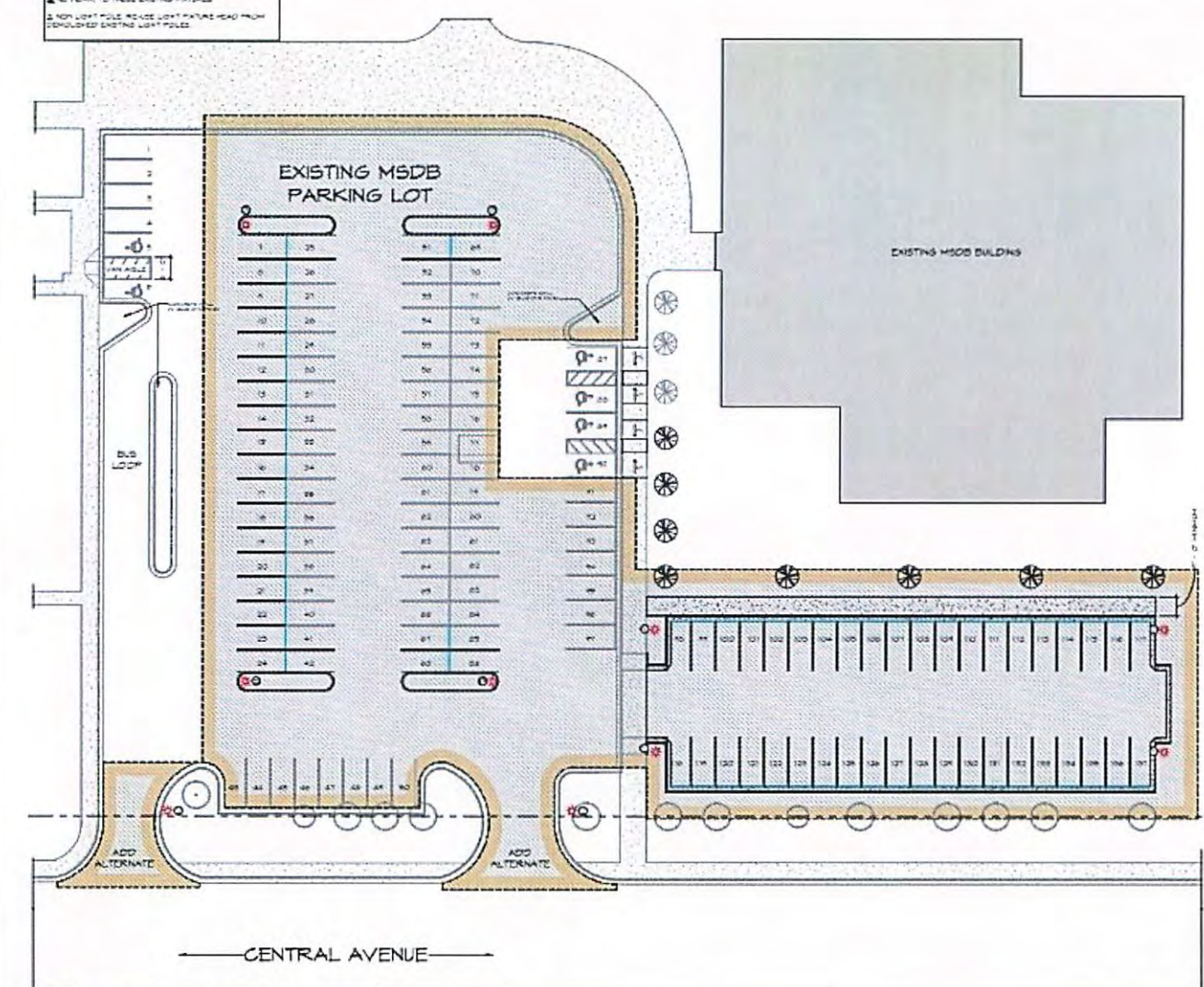


References and Readings

- AdvancED. (2015). Continuous Improvement and Accountability. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/issue-article/continuous-improvement-and-accountability/>
- Bernhardt, V., & Herbert, C. (2010). Response to intervention and continuous school improvement: Using data, vision, and leadership to design, implement, and evaluate a schoolwide prevention program. New York: Routledge.
- Chester, M.D. (2003). Multiple Measures and High-Stakes Decisions: A Framework for Combining Measures. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, 22: 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.2003.tb00126.x>
- Christenson, S., Reschly, A., & Wylie, C. (2012). Handbook of research on student engagement. Boston, MA: Springer.
- De Smet, A., Lurie, M., & St. George, A. (2018). Leading agile transformation: The new capabilities leaders need to build 21st-century organizations, McKinsey & Company, Retrieved from <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/organization/our%20insights/leading%20agile%20transformation%20the%20new%20capabilities%20leaders%20need%20to%20build/leading-agile-transformation-the-new-capabilities-leaders-need-to-build-21st-century-organizations.pdf>
- Dulak, J., Domitrovich, C., Weissberg, R., & Gullotta, T. (2015). Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Elgart, M. (2015). What a continuously improving system looks like. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://source.cognia.org/issue-article/what-continuously-improving-system-looks/>
- Elgart, M. (2017). Meeting the promise of continuous improvement: Insights from the AdvancED continuous improvement system and observations of effective schools. Alpharetta, GA: AdvancED. Retrieved from <https://www.cognia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Meeting-the-Promise-of-Continuous-Improvement-White-Paper.pdf>
- Ford, T., Lavigne, A., Fiegenger, A., & Si, S. (2020). Understanding district support for leader development and success in the accountability era: A review of the literature using social-cognitive theories of motivation. *Review of Educational Research*: 90 (2).
- Fullan, M. (2014). Leading in a culture of change personal action guide and workbook. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M. & Quinn, J. (2016) Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Hamedani, M. G., Zheng, X., Darling-Hammond, L., Andree, A., & Quinn, B. (2015). Social emotional learning in high school: How three urban high schools engage, educate, and empower youth—Cross-case analysis.
- Haladyna, T. & Hess, R. (1999) An Evaluation of Conjunctive and Compensatory Standard-Setting Strategies for Test Decisions, *Educational Assessment*, 6:2, 129-153, DOI: 10.1207/S15326977EA0602_03
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). Sustainable leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Hitt, D. H., & Tucker, P. D. (2016). Systematic review of key leader practices found to influence student achievement. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(2), 531-569. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315614911>
- Jaeger, Richard M. (1991). A comparison of compensatory, conjunctive, and disjunctive models for weighing attributes of school quality. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. (Chicago, IL, April 3-7, 1991)

- Kim, W., & Mauborne, R. (2017). *Blue ocean shift: Beyond competing*. New York: Hachette Book Group.
- Park, S, Hironaka, S; Carver, P, & Nordstrum, L. (2013). *Continuous improvement in education*. San Francisco: Carnegie Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/carnegie-foundation_continuous-improvement_2013.05.pdf
- Schein, E. (1985). *Organizational culture and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Von Bertalanffy, L. (1968). *General systems theory*. New York: George Braziller, Inc.
- Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education.
- Rotherham, A., & Willingham, D. (2010). 21st century skills: Not new but a worthy challenge. *American Educator*, Spring, 17-20. Retrieved from <https://bellwethereducation.org/publication/21st-century-skills%E2%80%99-not-new-worthy-challenge>
- Thompson, C. S. (2017). Teachers' expectations of educational leaders' leadership approach and perspectives on the principalship: Identifying critical leadership paradigms for the 21st century," *Journal of Organizational & Educational Leadership*: 2 (2).

ELECTRICAL NOTES:
 1. NON LIGHT POLE AND LIGHT FIXTURE SEE BLUE SYMBOLS
 2. NO WORK TO THESE EXISTING FIXTURES
 3. NON LIGHT POLE, POLE LIGHT FIXTURE HEAD FROM EXISTING LIGHT POLES



2. OVERALL SITE PLAN - NEA
 1" = 20'-0"

SITE STATISTICS & PARKING REQUIREMENTS

EXIST. CONDITIONS	REQUIRED	ACTUAL
PARKING STALLS	24 EXISTING	121
ADA PARKING STALLS	3	6
ADA VAN PARKING STALLS	1	1

SITE AREA	FULLY LAND AND NOTIFICATION (PL)	FULLY LAND AND NOTIFICATION (PL)
LANDSCAPING	EXISTING TO REMAIN	EXISTING TO REMAIN
PLANTINGS	EXISTING TO REMAIN	EXISTING TO REMAIN

SITE PLAN LEGEND

CONSTRUCTION FENCES PROVIDED BY CONTRACTOR
 CONTRACTOR LAY DOWN AREA PARKING AND CONSTRUCTION LOTS, COORDINATES IN ORDER AND ARCHITECT IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS REQUIRED

PHASE 1

PHASE 2

EXTENT OF NEW PARKING LOT ALIENS

SITE PLAN GENERAL NOTES

- CONSTRUCTION LIMIT LINE IS APPROXIMATE. ACCESS TO OTHER AREAS AS REQUIRED BY FORM IS ACCEPTABLE BY APPROVAL OF ARCHITECT AND OWNER.
- ALL CONSTRUCTION FENCES PROVIDED BY CONTRACTOR.
- SEE CIVIL DRAWINGS FOR SITE SPECIFIC INFORMATION.
- ALL AREAS AFFECTED BY CONSTRUCTION ARE TO BE RESTORED BACK TO EXISTING CONDITIONS.
- SEE CIVIL DRAWINGS FOR SITE CONSTRUCTION MEASUREMENTS AND DIMENSIONS VERIFICATION.

- GREAT FALLS MUNICIPAL REQUIREMENTS**
- OFF-STREET PARKING SURFACES SHALL BE PORTLAND CEMENT CONCRETE OR ASPHALTIC CONCRETE.
 - OBSTRUCTION ON INTERNAL SIDEWALKS MUST BE PLACED TO ACCOMMODATE A MINIMUM FIVE (5) FEET CLEAR PATH OF TRAVEL FOR PEDESTRIANS.
 - PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIVITY MUST BE MAINTAINED FROM PUBLIC SIDEWALK TO PRIMARY STRUCTURES.
 - DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS FOR 45 DEGREE PARKING:
 - STALL WIDTH: 4-10 FEET
 - STALL LENGTH: 13-20 FEET
 - DRIVE AISLE WIDTH: 24-26 FEET
 - DRIVE AISLE WIDTH: 25-28 FEET
 - OUTDOOR LIGHTING CODE APPLICABLE DUE TO AN INCREASE OF PARKING AREA BY 25 PERCENT.
 - LIGHTING REQUIRED TO ILLUMINATE NEAR SIDEWALKS AND PARKING AREAS.
 - POLE MOUNTED LUMINAIRES TO BE MAXIMUM 30 FEET TALL.
 - LIGHT POLES TO BE ANCHORED OR PAINTED TO MINIMIZE SLAKE FROM LIGHT SOURCE.
 - MAXIMUM FOOT CANDLES FOR SIDEWALKS: 5.0
 - MAXIMUM FOOT CANDLES FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL PARKING AREAS: 5.0
 - LANDSCAPING APPLICABLE DUE TO AN EXPANSION OF FIVE OR MORE PARKING SPACES.
 - INTERIOR DECIDUOUS TREES - 1-1/4" TRUNK SIX INCHES FROM SPL LINE AND A MINIMUM HEIGHT OF FIVE (5) FEET.
 - MULCH: GRAVEL APPLIED TO A DEPTH OF THREE (3) INCHES.
 - LANDSCAPED ISLANDS MUST CONTAIN A TREE WITH EITHER SHRUBS AND/OR TURF GRASS. IF LIGHT POLES ARE LOCATED WITHIN A LANDSCAPE ISLAND, THE ISLAND TREE MAY BE PLANTED IN ANOTHER LOCATION WITHIN THE INTERIOR AREA TO BE LANDSCAPED.
 - IRRIGATION OF LANDSCAPING REQUIRED.
 - BUFFER BETWEEN USES, WHERE A NON-RESIDENTIAL USE ADJACENT A RESIDENTIAL USE, A MINIMUM FIFTY-FOOT LANDSCAPE BUFFER SHALL BE PROVIDED ALONG THE FULL LENGTH OF THE SHARED PROPERTY LINE. THE LANDSCAPE BUFFER SHALL CONTAIN DECIDUOUS TREES AND SHRUBS. THE PLANTINGS REQUIRED FOR THE LANDSCAPE BUFFER MAY BE COUNTED TOWARDS THE INTERIOR RATE OF PLANTINGS REQUIREMENT.

Nelsonarchitects
 Dream • Design • Build
 621 2nd Avenue North, Great Falls, MT 59401
 406.727.1266 • Nelsonarchitects.com

MSDB PARKING LOT
 IMPROVEMENTS A/E #2023-20-02A

REVISION SCHEDULE

DATE: 24-000

10/10/2023

PAYROLL TOTALS

		General Fund	School Trust	MSDB misc MOU's	General Fund	General Fund	General Fund	School Trust	IDEA Pre-school & Part B	IDEA Outreach	Newborn Hearing	MT Reads Grant	
		PGM 1	PGM 1	PGM 1	PGM 2	PGM 3	PGM 4	PGM 4	PGM 4	PGM 4	PGM 4	PGM 4	
		01100	02050	2259	01100	01100	01100	02050	03012	03064	03396	03590	
Budget		\$589,857.00	\$3,394.00	\$6,120.44	\$392,182.00	\$2,053,236.00	\$6,221,450.00	\$302,341.00	\$52,861.00	\$49,219.00	\$22,000.00	\$2,720.00	\$9,695,380.44
PPE:													
6/27/2025		(\$2,635.00)			(\$2,635.00)	(\$14,231.82)	(\$30,563.18)						(\$50,065.00)
7/11/2025		(\$20,205.98)			(\$13,172.42)	(\$55,389.98)	(\$181,366.78)						(\$270,135.16)
7/25/2025		(\$23,497.47)			(\$14,903.77)	(\$55,959.52)	(\$207,299.12)						(\$301,659.88)
8/8/2025		(\$23,458.35)			(\$14,252.82)	(\$57,458.76)	(\$228,646.23)						(\$323,816.16)
8/22/2025		(\$20,738.78)			(\$14,309.61)	(\$64,336.61)	(\$345,710.37)						(\$445,095.37)
9/5/2025		(\$24,085.66)			(\$15,452.61)	(\$83,595.58)	(\$248,327.44)						(\$371,461.29)
9/19/2025		(\$23,427.26)			(\$14,241.47)	(\$76,804.09)	(\$239,199.09)						(\$353,671.91)
10/3/2025		(\$23,425.31)			(\$14,269.86)	(\$81,207.78)	(\$236,975.32)						(\$355,878.27)
10/17/2025		(\$20,318.09)			(\$11,655.17)	(\$64,412.75)	(\$203,564.86)						(\$299,950.87)
10/31/2025		(\$26,877.40)			(\$14,264.16)	(\$80,066.58)	(\$238,793.06)						(\$360,001.20)
11/14/2025		(\$25,837.34)			(\$14,241.47)	(\$83,894.36)	(\$232,359.75)						(\$356,332.92)
11/28/2025		(\$23,425.35)			(\$14,326.65)	(\$76,681.05)	(\$231,626.23)						(\$346,059.28)
12/12/2025		(\$23,209.23)			(\$18,850.02)	(\$81,156.02)	(\$237,165.85)						(\$360,381.12)
12/26/2025													\$0.00
1/9/2026													\$0.00
1/23/2026													\$0.00
2/6/2026													\$0.00
2/20/2026													\$0.00
3/6/2026													\$0.00
3/20/2026													\$0.00
4/3/2026													\$0.00
4/17/2026													\$0.00
5/1/2026													\$0.00
5/16/2026													\$0.00
5/29/2026													\$0.00
6/12/2026													\$0.00
6/26/2026													\$0.00
TOTAL PAYROLL:		(\$281,141.22)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$176,575.03)	(\$875,194.90)	(\$2,861,597.28)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$4,194,508.43)
BALANCE		\$308,715.78	\$3,394.00	\$6,120.44	\$215,606.97	\$1,178,041.10	\$3,359,852.72	\$302,341.00	\$52,861.00	\$49,219.00	\$22,000.00	\$2,720.00	\$5,500,872.01 * TIES TO GL
12 AVERAGE PAYROLL		(\$23,428.44)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$14,714.59)	(\$72,932.91)	(\$238,466.44)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$349,542.37)
14 ESTIMATED PAYROLL		(\$327,998.09)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$206,004.20)	(\$1,021,060.72)	(\$3,338,530.16)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$4,893,593.17)
Retirement payouts:		\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$100,567.55)	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$100,567.55)
PROJECTED FYE BAL:		(\$19,282.31)	\$3,394.00	\$6,120.44	\$9,602.77	\$156,980.38	\$21,322.56	\$302,341.00	\$52,861.00	\$49,219.00	\$22,000.00	\$2,720.00	\$506,711.29 Total with Grants
FOUR PROGRAM TOTAL:							\$168,623.40						

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 06 (Dec)/2026

This report compares ORG Budgets (ORG_BD) to Actuals expended amounts

Business Unit	(All)
Program Year	2026
FY_BudPer	(All)
Month	(All)
Source of Auth	(All)
Fund Type	(All)
Org	(All)
Account	(All)
Acct Lvl 2	(All)
Account Type	E
Project	(All)
Ledger	(All)

[Menu!A1](#)

[Menu!A1](#)

OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			599,371.44	281,141.22	318,230.22
01100 General Fund			589,857.00	281,141.22	308,715.78
	<u>300H1 ADMINISTRATION</u>		589,857.00	281,141.22	308,715.78
		61000 Personal Services	589,857.00	281,141.22	308,715.78
02050 School Trust Interest/Income			3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
	<u>300H1 ADMINISTRATION</u>		3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
		61000 Personal Services	3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
02259 MSDB MISC MOUS			6,120.44	0.00	6,120.44
	<u>300A1 DIGITAL ACADEMY</u>		6,120.44	0.00	6,120.44
		61000 Personal Services	6,120.44	0.00	6,120.44
02 GENERAL SERVICES			392,182.00	176,575.03	215,606.97
01100 General Fund			392,182.00	176,575.03	215,606.97
	<u>305H1 GENERAL SERVICES</u>		392,182.00	176,575.03	215,606.97

	61000 Personal Services	392,182.00	176,575.03	215,606.97
03 STUDENT SERVICES		2,053,236.00	875,194.90	1,178,041.10
01100 General Fund		2,053,236.00	875,194.90	1,178,041.10
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		2,053,236.00	875,194.90	1,178,041.10
	61000 Personal Services	2,053,236.00	875,194.90	1,178,041.10
04 EDUCATION		6,650,591.00	2,861,597.28	3,788,993.72
01100 General Fund		6,221,450.00	2,861,597.28	3,359,852.72
315H1 EDUCATION		6,219,317.00	2,861,597.28	3,357,719.72
	61000 Personal Services	6,219,317.00	2,861,597.28	3,357,719.72
315Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION		2,133.00	0.00	2,133.00
	61000 Personal Services	2,133.00	0.00	2,133.00
02050 School Trust Interest/Income		302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00
315H1 EDUCATION		302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00
	61000 Personal Services	302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00
03012 E.C.I.A. Chapter I		52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
315H1 EDUCATION		52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
	61000 Personal Services	52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
03064 EHA, Part B		49,219.00	0.00	49,219.00
315H1 EDUCATION		49,202.00	0.00	49,202.00
	61000 Personal Services	49,202.00	0.00	49,202.00
315Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION		17.00	0.00	17.00
	61000 Personal Services	17.00	0.00	17.00
03396 DPHHS Grand - Newborn Hearing		22,000.00	0.00	22,000.00
315AT NEWBORN HEARING		22,000.00	0.00	22,000.00
	61000 Personal Services	22,000.00	0.00	22,000.00
03590 Federal Literacy Grant		2,720.00	0.00	2,720.00
315AU MT READS GRANT 9/30/26		2,720.00	0.00	2,720.00
	61000 Personal Services	2,720.00	0.00	2,720.00
Grand Total		9,695,380.44	4,194,508.43	5,500,872.01

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 06 (Dec)/2026

This report compares ORG Budgets (ORG_BD) to Actuals expended amounts

Business Unit	(All)
Program Year	2026
FY_BudPer	(All)
Month	(All)
Source of Auth	(All)
Fund Type	(All)
Org	(All)
Account	(All)
Acct Lvl 2	(All)
Account Type	E
Project	(All)
Ledger	(All)

[Return to Menu](#)

OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			884,153.46	454,517.03	429,636.43
01100 General Fund			874,435.00	454,517.03	419,917.97
	<u>300H1 ADMINISTRATION</u>		616,838.00	294,704.62	322,133.38
		61000 Personal Services	589,857.00	281,141.22	308,715.78
		62000 Operating Expenses	26,981.00	13,563.40	13,417.60
	<u>300H5 STATE ITSD (RST)</u>		257,597.00	159,812.41	97,784.59
		62000 Operating Expenses	257,597.00	159,812.41	97,784.59
02050 School Trust Interest/Income			3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
	<u>300H1 ADMINISTRATION</u>		3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
		61000 Personal Services	3,394.00	0.00	3,394.00
02259 MSDB MISC MOUS			6,324.46	0.00	6,324.46
	<u>300A1 DIGITAL ACADEMY</u>		6,324.46	0.00	6,324.46
		61000 Personal Services	6,120.44	0.00	6,120.44

	62000 Operating Expenses	204.02	0.00	204.02
02 GENERAL SERVICES		727,434.91	345,986.76	381,448.15
01100 General Fund		727,434.91	345,986.76	381,448.15
305F4 FY2024 CARRYFORWARD		1,060.91	0.00	1,060.91
	62000 Operating Expenses	10.41	0.00	10.41
	63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,050.50	0.00	1,050.50
305H1 GENERAL SERVICES		726,374.00	345,986.76	380,387.24
	61000 Personal Services	392,182.00	176,575.03	215,606.97
	62000 Operating Expenses	271,577.00	169,411.73	102,165.27
	68000 Transfers-out	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
	69000 Debt Service	61,615.00	0.00	61,615.00
03 STUDENT SERVICES		2,290,049.00	943,573.28	1,346,475.72
01100 General Fund		2,255,320.00	943,573.28	1,311,746.72
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		2,255,320.00	943,573.28	1,311,746.72
	61000 Personal Services	2,053,236.00	875,194.90	1,178,041.10
	62000 Operating Expenses	202,084.00	68,378.38	133,705.62
03167 National School Lunch		34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
	62000 Operating Expenses	34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
04 EDUCATION		7,097,661.00	3,077,729.69	4,019,931.31
01100 General Fund		6,548,740.00	3,064,477.46	3,484,262.54
315H1 EDUCATION		6,485,607.00	3,047,636.51	3,437,970.49
	61000 Personal Services	6,219,317.00	2,861,597.28	3,357,719.72
	62000 Operating Expenses	266,290.00	186,039.23	80,250.77
315H8 INTERPRETER PROF DEV (OTO)		61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
	62000 Operating Expenses	61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
315Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION		2,133.00	0.00	2,133.00
	61000 Personal Services	2,133.00	0.00	2,133.00
02050 School Trust Interest/Income		302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00
315H1 EDUCATION		302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00
	61000 Personal Services	302,341.00	0.00	302,341.00

03012 E.C.I.A. Chapter I		52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
<u>315H1 EDUCATION</u>		52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
: 61000 Personal Services		52,861.00	0.00	52,861.00
03064 EHA, Part B		119,219.00	5,689.85	113,529.15
<u>315H1 EDUCATION</u>		119,202.00	5,689.85	113,512.15
: 61000 Personal Services		49,202.00	0.00	49,202.00
: 62000 Operating Expenses		70,000.00	5,689.85	64,310.15
<u>315Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION</u>		17.00	0.00	17.00
: 61000 Personal Services		17.00	0.00	17.00
03235 DPHHS Grant		28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
<u>315AS PRE-ETS</u>		28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
: 62000 Operating Expenses		28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
03396 DPHHS Grand - Newborn Hearing		35,000.00	800.00	34,200.00
<u>315AT NEWBORN HEARING</u>		35,000.00	800.00	34,200.00
: 61000 Personal Services		22,000.00	0.00	22,000.00
: 62000 Operating Expenses		13,000.00	800.00	12,200.00
03590 Federal Literacy Grant		11,000.00	6,500.00	4,500.00
<u>315AU MT READS GRANT 9/30/26</u>		11,000.00	6,500.00	4,500.00
: 61000 Personal Services		2,720.00	0.00	2,720.00
: 62000 Operating Expenses		8,280.00	6,500.00	1,780.00
Grand Total		10,999,298.37	4,821,806.76	6,177,491.61

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 06 (Dec)/2026

This report compares ORG Budgets (ORG_BD) to Actuals expended amounts

Business Unit	(All)
Program Year	2026
FY_BudPer	(All)
Month	(All)
Source of Auth	(All)
Fund Type	(All)
Org	(All)
Account	(All)
Acct Lvl 2	(All)
Account Type	E
Project	(All)
Ledger	(All)

[Menu!A1](#)

[Menu!A1](#)

OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			284,782.02	173,375.81	111,406.21
01100 General Fund			284,578.00	173,375.81	111,202.19
300H1 ADMINISTRATION			26,981.00	13,563.40	13,417.60
62000 Operating Expenses			26,981.00	13,563.40	13,417.60
300H5 STATE ITSD (RST)			257,597.00	159,812.41	97,784.59
62000 Operating Expenses			257,597.00	159,812.41	97,784.59
02259 MSDB MISC MOUS			204.02	0.00	204.02
300A1 DIGITAL ACADEMY			204.02	0.00	204.02
62000 Operating Expenses			204.02	0.00	204.02
02 GENERAL SERVICES			335,252.91	169,411.73	165,841.18
01100 General Fund			335,252.91	169,411.73	165,841.18
305F4 FY2024 CARRYFORWARD			1,060.91	0.00	1,060.91
62000 Operating Expenses			10.41	0.00	10.41

	63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,050.50	0.00	1,050.50
305H1 GENERAL SERVICES		334,192.00	169,411.73	164,780.27
	62000 Operating Expenses	271,577.00	169,411.73	102,165.27
	68000 Transfers-out	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
	69000 Debt Service	61,615.00	0.00	61,615.00
03 STUDENT SERVICES		236,813.00	68,378.38	168,434.62
01100 General Fund		202,084.00	68,378.38	133,705.62
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		202,084.00	68,378.38	133,705.62
	62000 Operating Expenses	202,084.00	68,378.38	133,705.62
03167 National School Lunch		34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
	62000 Operating Expenses	34,729.00	0.00	34,729.00
04 EDUCATION		447,070.00	216,132.41	230,937.59
01100 General Fund		327,290.00	202,880.18	124,409.82
315H1 EDUCATION		266,290.00	186,039.23	80,250.77
	62000 Operating Expenses	266,290.00	186,039.23	80,250.77
315H8 INTERPRETER PROF DEV (OTO)		61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
	62000 Operating Expenses	61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
03064 EHA, Part B		70,000.00	5,689.85	64,310.15
315H1 EDUCATION		70,000.00	5,689.85	64,310.15
	62000 Operating Expenses	70,000.00	5,689.85	64,310.15
03235 DPHHS Grant		28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
315AS PRE-ETS		28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
	62000 Operating Expenses	28,500.00	262.38	28,237.62
03396 DPHHS Grand - Newborn Hearing		13,000.00	800.00	12,200.00
315AT NEWBORN HEARING		13,000.00	800.00	12,200.00
	62000 Operating Expenses	13,000.00	800.00	12,200.00
03590 Federal Literacy Grant		8,280.00	6,500.00	1,780.00
315AU MT READS GRANT 9/30/26		8,280.00	6,500.00	1,780.00
	62000 Operating Expenses	8,280.00	6,500.00	1,780.00

Grand Total	1,303,917.93	627,298.33	676,619.60
-------------	--------------	------------	------------



THE MSDB STUDENT LIFE NEWSLETTER



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER
2025

VOLUME 5, NO. 3

A huge thank
you to Angelina
and cottage
staff for
providing all the
stunning visuals
for this edition!



UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE

Since our October newsletter is has been a crazy and busy these past two months. As you will be able to see in the newsletter the pictures and stories really catch the excitement of the happenings in our Student Life Program. Our cottages are decorated to the hilt and there is much joy and celebration in the air. Students have been involved with performances, parties and many activities. We have so much to be thankful for as our wonderful kitchen staff prepare awesome meals and we just had our Christmas formal dinner on Sunday night for our students, staff, board members and other guests—it really was a delightful time for all. I have always said it is “not what we get for Christmas-but it is what we do that we remember the most”. I am very proud of the many activities and traditions that we have established and celebrated over the years – the kids will remember these!

Wishing you all a blessed and wonderful holiday with your families and looking forward to great things happening in 2026!

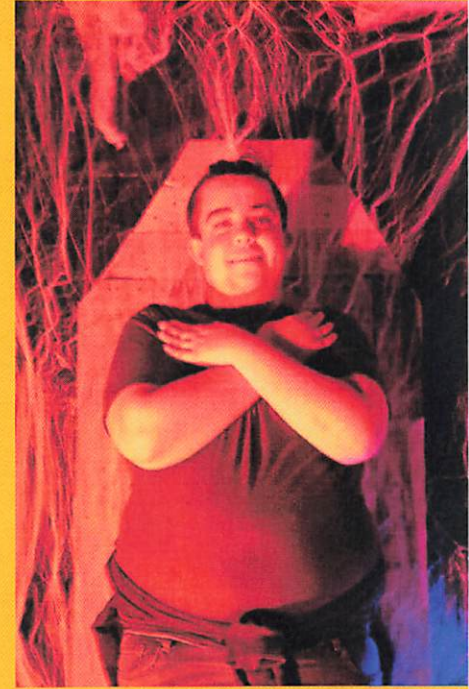
Jim Kelly II

A Cottage Halloween Party with LEAP

By Angelina



We invited the Cottage students from high school to our LEAP Halloween Party. I enjoyed photography. We enjoyed snacks, water, dessert, and they enjoyed the food. They enjoyed pumpkin painting, the Hot Potato game, Musical Chairs, Twister Walls with candy, and group photos with a Halloween background. We had loads of fun. We want to thank high school students and staff for coming to the Halloween party!



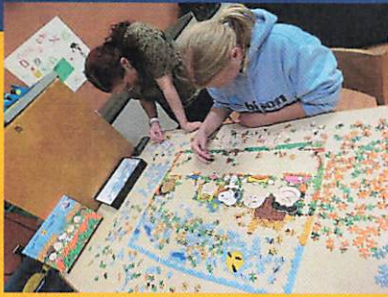
High School Perspective of the LEAP Halloween Party



By Madison

We had an epic time at the LEAP Halloween Party! 🎃 I won 1st place for my awesome painted pumpkin, with Marissa snagging 2nd, and David getting 3rd! It was such a blast seeing everyone's creative designs, but I'm definitely proud to have come out on top! Can't wait for the next Leap party! I tried to win both games, but Lilly always won! Dorothy had an idea for a game with Twister and snacks. I enjoyed myself, and we all had fun! We took a group picture with friends, LEAP, and the Cottage. We said, "Thank you for inviting LEAP!" 🎃🎃🎃





Puzzles at the Cottage

By Myra

We have puzzles that we can do in the cottage. In the activity room, we already did a 1,000 piece puzzle! It was a Charlie Brown puzzle. We have a dog puzzle in the cottage where the girls live, and the boys are working on their own puzzles-They have three in their cottage already!

Lounging in the Book Nook

By Elijah



In the cottage, there is a new book lounge. There are a lot of books and many places to sit. The seats are comfy to sit on. I love to read books!



4-H Begins

By Megan DeSilva



We got 4-H up and running! We had our first meeting on November 18th. Meetings for 4-H follow the Parliamentary Procedure, which is a set of rules that govern how meetings are conducted to debate and make decisions. It's based on the principles of majority rule, fairness to the minority, and giving every member a voice. Each meeting is conducted in this order: call the meeting to order, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and 4-H Pledge, roll call, secretary's report, treasurer's report, correspondence, committee reports, unfinished business, new business, and adjournment. We will vote for officers at our January meeting. Every month, we will have one Tuesday as a 4-H meeting, and the rest of the Tuesdays in the month, we will be working on our project books. Many of our students are interested in the Archery project and the Cooking 101 project.

We are stoked to get 4-H going again at MSDB!

Pizza Art

By Morris



One day, we made our own pizzas for dinner. We cut toppings like peppers, mushrooms, and ham. We decided what to put on our pizzas. I put sauce, sausage, cheese, and pepperoni on my pizza. Then we baked them and ate them. It tasted very good!



Cookie Decorating

By Carter



We started setting up for cookie decorating at 1:15pm. We set up a percolator to provide hot water for hot chocolate preparation. We started decorating for a cookie contest for elementary, middle, and high school. The most Grinch-like and the most beautiful. I did the most Grinchiest (I did the snowman cookie, and I added a face and hat on the cookie). The judges decided that the elementary third place was Kline's friend for the most Grinchiest, Matthew got second place for most Grinchiest, and I got first place for the most Grinchiest.



Annual Cookie Decorating

By Alissa

Do you have special Christmas traditions that you look forward to every year? For many people, making Christmas cookies is one of those traditions.

MSDB has a Cookie Decorating Party and Contest tradition that has a special beginning. Director of Student Life, Jim Kelly, started this tradition early in his career, but the tradition actually started long before that. Jim's brother has a birthday on Dec. 22. For his birthday party each year, his brother would invite friends to come decorate cookies. As they got older, his family began to invite others to come over and decorate cookies with them, including adults and teenagers.

A couple years after working at MSDB, Jim began the tradition of cookie decorating just with the Cottage students. Over the years, it became a campus-wide event. The event now includes MSDB staff and their families as well as students and their families.

This year we celebrated our Cookie Decorating Party with nearly 60 people. On Travel Return from Thanksgiving, staff volunteered their time to make the cookies. The night before the event, students and staff put all the sprinkles and frosting in cups for the occasion. On Saturday, Dec. 6, families gathered in the Dining Room and chose cookies to decorate. A variety of colored frosting and sprinkles were available to customize their designs. While everyone decorated and visited with each other, they sipped on hot chocolate and enjoyed flavored candy canes. Near the end of the event, each person was able to submit a cookie for judging in each category: Most Beautiful or Most Grinchy. Small prizes were awarded to the top three winners of each category.

Fun Fact: The cookie cutters that were used this year went back to the original designs that were used in Jim's family when the tradition first started: a star, a tree, a stocking and Santa. Jim states that this tradition has been going on for over 60 years. We look forward to carrying on this tradition even after Jim retires. We hope you join us for our future Cookie Decorating Party and Contest events.



Weekly Student Life Activities

- EOS (Mon/Wed)
- 4-H (Tues)
- Goal Ball (Tues and Thurs)
- Flying Hooves-Elem. (Tues)
- Moving Mustangs (Tues 2x/mo)
- Computer Club (Tues 2x/mo)
- Student Life Social Hour (Wed)
- Student Council (Wed)
- Snack Shack (Wed/Fri)
- Flying Hooves-MS/HS (Thurs)
- Gaming Club (Fri)
- Dungeons & Dragons (Fri)
- Alley Cats Bowling Club (Sun)

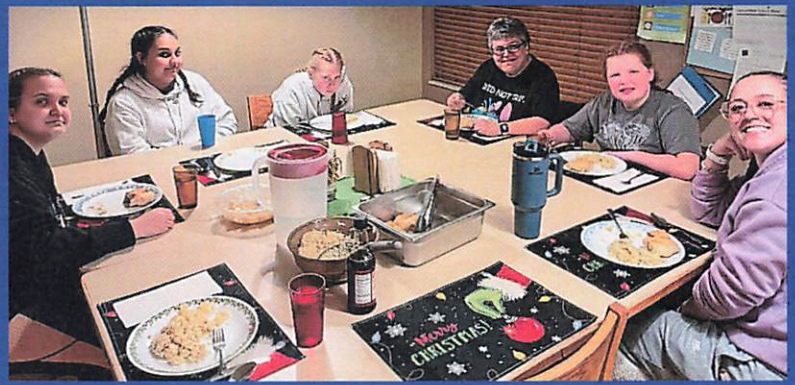


Hot Chocolate Hangout with LEAP

By Ayvia



Hi! My name is Ayvia. Tonight, we had an awesome time inviting the LEAP students to our cottage for a hot chocolate hangout! We made two different kinds of hot chocolate: a rich, homemade version and a classic chocolate one. The homemade hot chocolate was definitely the star - there's something special about making it from scratch! Everyone had a blast mixing, sipping, and enjoying the warmth of good company and delicious drinks. It was the perfect way to spend the evening!



Family-Style Dinners at the Cottages

By Megan DeSilva

At the MSDB residential cottages, dinner is far more than a daily routine—it's a meaningful time for connection, learning, and community. Each evening, students and staff gather around the table to share a family-style meal, creating an atmosphere that feels warm, supportive, and home-like.

Family-style dining allows students to practice important life skills in a natural setting. Passing serving dishes, helping themselves to portions, and engaging in conversation builds independence, confidence, and social awareness. It also fosters responsibility, as students take turns helping set the table, serve food, and tidy up afterward. But the benefits go beyond skill-building. Sharing a meal encourages students to slow down, reflect on their day, and strengthen relationships with peers and staff. For many, this consistent routine offers a sense of comfort and belonging—something that's especially important while living away from home.

Staff members in the cottages embrace this time as an opportunity to model positive communication, encourage healthy eating habits, and create a supportive environment where every student feels included. Laughter, stories, and daily check-ins have become parts of the evening meal.

Family-style dinners are a cornerstone of life at MSDB. They remind us that community is built in small moments—like passing the potatoes, asking about someone's day, or simply sitting together at the same table.

Campus Enrichment Days (CED)

By Alissa Kline

Those of you who have been with MSDB for a while may remember when we had VIEW and DEW. It has been an opportunity for students around the state with a vision or hearing loss to come see what life is like on our MSDB campus. We still have this event, but it is now called Campus Enrichment Days (CED). The theme for this fall was "Art in the Making" and focused on creativity.

On Friday, November 7 and Saturday, November 8, we hosted CED and invited students to join our classrooms and Cottage. On Friday during the day, students participated in regular classrooms on campus to see what it is like for students who attend school here. We also had visitors from Gallaudet University, the Helen Keller Foundation and MT Empowerment. Many students and their families commented on how much they enjoyed the classroom experience and wondered if this would be a good place for them to come to school.

On Friday night, students participated in regular Cottage activities such as swimming, bowling, playing card/board games and socializing. Some of the favorite activities, though, were creating their own puzzles and Story Night with books read aloud/visually described by Darreck and read in ASL by Amanda. Students and families commented on how welcoming everyone was as well as how quickly everyone warmed up to each other.

On Saturday, students participated in art activities with our Outreach consultants. They made a 3-D relief art project, made a clay sculpture and made their own individual pizzas. Smiles and laughter were plentiful. Thanks to all of our staff and students for making this such a positive experience for our visiting students and families.



2025-2026 Student of the Quarter -1st Quarter

By Alissa Kline

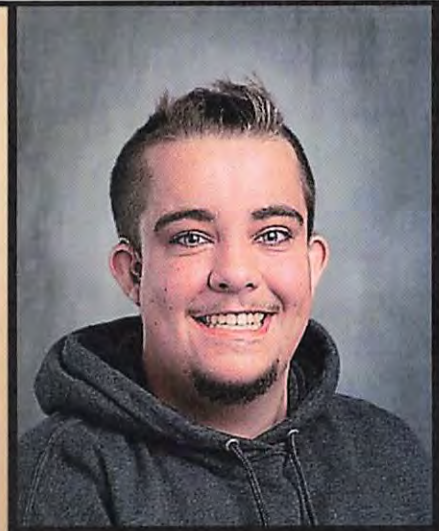
Choosing a Student of the Quarter for 1st quarter this year was a challenge. Multiple students have shown great improvement in their hygiene, time management, interactions with others and taking care of their belongings. After a bit of discussion, a final decision was made. Here is what staff had to say about him:

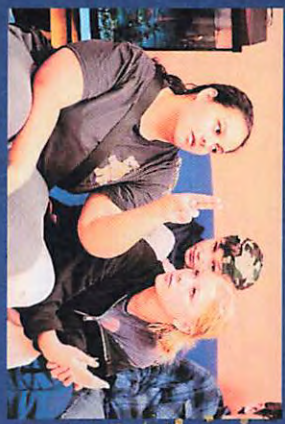
The first Student of the Quarter this year greets everyone with a cheery hello and a smile. He is always in a happy mood and a pleasure to work with. He enjoys participating in a variety of activities in the Cottage including working on puzzles, playing card/board games, playing Pool, and learning to play the piano and guitar. He is supportive of the younger students and doesn't hesitate to do anything with them.

Staff have also noticed a great improvement in his cleanliness. He never argues and is always excited to do any activity, even if it is work or cleaning. He does his work study without complaining and, for the most part, without being asked. He has been very conscientious of his hygiene and keeping his surroundings clean as well as other issues when staff have brought them up. He has tried very hard to always keep his room clean and bed made.

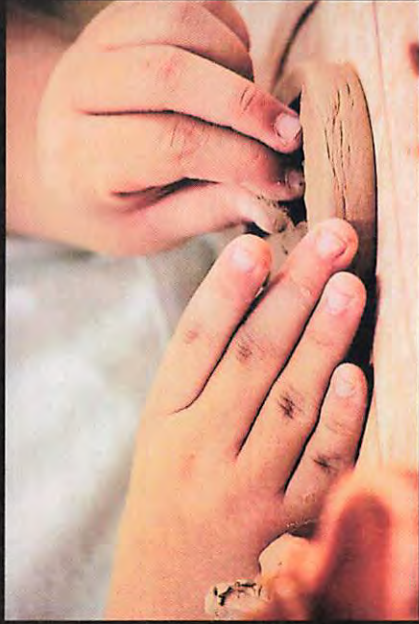
His dream is to understand the science and chemistry of becoming a mechanic. He has looked at multiple types of vehicle repairs. He has mentioned working on standard automobiles, diesel vehicles and possibly trains.

It is with great pleasure that we announce David Harasymczuk as our Student of the Quarter! Please join us in congratulating him.





A Day in the Life at MSDB



**9089 Mont Sch for
Deaf & Blind District**

3911 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59405
Generated on 12/19/2025 02:32:19 AM Page 1 of 1

Student Enrollment Summary Report

Effective Date: 12/19/2025 Enrollment Types: P, S, N
Total Race/Ethnicities: 5 of 7 Total Schools: 2
Race/Ethnicity Source: Federal Male/Female/Total: 18/18/36

Student Population by Race/Ethnicity and Grade Level (Male/Female/Total)

MT Sch For Deaf & Blind EI

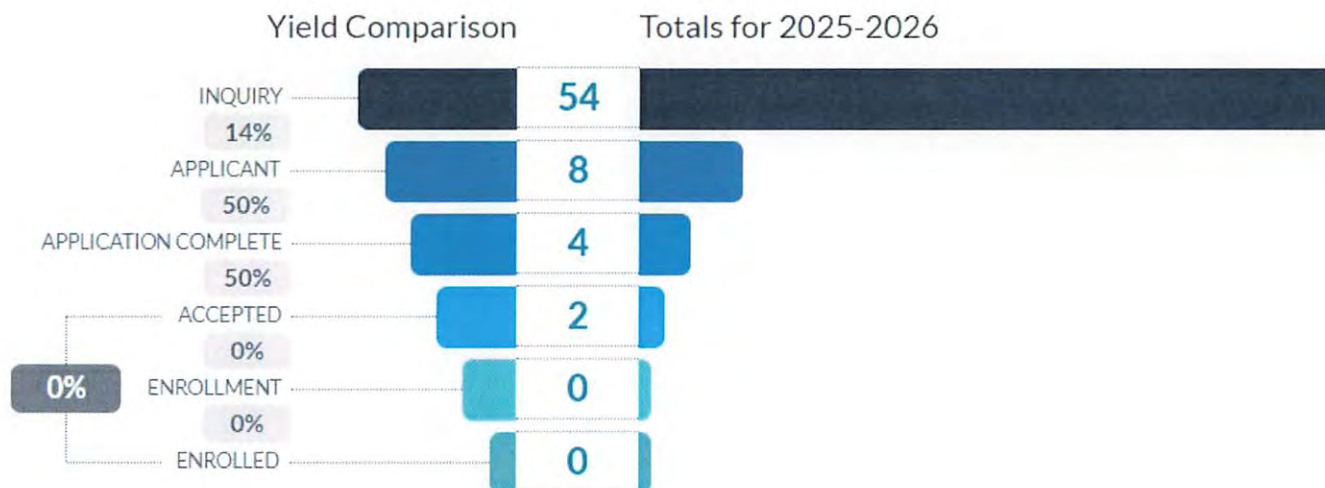
Grade	1:Hispanic/Latino	2:American Indian or Alaska Native	3:Asian	4:Black or African American	5:Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6:White	7:Two or more races	Total
01	-	-	-	-	-	1/1/2	-	1/1/2
03	-	-	-	-	-	2/1/3	-	2/1/3
05	-	-	-	-	-	2/3/5	-	2/3/5
06	-	-	-	-	-	1/0/1	1/1/2	2/1/3
07	-	-	-	-	-	0/1/1	-	0/1/1
08	-	-	1/0/1	-	-	0/2/2	-	1/2/3
KG	-	0/1/1	-	-	-	-	-	0/1/1
PK	1/0/1	-	-	-	-	2/2/4	-	3/2/5
PS	0/1/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1/1
All Grades	1/1/2	0/1/1	1/0/1	-	-	8/10/18	1/1/2	11/13/24

MT Sch For Deaf & Blind HS

Grade	1:Hispanic/Latino	2:American Indian or Alaska Native	3:Asian	4:Black or African American	5:Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6:White	7:Two or more races	Total
09	-	-	1/0/1	-	-	-	-	1/0/1
10	-	1/0/1	-	-	-	0/2/2	-	1/2/3
11	-	1/0/1	-	-	-	1/1/2	-	2/1/3
12	-	1/0/1	-	-	-	2/2/4	-	3/2/5
All Grades	-	3/0/3	1/0/1	-	-	3/5/8	-	7/5/12

Student Population Excluding White not of Hispanic Origin

School	Total	Percentage
MT Sch For Deaf & Blind EI	6	25.00%
MT Sch For Deaf & Blind HS	4	33.33%
Total	10	27.78%



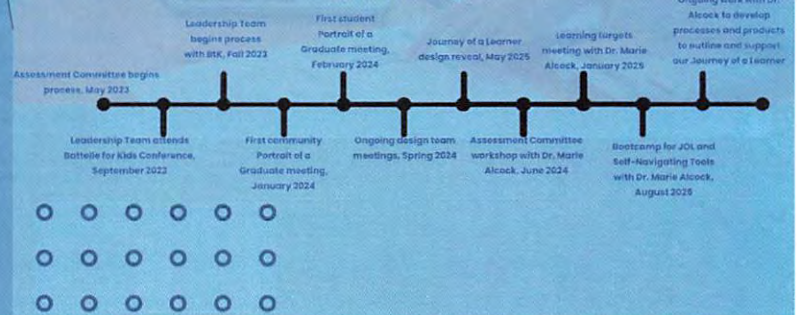
Admissions

INQUIRY		APPLICANT		APPLICATION COMPLETE		ACCEPTED	
Inquiry	1	Applicant	4	Application Complete	1	Accepted	2
Inquiry Completed	41	Application Withdrawn By Parent	0	Review In Progress	1	Did Not Enroll	0
Inactive Inquiry	0	Collecting Educational Documents	0	Waitlisted	0	Enrollment Date Selected	0
Inquiry Referred To Outreach	4	Collecting Medical Documents	0	Applicant Ineligible For Services	0	Parent Declined	0
				Current Ten Day In Process	0		
				Document Review In Progress	0		
				Ten Day Observation Scheduled	0		



MSDB Journey of a Learner

From 'Portrait' to 'Journey'...



JOURNEY of a LEARNER

- EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR
- RESPONSIBLE LEARNER
- INDEPENDENT PERSON
- FLEXIBLE THINKER
- PROBLEM SOLVER
- DIGITAL CITIZEN



Montana School for the Deaf & the Blind

Final Design

JOURNEY of a LEARNER



EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR

- Expresses thoughts and ideas effectively across environments
- Seeks to empathetically understand and collaborate with communication partners
- Uses communication skills to successfully interact with others over a range of purposes and audiences

RESPONSIBLE LEARNER

- Honors commitments, obligations and promises
- Accepts accountability for decisions and actions
- Demonstrates an awareness of how personal actions affect others

INDEPENDENT PERSON

- Demonstrates the ability to self-advocate in a variety of situations
- Defines a purpose of own future and goals
- Takes initiative in completion of tasks
- Builds a trusted support network

FLEXIBLE THINKER

- Demonstrates open-mindedness in thoughts and actions
- Adapts and works effectively amidst constantly changing demands
- Acknowledges biases and alters opinions based on knowledge, education and experience

PROBLEM SOLVER

- Identifies, analyzes and determines solutions to complex situations
- Reflects and responds critically to feedback and/or setbacks
- Approaches problems objectively and considers various perspectives
- Collaborates to produce a shared outcome

DIGITAL CITIZEN

- Proficiently advocates for, explains and uses digital tools that maximize access to opportunities and learning
- Uses social networking tools safely, ethically, and efficiently
- Critically analyzes and evaluates digital information to make informed decisions

Domains and Descriptors

"I Can" Statements

The school community has also worked on "I Can" statements. "I Can" statements are simple, student-friendly ways to express a learning objective or goal. Our statements are meant to reflect skills and attributes that students should express throughout their educational careers. These statements reflect the descriptors for each of the Journey of a Learner domains.



Parameters for "I Can" Statements

- Clear and concise
- Starts with an action verb
- Specific and measurable
- Student-friendly and age-appropriate
- Aligned with learning intentions

[How to write learning targets \(I can...\) video](#)



Problem Solver

Perseverance			
Lower Elementary	Upper Elementary	Middle School	High School
I can sort difficult tasks from easy tasks.	I can define perseverance. I can complete easy tasks.	I can explain when perseverance would be important.	I can demonstrate perseverance.
I can describe why a task is difficult for me.	I can explain how I feel when doing a difficult task.	I can start difficult tasks. I can list strategies to use when I struggle during difficult tasks.	I can complete difficult tasks. I can evaluate which strategies work for me when I struggle during difficult tasks.

Full Document with all Domains: [MSDB JOL "I CAN" Statement - All Domains](#)

Year 1 Effective Communicator (High School)

September/October	November/December	January/February*	March/April	May/June*
Bundle 1	Bundle 2	Bundle 3	Bundle 4	Repeat a bundle
What: I can summarize another person's perspective in a conversation.	What: I can share my perspective with a larger group of people. I can adjust the manner of my communication to meet the needs of others.	What: I can apply active listening techniques in a conversation. I can engage in respectful and productive conversation. I can evaluate if a conversation is respectful.	What: I can support my perspective by sharing information in a conversation.	What: I can summarize another person's perspective in a conversation. I can engage in respectful and productive conversation.

Full Document with all Domains: [JOL Learning Targets by grade level - All Bundles](#)

How to create a [Year at a Glance Video](#)

Your Role in MSDB's Journey of a Learner

Implementation, Modeling the Traits and Evaluation

Incorporate the defined skills and competencies of the JOL into your daily teaching and learning activities.

1. Review the bi-monthly Journey of a Learner bundles and find something to plug into your weekly lesson plans and use that language when you review the daily learning target or objectives. During your wrap-up, review the "I Can" statement and ask the students if they met it.
2. Point out to your learners when they (or you) are using one of the domains or completing an associated "I Can" statement. Example: "Way to be a flexible thinker! I like how you accepted the change of schedule today."



To Do List:

Find a place to add in this month's "I Can" statements.

Go be awesome!

Marie Alcock's Boot Camps 2026

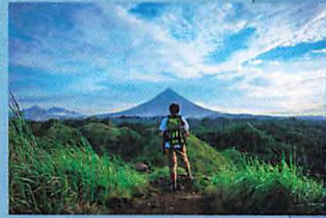
Initial Foundations Boot Camp:

August 3rd - 7th

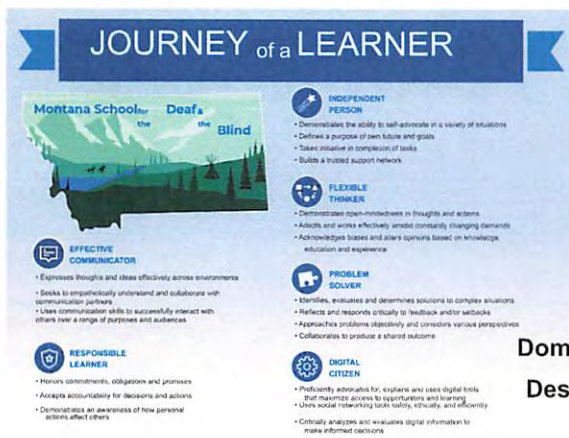
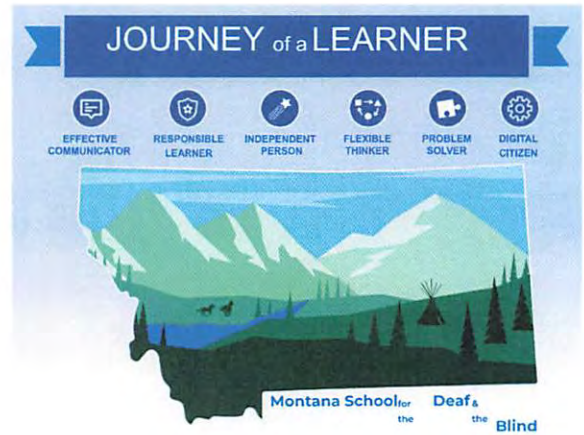
Continuing Boot Camp:

August 10th - 14th

If you attended this years boot camp you are still welcome to attend both sessions.



MSDB Journey of a Learner



Domains and Descriptors



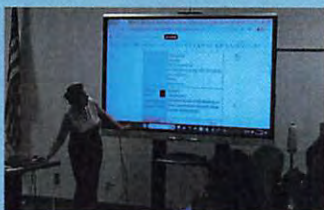
Brain Science

How the brain learns.

Brain Science is directly connected to our JOL's through the learning targets that we have selected.

This is how we teach these learning targets for students to be able to learn and retain that knowledge.

Brain Science Video



In this video Marie explains the 4 steps to make a neurological pathway with a useful analogy:

1. Hacking through the Wilderness
2. Dragging a cart
3. Laying down gravel
4. Paving and putting up signs

[The Cheat Sheet for Brain Science](#)

Brain Science Reflection Questions



1. How am I already using Brain Science?
2. Which Brain Science step am I on for a particular concept?
3. How can I connect brain science to an aspect of what I am doing now?



To Do List:

Find a place to add in this month's "I Can" statements.

[Jan/Feb JOL](#)
[I can Statements](#)

Reflect on the Brain Science.

Go be awesome!

Marie Alcock's Boot Camps 2026

Initial Foundations Boot Camp:

August 3rd - 7th

Continuing Boot Camp:

August 10th - 14th

If you attended this years boot camp you are still welcome to attend both sessions.



Outreach Newsletter

Reaching out across Montana

MAKING FIRE SAFETY A HABIT

Essential Fire Safety Planning Strategies for students
who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, low vision, or
deaf-blind.



Safety You Can Feel: Fire Readiness for Blind and Visually Impaired Children

Fire safety for blind or visually impaired children emphasizes using other senses and consistent practice. Key strategies include creating and practicing escape plans with multiple routes and a designated meeting spot, teaching actions like "stay low and go," and practicing with the sound of a smoke alarms. Area modifications like tactile markers along escape routes, clear paths, and loud or vibrating smoke alarms can all enhance safety. Additionally, practicing skills like feeling doors for heat, stop-drop-and-roll, and calling 911 are vital.

For those wanting to create a fun, tactually engaging lesson for your students, consider creating a literacy skills kit. A literacy skills kit is an engaging, hands-on way for parents and teachers to help their visually impaired child/student learn important skills. Each kit is built around a children's book and is made to be used together by a parent/teacher and child/student.

Resources

Eight Tips for teaching fire safety to children who are Blind.

[Click Here](#)

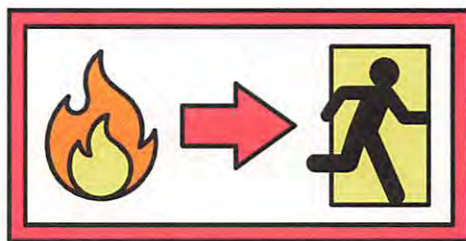


Smoke Alarms for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing

[Click Here](#)

Literacy Skills Kit to Teach Fire Safety

[Click Here](#)



Alert, Aware, Prepared: Essential Tips for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Being safe in the event of a fire is extremely important, and when hearing loss or deafness is involved, it's essential to know how to stay safe in any environment. For individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, consider installing vibrating smoke alarms that can provide a physical alert that's easy to notice. Strobe-light alarms provide strong visual signals when vibration isn't available, and wearable personal alert devices can pair with external systems to provide vibrating or visual notifications in an emergency.

Important things to consider:

- Know at least two exits from every room.
- Practice escape routes several times a year.
- Prepare an emergency bag that includes a communication method, important documents, and emergency information.

With the right tools and planning, students with hearing loss can stay safe and confident during a fire emergency.



Save the Dates

December 4th : Create & Connect

Winter Social in Kalispell, MT

Registration:



January 16th : Braille Challenge

April 17th & 18th : Spring Campus Enrichment Days

June 5th & 6th : Family Learning Weekend

Thanks for being part of our MSDB community. Please check out our Facebook Page and our school website.



[CONTACT US](#) | [MANAGE PREFERENCES](#)

© 2025 Email Design Insights. All rights reserved.

You're receiving this email because we want to keep you up to date and informed.

*******CLOSED SESSION*******

❖ EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – (Item 20)

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 20

MSDB SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Dr. Tim Tharp

*******OPEN SESSION*******

January 16, 2026

CALL TO ORDER

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

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – (Items 21-22)**

Dr. Ron Slinger

ITEM 21

**UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE
SCHOOLS COMMISSION**

Cathy Kincheloe



The vision of the Community Choice Schools Commission is to develop the full educational potential of each student by fostering a diverse and dynamic public education landscape.



Our Promise

As duly appointed Members of the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission, we embrace our responsibility to serve as stewards of educational opportunity and the public trust. We are committed to helping realize the full promise of our Constitution for every student, in every community.

Our Guiding Principles

- 1. Students First, Always:** Student success is our north star. We want every student to experience the transformative power of education.
- 2. Stewards of the Public Trust:** We exercise our authority with transparency, discipline, and humility. Credibility is foundational and we understand that trust must be earned, not assumed. We seek to build enduring trust with families, educators, communities, tribes, and policymakers through every decision we make.
- 3. Authorizing for Systems Change:** We don't just authorize schools, we help foster a more responsive, innovative, and effective public education system.
- 4. Excellence is the Expectation:** Students deserve our best. That's why we set a high bar for schools, boards, authorizers, and ourselves.
- 5. Community-Centered Innovation:** We listen to and elevate local voices and context, especially in rural and tribal communities, in order to create the conditions where excellence can thrive.
- 6. Clarity and Courage in Decision-Making:** We lead transparently and act with integrity. We face difficult decisions with moral clarity and constitutional conviction.

Core Values & Commitments

Courage	Respect	Integrity	Service	Transparency	Learning
We make bold decisions in the best interests of students, even under pressure.	We communicate. We honor the dignity of students, families, educators, communities, and tribes.	We follow through. We are fair, honest, and grounded in our principles and purpose.	We act with intention and humility. We exist to serve the people, not ourselves.	We share our rationale, invite public understanding, and welcome accountability.	We grow through reflection, data, feedback, and the wisdom of Montana's people.

Our Core Purpose

- To authorize, oversee, and hold accountable public community choice schools for fulfilling the terms of their contracts.
- To approve, oversee, and evaluate the effectiveness of public community choice school authorizers.



Pre-Application Process

May - December

RFP Posted	Information Sessions	Notice of Intent	Epicenter Access	Pitch Meetings
Application window & directions to submit Application posted	Director hosts open webinars for potential Applicants to gain insight to CCS & the Application process	Applicants submit the NOI template to Director & Commission detailing a general overview of their school model	Applicants gain access to Epicenter to begin drafting their Application	Applicants pitch their model to Director & Application Review Subcommittee with Q&A

Application Process

January - April

Written Applications Submission & Review	Public Forums	Applicant Interviews	Deliberation
Written Applications are submitted in Epicenter and posted for the public to view Written Applications are evaluated according to the Application Criteria by the Application Review Subcommittee & Director	Applicants host the public, Application Review Subcommittee, & Director for an overview of their proposed school model. Local residents provide public comment.	Applicants answer clarifying questions & challenge scenarios from Application Review Subcommittee and Director.	Application Subcommittee and Director provide a final recommendation report on each Application to Members Applications are deliberated in an open meeting with input from the BPE & public culminating in a final vote by Members

Contracting to Opening

May through Fall of Next Year

Contracting	Building Oversight Model	Year Zero
Contracts offered to approved applicants	Performance Framework & oversight metrics built into Epicenter	School founder cohorts meet for training & consulting to fully build out their academic, cultural, operational, & financial models



Statutory Requirements for CCS Commission Annual Report to Board of Public Education,
Interim Education Committee, and the Public

20-11-109 Duties Of Commission -- Oversight Of Authorizers

(10) On or before December 1 of each year, beginning in the first year that choice schools have been in operation for a full school year, the commission shall issue to the board of public education, the education interim committee, and the public an annual report on the state's community choice schools that **includes data from the annual reports submitted by every authorizer**, as well as **any additional relevant data compiled by the commission**, for the school year ending in the preceding calendar year.

The annual report must include:

(a) a comparison of the performance of choice school students with the performance of the comparable grade ranges of the choice school's students' resident district schools; and

(b) the commission's assessment of the successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in meeting the purposes of this part, including the commission's assessment of the sufficiency of funding for choice schools, the efficacy of the commission's formula for authorizer funding, and any suggested changes in state law or policy necessary to strengthen the state's community choice schools.



**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE SCHOOLS**

Commission Annual Report to the
Interim Education Committee,
Board of Public Education,
and the Public

(year)

Report Contents

Chair Welcome Letter

- Section I: The Commission
- Section II: Community Choice Schools Portfolio at a Glance
- Section III: Community Choice Schools Summary Report of Progress
- Section IV: Community Choice Schools Performance Comparison
with Resident District Schools
- Section V: Assessment of Successes, Challenges, and Areas for Improvement

Letter from the Commission Chair:

- Highlight accomplishments as whole (schools, movement) and work to be completed

Section I: The Commission

Members	Chair - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Vice Chair - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Treasurer - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Member - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Member - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Member - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official
	Member - headshot, name	location, profession, appointing official

The vision of the Community Choice Schools Commission is to develop the full educational potential of each student by fostering a diverse and dynamic public education landscape.



Our Promise

As duly appointed Members of the Montana Community Choice Schools Commission, we embrace our responsibility to serve as stewards of educational opportunity and the public trust. We are committed to helping realize the full promise of our Constitution—for every student, in every community.

Our Guiding Principles

- 1. Students First, Always:** Student success is our north star. We want every student to experience the transformative power of a great education.
- 2. Stewards of the Public Trust:** We exercise our authority with transparency, discipline, and humility. Credibility is foundational — and we understand that trust must be earned, not assumed. We seek to build enduring trust with families, educators, communities, tribes, and policymakers through every decision we make.
- 3. Authorizing for Systems Change:** We don't just authorize schools—we help foster a more responsive, innovative, and effective public education system.
- 4. Excellence is the Expectation:** Students deserve our best. That's why we set a high bar for schools, boards, authorizers, and ourselves.
- 5. Community-Centered Innovation:** We listen to and elevate local voices and context—especially in rural and tribal communities—in order to create the conditions where excellence can thrive.
- 6. Clarity and Courage in Decision-Making:** We lead transparently and act with integrity. We face difficult decisions with moral clarity and constitutional conviction.

Core Values and Commitments

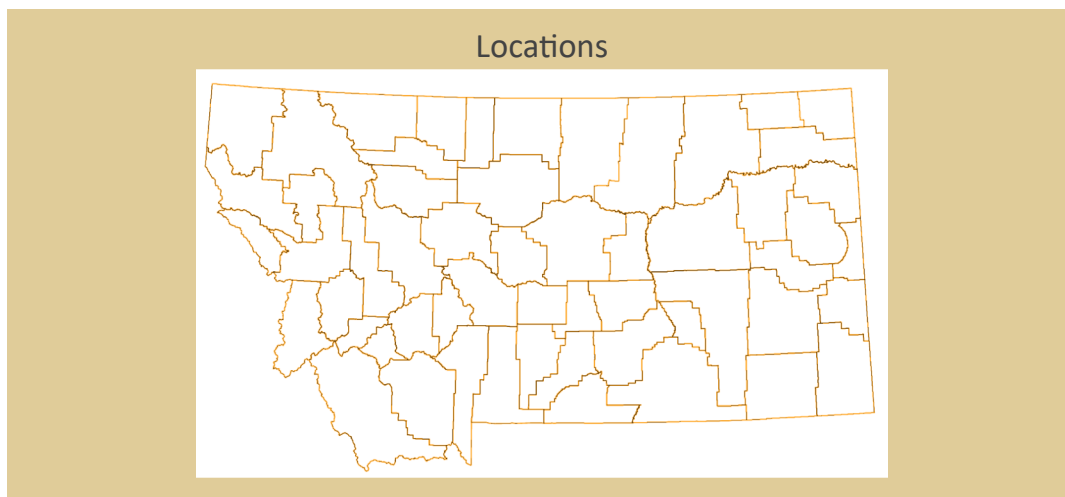
Courage	Respect	Integrity	Service	Transparency	Learning
We make bold decisions in the best interests of students, even under pressure.	We communicate. We honor the dignity of students, families, educators, and tribes.	We follow through. We are fair, honest, and grounded in our principles and purpose.	We act with intention and humility. We exist to serve the people, not ourselves.	We share our rationale, invite public understanding, and welcome accountability.	We grow through reflection, data, feedback, and the wisdom of Montana's people.

Our Core Purpose

- To authorize, oversee, and hold accountable public community choice schools for fulfilling the terms of their contracts.
- To approve, oversee, and evaluate the effectiveness of public community choice school authorizers.

Section II: Community Choice Schools Portfolio

Community Choice Schools at a Glance				
	Total	Elementary	Middle	High School
Schools	#	#	#	#
Students	#	#	#	#



Year 0 #
Start-up/Year 1 #
Renewals #
Closures #

# Total Students		Model Focus	# Schools
% of State Enrollment			
% Economically Disadvantaged			
% Special Education			
% English Language Learners			
American Indian			

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK SUMMARY FOR ALL SCHOOLS				
	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does Not Meet
Academic	%	%	%	%
Operational	%	%	%	%
Financial	%	%	%	%

Schools' Philanthropy	Schools' Partnerships

Commission Philanthropy	Commission Partnerships

Section III: Community Choice Schools Performance Summaries

School Name		
Location		
Model		
Mission		
School Leader		
Governing Board Chair		
Year of Charter Contract		
Student Demographics	Grades Served	
	Enrollment	
	% F/RL	
	% American Indian	
	% White	
	% Special Education	
	% English Language Learners	
	Other (indicate)	

PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK SUMMARY				
	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	Does Not Meet
Academic	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%
Operational	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%
Financial	#	#	#	#
	%	%	%	%

Section IV: Community Choice Schools Performance Comparison with Resident District Schools

For each school:

- Literacy & Math graphs displaying the growth of students by grade compared to their resident district. Note: the data for the resident school district will not likely be for the same assessment, it may also be a challenge to retrieve.
- Cohort Adjusted Graduation Rate graph for high school compared to the resident district
- Note: longitudinal data will be displayed on each graph as the school progresses in years

Section V: Commission's Assessment of Successes, Challenges, and Areas for Improvement of the Intent of the Law

20-11-102. Community choice schools -- legislative findings and intent. (1) The legislature finds, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3), of the Montana constitution, that:

- (a) parents desire education options for their children;
- (b) expanding educational opportunities for K-12 education within the state is a valid public purpose; and
- (c) creating options that empower parents, encourage students to develop their full educational potential, provide a variety of professional opportunities for teachers, and encourage educational entrepreneurship is vital to the economic competitiveness of the state.

(2) It is the legislature's intent, pursuant to the authority and duties provided in Article X, section 1(3), of the Montana constitution, to create other public educational programs and institutions through choice schools. The purposes are to:

- (a) enable parents to make decisions on how best to educate their children;
- (b) provide other public educational opportunities for all students, especially those at risk of academic failure or academic disengagement;
- (c) encourage the use of different models of teaching, governing, scheduling, and providing instruction to meet a wide variety of student and community needs; and
- (d) advance Montana's commitment to the preservation of American Indian cultural identity, pursuant to Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana constitution, and to eliminate the American Indian achievement gap by encouraging participation in the choice school program by students, parents, and school districts in Indian country.

Community Choice Schools Movement Overall

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Sufficiency of Funding for Community Choice Schools

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Efficacy of the Commission's Formula for Authorizer Funding

Successes	
Challenges	
Areas for Improvement	

Suggested Changes to State Law or Policy Needed to Strengthen Community Choice Schools	
Section of Law	Suggested Amendment

ITEM 22

**ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS TO
APPROVE AND DENY PUBLIC CHARTER
SCHOOLS**

Dr. Ron Slinger

❖ **MACIE LIAISON - (Item 23)**

Julia Maxwell

ITEM 23

MACIE REPORT

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
January 2026

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:

Related Issue(s)

January MACIE Meeting

Recommendations

None

❖ ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – (Items 24-25)

Renee Rasmussen

ITEM 24

ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF
ADOPTION PERTAINING TO
RULEMAKING IN ARM TITLE 10,
CHAPTER 54, EARLY TARGETED
INTERVENTION STANDARDS AND ARM
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 63, EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS,
AND AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE
WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER

Renee Rasmussen



**MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER**



BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

NOTICE OF ADOPTION

MAR NOTICE NO. 2025-479.2

Summary

Amendment of ARM 10.54.901 through 10.54.903 pertaining to the Early Targeted Intervention Standards and ARM 10.63.101 through 10.63.107, 10.63.109, and 10.63.115 pertaining to the Early Childhood Education Standards

Previous Notice(s) and Hearing Information

On December 5, 2025, the Board of Public Education (board) published MAR Notice No. 2025-479.1 pertaining to the public hearing on the proposed amendment of the above-stated rules in Issue Number 23 of the 2025 Montana Administrative Register.

On January 6, 2026, the board held a public hearing to consider the proposed rulemaking.

Final Rulemaking Action – Effective February 7, 2026

AMEND AS PROPOSED

The agency has amended the following rules as proposed:

10.54.901 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY FOR EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTIONS

10.54.902 JUMPSTART PROGRAM FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION

10.54.903 EARLY NUMERACY INTEGRATION FOR 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR

10.63.101 APPLICATION AND PROCEDURES

10.63.102 DEFINITIONS

10.63.103 LEADERSHIP

**10.63.104 TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR PUBLIC PRESCHOOL AND
EARLY LITERACY TARGETED INTERVENTIONS**

10.63.105 EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

10.63.106 EARLY CHILDHOOD PARAPROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

10.63.107 CLASS SIZE

10.63.109 ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY

10.63.115 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Statement of Reasons

No comments were received.

Contact

McCall Flynn
(406) 444-6576
bpe@mt.gov

Rule Reviewer

McCall Flynn

Approval

Dr. Tim Tharp

Board Chair



Board of Public Education

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TIMELINE CHAPTER 54 EARLY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS CHAPTER 63 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION STANDARDS

Advisory Council Recommendation to BPE – Package 1	September 12, 2025
Advisory Council Recommendation to BPE – Package 2	November 19-21, 2025
BPE authorization to publish Proposal Notice, including public hearing date	November 19-21, 2025
BPE approves rulemaking timeline	November 19-21, 2025
Proposal Notice to SOS for publication in MAR	November 25, 2025
MAR publication of Proposal Notice <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public comment begins	December 5, 2025
Public hearing date	January 6, 2026
Final public comment deadline	January 6, 2026
BPE authorization to publish Adoption Notice	January 15-16, 2026
Adoption Notice to SOS for publication in MAR	January 27, 2026
MAR publication of Adoption Notice	February 6, 2026
Effective date of rules	February 7, 2026

The Board of Public Education may revise the above dates, based on the requirements of the Montana Administrative Procedure Act and the rulemaking statutes.

ITEM 25

**INFORMATION ON MAST
ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION**

Cedar Rose

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Understanding MAST: Addressing Common Misconceptions
Presenter	Cedar Rose
Position Title	Assessment Director Montana Office of Public Instruction
Overview	The Office of Public Instruction will address common misconceptions about the Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) assessment and explain how its design and reporting support instructional usefulness.
Requested Decision(s)	Information Only
Related Issue(s)	Chapter 56 Assessment ESEA-ESSA Section 1111(b)(2)
Recommendation(s)	None





UNDERSTANDING MAST: ADDRESSING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Cedar Rose
Assessment Director
OPI

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent

PURPOSE

1

Provide clarity on how MAST results are designed and used

2

Address common misconceptions emerging from the field

3

Clarify the technical soundness and instructional intent of the system

4

Support informed oversight and communication



WHY MAST USES MULTIPLE REPORTS



Learning is developmental and occurs over time



Different decisions require different levels of evidence



The system balances:

- Timely feedback
- Testlet reliability
- Appropriate limits on interpretive claims

MAST REPORTS: PURPOSE AT A GLANCE

Report Type	Availability	Primary Purpose
Testlet Report	Weekly during testing windows	Snapshot of performance on a focused set of standards
Progress Report	End of Window 1 and Window 2	Cumulative achievement based on testlets taken to date (after windows 1 and 2)
Through-Year Report	After the school year	Overall achievement across the year



WHY CLARIFYING PROGRAM MISCONCEPTIONS MATTER AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

Misinterpretation can:

- Undermine confidence in the assessment system
- Lead to inappropriate use of results
- Create inconsistent messaging statewide

Clear understanding supports:

- Sound policy decisions
- Accurate public communication
- Appropriate local implementation



MISCONCEPTION: THE MOVE FROM BANDS TO LEVELS REDUCED THE USEFULNESS OF RESULTS

2024-2025 Bands	2025-2026 Levels
Peer comparison	Standards-based
Always split into thirds	Based on overall proficiency expectations
Not tied to the overall scale score	Directly tied to summative scale
Weak instructional meaning	Strong instructional signal

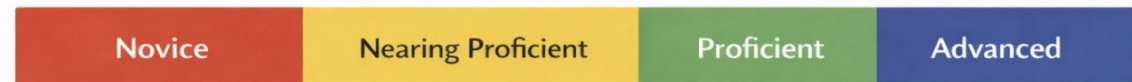
What's being heard

- Levels feel less precise than bands
- Comparisons across students are less clear

Clarification

- Bands were **norm-referenced** (peer comparison)
- Levels are **criterion-referenced** and aligned to grade-level expectations
- Levels provide more meaningful information about learning relative to standards

Achievement Levels (Summative — Through-Year Report)



Testlet Performance Levels (Instructional — Testlet Reports)



MISCONCEPTION: SPECIFIC ITEMS ARE WEIGHTED MORE AND CONTRIBUTE TO DIFFERENT PLACEMENT INTO BANDS OR LEVELS

Legend		
Question Description	Credit Earned	Standards
1. This question evaluates students' understanding of sequences and series.	✗	3.NF.A.3
2. This question evaluates students' understanding of rounding numbers to the nearest ten.	✗	3.NF.A.3
3. This question addresses students' understanding of basic probability concepts.	✗	3.NF.A.3
4. This question evaluates students' understanding of coordinate planes and how to plot points.	✓	3.NF.A.3
5. This question assesses students' understanding of ratios and proportional relationships.	○	3.NF.A.3

What's being heard

- Certain questions “count more” than others, pushing students into lower bands or levels
- “Weighted questions” are assumed to be task-based or performance task items
- Placement feels driven by question type rather than student understanding

Clarification

- There are **no separately weighted question types** on MAST testlets
- Differences in how questions contribute to performance come from **item difficulty**, not item format
- Performance levels are based on an **estimated scale score**, which considers:
 - Which items a student answered correctly
 - How difficult those items were
 - Not a simple count of questions answered correctly



MISCONCEPTION: THE WRITING ASSESSMENT ISN'T RELIABLE BECAUSE SCORES SEEMED LOW

English Language Arts - Practice Performance Task

Grade 3 Student Exemplar Response (8/8 points):

Main idea is clearly stated.

Moonlight and caves are alike in some ways, but they are mostly different. Moonlight comes from the sun shining on the moon. It makes the night brighter and can change how animals and people act. For example, owls can hunt better in moonlight. Some animals do not. People like to look at the moon and plant flowers that look silver. Moonlight comes from the sky, but caves are usually under the ground. Caves form when water and wind wear away rocks. They make big spaces that people can go inside, like Mammoth Cave. Both moonlight and caves are part of nature, but moonlight changes what animals and people do at night. Caves make spaces that people can walk in.

Ideas are grouped logically. Explains moonlight first.

Provides detail from text 1.

Ideas are grouped logically. Makes a comparison and then elaborates on caves.

Provides detail from text 2.

Has a conclusion that is reasonable and connected to the ideas developed in the paragraph.

What's being heard

- Student performance on the performance task is very low
- Very few students earned a Level 3
- This suggests a flaw in the assessment or scoring

Clarification

- Level 2 indicates adequate performance in each area
- Level 3 reflects effective to highly effective performance
- Performance reflects standards alignment, not scoring error
- 50th %ile timing ranged 4.7-6.7 minutes in the 24-25 administration; 90th %ile ranged 12.1-18.2 minutes
- Early results may reflect first-year implementation and unawareness of expectations and resources
- Public reporting uses appropriate aggregation to prevent misinterpretation



MISCONCEPTION: THE ELA PERFORMANCE TASK IS OVER-WEIGHTED OR NORM-REFERENCED

What's being heard

- Writing disproportionately affects scores
- Scoring is subjective or comparative

Clarification

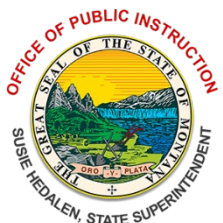
- Performance tasks are criterion-referenced against Montana Writing Standards
- The performance task accounts for 8 points compared to 108 items (some with items holding multiple points) administered across the literary and informational testlets.
- Scored using educator-validated rubrics and quality assurance processes
- Measure complex skills not captured through selected-response items

Please use this construct to frame the scoring of student responses:

- 3 – effective (to highly effective)
- 2 – adequate
- 1 – limited/inconsistent
- 0 – minimal/insufficient

Written Expression

Score	Organization
3	Response is consistently and clearly focused. Organization is purposeful and effective. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicates/introduces an opinion or controlling idea of a topic. • Groups related information together effectively. • Effectively uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information or to connect opinion and reasons. • Provides a concluding statement related to the topic or opinion.
2	Response is generally focused. Organization is evident and provides an adequate sense of completeness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates/introduces an opinion or controlling idea of a topic. • Groups related information together most of the time. • Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information or to connect opinion and reasons. • Provides concluding statement that mostly relates to the topic or opinion.
1	Response is somewhat focused. Organization is limited and inconsistent, with some evident flaws. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ineffectively communicates/introduces an opinion or controlling idea of a topic that may require inferences. • Groups related information together somewhat, with many ideas only loosely connected. • Inconsistently uses some linking words to connect ideas within categories of information or to connect opinions and reasons. • Provides a concluding statement that may not be directly related to the topic/opinion.
0	Response has limited or no focus. Organization is minimal or nonexistent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides no opinion or controlling idea, or the opinion or controlling idea is difficult to infer. • Groups information with minimal or no clear connections or relationships. • Uses few, if any, linking words to connect ideas. • Provides no concluding statement, or the concluding statement is difficult to discern.



MISCONCEPTION: EFFECTIVE PREPARATION REQUIRES TEACHING TO THE TEST

What's being heard

- Focus on item formats and test strategies
- Concern about narrowing instruction

Clarification

- Testlets reflect high-quality, standards-aligned instruction
- Items span a range of cognitive complexity
- Strong instruction aligned to standards prepares students without test-specific teaching



MAST CENTRAL PRINCIPLES



MAST is a coherent, criterion-referenced system aligned to Montana Content Standards



All results reflect intentional expectations for students



Item design and scoring follow best practices



Transparency and educator involvement are central

CLOSING WONDERINGS:

How does a clearer definition of grade-level proficiency change how results feel compared to past assessments?

What does it mean for a system to reveal learning gaps that may have existed but were less visible before?

How do we distinguish between challenges created by the assessment and challenges revealed by the assessment?

If MAST is helping us see student learning more clearly, how do we ensure our response focuses on action and improvement, not discomfort?



CONTACT

Cedar Rose, Assessment Director OPI
cedar.rose@mt.gov



❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE – (Item 26)

Dr. Ron Slinger

ITEM 26

ACTION ON THE PROPOSED NOTICE OF
PUBLIC HEARING AND TIMELINE
PERTAINING TO RULEMAKING IN ARM
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57, SPECIAL
EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE, AND
AUTHORIZE FILING OF THE NOTICE
WITH THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
PUBLICATION IN THE MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE REGISTER

Dr. Ron Slinger



**MONTANA
ADMINISTRATIVE
REGISTER**



BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING

MAR NOTICE NO. 2026-4.1

Summary

Adoption of New Rule 1 (10.57.439) pertaining to Class 9 Special Education Technician License in the Educator Licensure Standards

Hearing Date and Time

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

Virtual Hearing Information

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/82948590657>

Comments

Comments may be submitted using the contact information below. Comments must be received by Friday, March 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Accommodations

The agency 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. Requests must be made by Friday, February 27, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.

Contact

McCall Flynn
(406) 444-6576
bpe@mt.gov

General Reasonable Necessity Statement

The proposed new rule will support the intent to increase the capacity of Montana's paraprofessionals to provide a higher level of support to Montana students with disabilities. In particular, the purpose is to certify a technician, who meets requirements to provide technical services to a special education supervising teacher. This pathway is currently not available through any other classification of licenses under the authority of the Board of Public Education. The New Rule will be numbered ARM 10.57.439 and titled Class 9 Special Education Technician License.

Rulemaking Actions

ADOPT

The rules proposed to be adopted are as follows:

NEW RULE 1 (10.57.439) CLASS 9 SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE

- (1) A Class 9 special education technician license shall be valid for a term of five years.
- (2) To obtain a Class 9 special education technician license, an applicant must submit verification of all of the following:
 - (a) hold a high school diploma or high school equivalency diploma;
 - (b) completion of the approved special education technician online modules, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
 - (c) proof of 1,000 hours of documented special education work, or relevant work experience, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
 - (d) verified completion of four institutionally accredited college or university introductory courses in education, as determined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
 - (e) verified completion of the online course "An Introduction to Indian Education for All in Montana."

- (3) A Class 9 special education technician license is renewable pursuant to the requirements of ARM 10.57.215 with 30 professional development units.
- (4) A lapsed Class 9 special education technician license may be reinstated by earning 30 professional development units as defined in ARM 10.57.215(4) during the five-year period preceding the date of application for the new license.

Authorizing statute(s): Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-102, MCA

Implementing statute(s): Mont. Const. Art. X, sec. 9, 20-4-106, 20-4-108, MCA

Small Business Impact

The Board of Public Education adopts rules that primarily impact teachers, administrators, and school district operations. The board works in cooperation with public schools across the state to implement the rules that are adopted. Given that the board does not work directly with small businesses, the small business impact analysis performed as required under 2-4-111, MCA, indicates that no small businesses are likely to be directly impacted by the proposed rule changes.

Bill Sponsor Notification

The bill sponsor contact requirements of 2-4-302, MCA, do not apply.

Interested Persons

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 above or may be made by completing a request form at any rules hearing held by the board.

Rule Reviewer

McCall Flynn

Approval

Dr. Tim Tharp
Board Chair



Board of Public Education

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TIMELINE PROPOSED CHAPTER 57 EDUCATOR LICENSURE STANDARDS

Superintendent's Request to Revise ARM Title 10, Chapter 57	November 19-21, 2025
BPE authorization to publish Proposal Notice, including public hearing date	January 15-16, 2026
BPE approves rulemaking timeline	January 15-16, 2026
Proposal Notice to SOS for publication in MAR	January 27, 2026
MAR publication of Proposal Notice <ul style="list-style-type: none">Public comment begins	February 6, 2026
Public hearing date	March 3, 2026
Final public comment deadline	March 6, 2026
Adoption Notice to BPE for consideration/respond to comments	March 19-20, 2026
BPE authorization to publish Adoption Notice	May 21-22, 2026
Adoption Notice to SOS for publication in MAR	May 26, 2026
MAR publication of Adoption Notice	June 5, 2026
Effective date of rules	July 1, 2026

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 – (Item 27)**

Madalyn Quinlan

ITEM 27

**INFORMATION ON THE
SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION
ON THE INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE
PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION**

**Dr. Julie Murgel
Tyler Capece**

Montana Board of Public Education

Executive Summary

Date: January 15-16, 2026

Presentation	Information on the Superintendent's Recommendation on the Intensive Assistance Process for Accreditation
Presenter	Julie Murgel Tyler Capece
Position Title	Chief Program Officer Assistant Deputy Superintendent Office of Public Instruction
Overview	Presentation on recommendation for the Intensive Assistance (IA) Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of IA Task Force Work• IA Vision Statement• IA Process Graphic• IA Process Phases• IA Recommended Timeline
Requested Decision(s)	Informational Item
Related Issue(s)	10.55.602(21), 10.55.605(8)(9)
Recommendation(s)	Action Item: March 2026





Intensive Assistance Task Force Recommendations

November- December 2025



Thank you Intensive Assistance Task Force members!

The Office of Public Instruction staff and I extend our deepest gratitude to the members of the Intensive Assistance Task Force.

Your dedication and the significant time you invested in developing this recommendation for intensive support for schools and school leaders are truly admirable and deeply appreciated.

The success of this proposed recommendation is a direct result of the diverse expertise you brought to the task. We are grateful for the insights shared by each member, representing a broad spectrum of our community, including tribal representatives, business leaders, school leadership, educational partners, and classroom teachers.

At the core of this vital task was the success of Montana's students—because when Montana's students succeed, Montana succeeds.

Thank you once again for your invaluable efforts.

Susie Hedalen

Susie Hedalen
State Superintendent of Public Instruction



Task Force Sessions Summary

The Task Force, in collaboration with staff from the Office of Public Instruction and facilitators from Education Northwest's Comprehensive Center, convened on five occasions prior to the January Board of Public Education meeting. These sessions included both virtual meetings and two days of intensive in-person sessions.

Session 1: Introduction, November 12th

The first virtual session served to welcome task force members, delineate the purpose and intended outcomes of the task force's work, and establish the foundational rationale for the work of the task force. Participants were informed of the necessity to define the Intensive Assistance process and to develop substantive, innovative accountability systems for schools. Members divided into small groups to discuss the unique roles and expertise they would be bringing to the task force.

Session 2: Technical Overview, November 17th

This session concentrated on providing background on the two frameworks for accountability and support in Montana: the state accreditation system and the federal accountability system. The session included an overview of the respective roles in the accreditation process for schools, the Office of Public Instruction, and the Board of Public Education. Furthermore, it detailed a timeline of changes over time to the accreditation process and its connection to school funding. Finally, task force members reviewed the requirements for schools when submitting accreditation reports and supports provided throughout the process to school leaders.

Session 3: Capacity Building, December 4th

The third session commenced with a review of the state accreditation and federal accountability system. The majority of this session featured a panel of current and former school leaders in Montana. Panel members provided candid and open discussion regarding areas of achievement, challenges encountered during their experience as school leaders, and opportunities for development. Thank you again to panelists, Superintendent Marcy Cobell of Heart Butte Schools, Superintendent Gerald Chouinard of Hot Springs Schools and Jeremy MacDonald, former Superintendent of Box Elder Schools.

In Person Sessions: December 9th & 10th



The two in-person sessions were crucial for developing the proposed recommendations. On the first day, members participated in exercises that used images to define both a "school where all students thrive" and the concept of "Intensive Assistance." These activities were followed by open and honest discussions to establish the foundations for each of the proposed phases. Finally, members broke into small groups, each tasked with defining one of the three proposed phases.

The second day commenced with a student panel discussion. This session covered students' perspectives on school strengths and areas for growth, the opportunities provided to them, and included a Q&A with task force members. Following the panel, members reviewed the proposals from the other small groups. Subsequently, members were assigned the task of continuing the work of the original groups by identifying what was missing from their recommendations, proposing additions, and offering further feedback.

Session 4: Closing, December 18th

The final virtual session of the task force was convened to allow members to review and discuss the proposed Intensive Assistance plan. This plan was developed based on recommendations derived from the preceding in-person sessions. Task force members examined the four-phase timeline of the recommended Intensive Assistance process, along with supporting visual aids detailing the critical components of each phase and an outline of the Intensive Support Network. Furthermore, members were presented with the proposed vision statement, which was crafted around the central themes identified during the sessions. These themes include the imperative need for local individualization, the development of culturally relevant plans, collaborative engagement with local communities, and a focused commitment to leveraging strengths, enhancing student achievement, and fostering community involvement.

Next Steps

- Subset of the task force will;
 - Develop the innovation plan documents that include: clear goals, measurable objectives, action steps aligned to proven best practices for school improvement (literacy plans, work based learning plans, attendance plans, MTSS framework, leadership capacity plans, school master schedules with 90 minute instructional blocks for ELA & Math), requested flexibilities, and financial planning aligned to the innovation plan.



- Develop a progress report template for schools.
- Create a list of the details of the Intensive Support Network and a list of tangible resources. This will include the structure of the Network.
- Draft of the Request for Information (RFI) for eligible 3rd party entities to support the system analysis and innovation planning.
- Create a tribal consultation protocol.
- Develop a data collection and reporting tool for the system analysis.

Task Force Members:

- ❖ Superintendent Gerald Chouinard, Hot Springs Public Schools
- ❖ Superintendent Marcy Cobell, Heart Butte Public Schools
- ❖ Sara Tempel, Bear Paw Special Education Co-Op
- ❖ Caitlin Jensen, Zero to Five Montana
- ❖ Alex DuBois, Zero to Five Montana
- ❖ Anne Penn, Livingston Schools
- ❖ Dr. Allison Wilson, University of Montana Early Childhood Education Department
- ❖ Dr. Lynne Rider, Kalispell Public Schools
- ❖ Gary Stevenson, Lodge Grass High School
- ❖ Burt Medicine Bull, Chief Dull Knife College
- ❖ Jeremy MacDonald, Stone Child College
- ❖ Whitney Top Sky, Box Elder Public Schools
- ❖ Alicia Doney, Department of Labor & Industry Tribal Youth Outreach Division
- ❖ Dawn Bishop Moore, Indian Impact Schools of Montana
- ❖ Tammy Tolleson Knee, University of Montana Center for the Advancement of Positive Education
- ❖ Craig Crawford, Montana Contractors Association
- ❖ Jennifer Cronk, Kalispell Chamber of Commerce
- ❖ Dr. Rob Watson, School Administrators of Montana
- ❖ McCall Flynn, Board of Public Education
- ❖ Larry Crowder, Montana Rural Education Association
- ❖ Shelley Turner, Montana Association of School Business Officials
- ❖ Jordann Lankford Forrester, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education
- ❖ Norma Bixby, Northern Cheyenne Education Department
- ❖ Calli Rusche- Nicholson, Billings Public Schools
- ❖ Crystal Hickman, Tribal Student Achievement Specialist

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

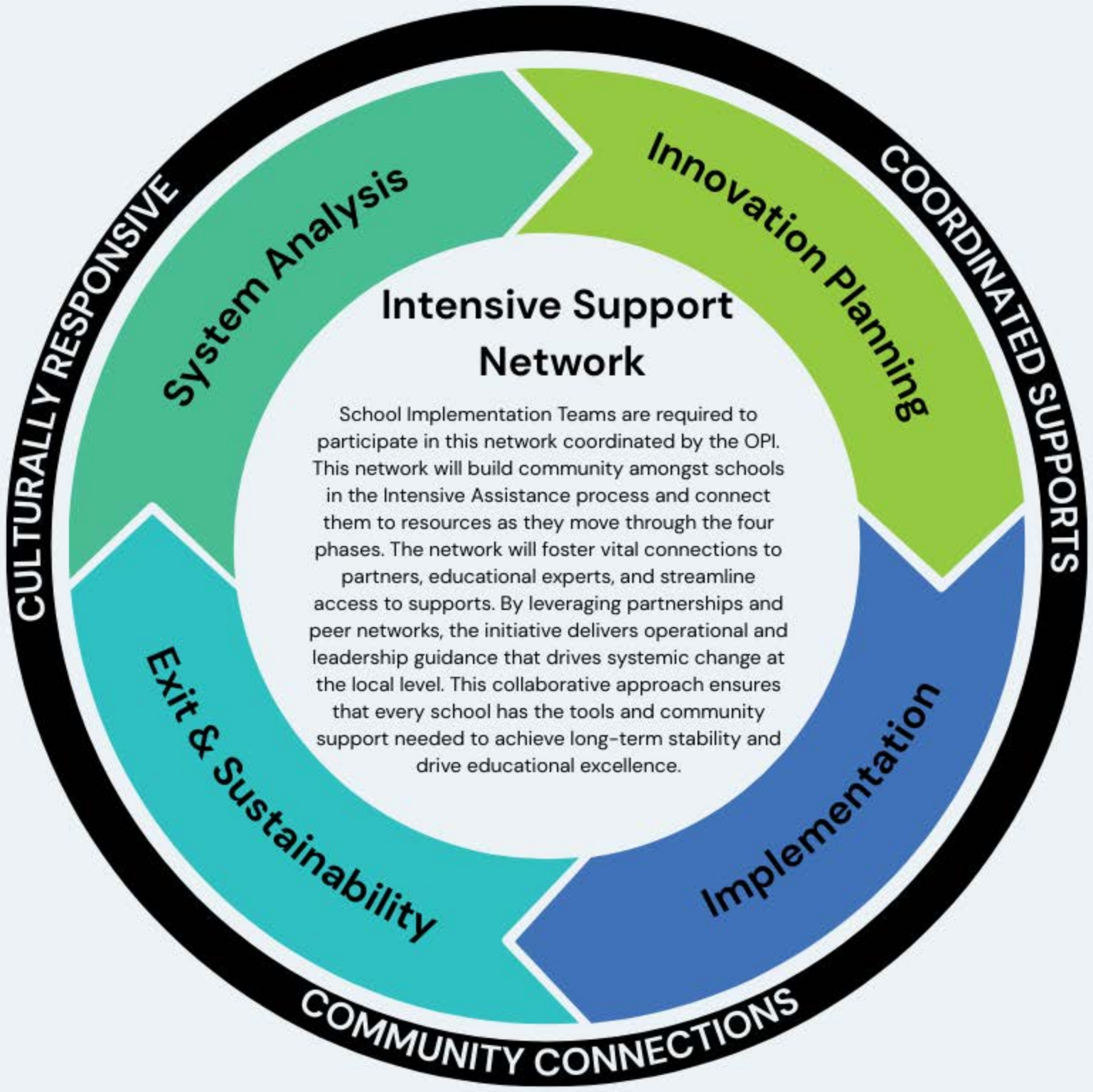
Office of Public Instruction Staff

- ❖ Dr. Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer
- ❖ Crystal Andrews, Senior Manager School & Educator Effectiveness
- ❖ Krystal Smith, Senior Manager Opportunities & Innovative Learning
- ❖ Dr. Brooke Beaverheart Gondara, Indian Education Director
- ❖ Lindsay Mahoney, Comprehensive School Improvement Director
- ❖ Tyler Capece, Assistant Deputy Superintendent



Intensive Assistance Vision Statement **(Proposed)**

Intensive Assistance Support will be intentional, individualized, and culturally relevant—designed to honor local context and community voice while maintaining clarity and accountability. In collaboration with its community, each school develops a plan reflecting its unique strengths and needs, using backward mapping and transparent progress markers. Flexibility will be provided to locally define relevant goals, identify and mitigate barriers, and adjust supports. As a result schools will implement focused strategies, provide opportunities, demonstrate progress, and achieve academic outcomes that endure for students.



4 Phases of Intensive Assistance

SYSTEM ANALYSIS

- The process is led by the school with support from a 3rd party entity, using a framework supplied by OPI.
- A wide variety of qualitative and quantitative data are examined, including student achievement and factors that contribute to it (e.g. basic needs, cultural instruction, facilities, staffing trends, public health data).
- The entire school community participates in gathering and making meaning from the data.
- The initial outcome is a student-centered vision and map of assets and challenges.

INNOVATION PLANNING

- The plan is supported by an implementation team that builds the necessary framework, accesses resources, and creates organizational supports.
- The team will lead ongoing professional learning, coaching and feedback, data collection, and course correction.
- The team builds momentum and commitment and makes data visible to show progress and outcomes.
- The implementation team will conduct community data sharing at least twice yearly.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Weekly meetings of the dedicated intensive support network team aligned to the needs identified through the system analysis phase (finance, administration, instruction) works with school leaders, staff, parents, students, tribal representatives.
- The team collaborates on locally relevant goals, strategic actions, and policy flexibilities to strengthen implementation.
- Broad community participation is required, as well as transparency about challenges and consequences, and clear communication plans for both community and school staff.
- The plan is formalized and adopted by the local school board, the State Superintendent and approved by the BPE.

EXIT & SUSTAINABILITY

- Exit criteria is based on student performance and assurance standards.
- To exit, schools must demonstrate sufficient and sustained progress.
- Schools present progress on goals and objectives, action steps, and data analysis, challenges and barriers, financial update and next steps to the BPE bi-annually.
- Schools may participate for a maximum of **three years** before a decision is made on their exit/status.
- Schools that lack participation in the process, make no progress on student achievement, or fail to exit will be placed on non-accredited status.
- Schools that successfully exit IA will continue to participate in the Intensive Support Network for at least one and up to three years.



Summary of the Intensive Assistance Timeline

This timeline outlines a seven-step process for a school placed in "intensive assistance" due to consecutive years of overall deficient accreditation status, culminating in either exiting the process or moving to non-accredited status. Schools placed in "intensive assistance" will have one year for systems analysis and innovation planning, followed by three years of plan implementation with biannual progress updates, before either exiting "intensive assistance" status or being recommended for non-accreditation.

Step	Action/Requirement	Key Timeline	Potential Outcome
Preamble	The Board of Public Education (BPE) approves overall accreditation statuses for all schools.	MAY	Establishes the initial deficient status.
STEP 1	The State Superintendent recommends BPE place school in intensive assistance, if 2 years of overall deficient status. School starts receiving support. OPI/State Superintendent presents the process to the district school board.	MAY	Formal initiation of the Intensive Assistance process.
STEP 2	A 3rd Party Entity supports the school in conducting a system analysis to drive the development of an innovation plan. The school presents and submits the system analysis.	NOVEMBER	Establishes the foundation for the innovation plan.



Step	Action/Requirement	Key Timeline	Potential Outcome
STEP 3	School submits and presents the innovation plan. BPE approves or denies the plan. If approved, implementation begins. If denied, school updates plan based on feedback to resubmit in May.	MARCH	Innovation plan is finalized and implementation starts.
STEP 4	School submits assurance standards components for accreditation review. OPI reports assurance standard rating to BPE.	MAY	If overall rating is Deficient, the school is recommended for non-accreditation (moves to Step 6).
Ongoing Progress Reports	School presents biannual progress reports including information prepared with support from the 3rd Party Entity. OPI presents state assessment data.	NOVEMBER (Year 1, 2, 3) & MARCH (Year 2, 3)	Continuous monitoring and evidence of progress is required. Failure to show improvement leads to Step 6.
STEP 5	School submits assurance and student performance components in the 3rd year of Intensive Assistance. OPI reports overall accreditation rating to BPE.	MARCH (Submission) / MAY (Report)	If Deficient , school is recommended for non-accreditation (moves to Step 6). If Regular, Regular with Minor Deviation, or Advice , the school is <i>exited</i> from intensive assistance and receives one more year of support.

Susie Hedalen, Superintendent
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501



Phone: 406.444.3680
opi.mt.gov

Step	Action/Requirement	Key Timeline	Potential Outcome
STEP 6	BPE gives notice of potential non-accredited status. The school can appeal at the next meeting. BPE approves or denies appeal and takes action to place the school in non-accredited status if the appeal is denied.	MAY (Notice) / JULY (Appeal & Action)	Final decision point for non-accreditation status.
STEP 7	The school officially enters non-accredited status.	Following JULY 1	Final consequence of the process.

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – (Items 28-30)**

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 28

**ACTION ON MSDB SUPERINTENDENT
CONTRACT**

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Action on 2025 Contract**
- **Action on 2026 Contract**

ITEM 29

**ACTION ON THE CREATION OF THE SEAL
OF CIVICS LITERACY**

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 30

**RECOGNITION OF EXITING BOARD
MEMBER**

Dr. Tim Tharp

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

March 19-20, 2026

Ronan, MT

MACIE Update

Action on MSDB School Calendar

Action on Public Charter School Contracts

Assessment Update

Federal Update

Accreditation Report

Annual School Food Services Report

Review Draft CAEP MOU

Content Standards Revision Update

Youth Risk Behavioral Survey

❖ **BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**
STRATEGIC PLANNING

Dr. Tim Tharp

12:00PM REVIEW OF NASBE DOCUMENTS

**12:30PM REVIEW OF MISSION AND
DISCUSSION OF VISION**

1:45PM WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS



Board of Public Education

Strategic Planning Timeline

September 11–12, 2025 | Board Meeting – Kickoff

- Presentation on strategic planning timeline and process.
- Review project plan, roles, and expectations.
- **Output:** Confirm process, timeline, and stakeholder engagement plan.

October–December 2025 | Pre-Engagement Phase (Between Meetings)

- Gather baseline information and data for priority areas.
- Identify and outreach to key stakeholders.

January 15–16, 2026 | Board Meeting – Mission & Vision

- Review mission statement.
- Discuss and draft vision statement.
- **Pre-Reading:** NASBE *Roadmap to Excellence* - Strategic Planning for State Boards and NASBE Policy Update - New State Strategic Plans Zero In on Learning Recovery
- **Output:** Draft vision statement.

February–March 2026 | (Between Meetings)

- Follow up from January Board Meeting.
- Prepare draft vision statement.

March 19–20, 2026 | Board Meeting – Vision & Commitments

- Review and refine vision statement.
- Discuss commitments and initial strategic priorities.
- **Pre-Reading:** Goals and commitments adopted by other states.
- **Output:** Final vision statement.

April–May 2026 | (Between Meetings)

- Follow up from March Board Meeting.
- Prepare commitments and initial strategic priorities.

May 21–22, 2026 | Board Meeting – Commitments & Priorities

- Review commitments and initial strategic priorities.
- Identify 1–2 critical issues per priority.
- Establish related goals and metrics of success.
- **Output:** Draft monitoring/accountability framework.

June–July 2026 | Draft Development (Between Meetings)

- Follow up from May Board Meeting.
- Prepare related goals and metrics of success.
- Outreach to stakeholders for feedback.

July 22–24, 2026 | Board Meeting – Draft Review & Feedback

- Review first draft of strategic plan and incorporate stakeholder feedback.
- **Output:** Give direction for revisions.

August–Early September 2026 | Draft Development Cont. (Between Meetings)

- Follow up from July Board Meeting.
- Continue draft development and revisions.

September 24–25, 2026 | Board Meeting – Strategic Plan Adoption

- Review final draft, incorporating public comment and stakeholder feedback.
- **Output:** Final Strategic Plan.