

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

ANNUAL PLAN

2025

Approved 9/12/2025

MISSION STATEMENT

The Board of Public Education has a mission statement as directed by the Montana Constitution, which states, “There is a board of public education to exercise general supervision over the public school system and such other public educational institutions as may be assigned by law”. The Board of Public Education was established to supervise, serve, maintain, and strengthen Montana's system of free quality public elementary and secondary schools.

OVERVIEW

The Board of Public Education was created by the Montana Constitution of 1972 to exercise general supervision over the elementary and secondary schools of the state. The Board of Public Education consists of seven members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate to staggered seven-year terms.

By statute, the Governor must appoint members to the Board of Public Education so that no more than four may be from one of the two commission districts and no more than four may be affiliated with the same political party.

The Governor, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Commissioner of Higher Education are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board of Public Education. In 1978 the Board of Public Education added a student representative who is elected by the executive committee of the Montana Association of Student Councils to a one-year term. The Board of Public Education maintains its office in Helena with a small staff led by an Executive Director.

In addition to the constitutional mandate to exercise general supervision of the schools, the Board of Public Education is assigned specific responsibilities by the Montana Legislature. A partial list of duties requires the Board of Public Education to:

- adopt standards of accreditation for Montana schools and establish the accreditation status of each school;
- effect a system of teacher certification, including the accreditation of the teacher and administrator training programs;
- consider the suspension or revocation of teacher certificates and hear appeals from the denial of teacher certificates;
- administer and order the distribution of state equalization aid;
- adopt policies for the special education of handicapped and gifted and talented students; and
- act as the governing agency for the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind.

The following priority areas have been developed and approved by the Board of Public Education as part of their annual strategic planning process. The priorities are separated into six points, which include subpoints and measures for each. The Board of Public Education reviews their strategic plan at their July meeting and approves any changes at their September meeting.



Priority

#1

EXERCISE THE BOARD'S CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO IMPROVE MONTANA'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

- Work with constitutional education authorities to ensure they understand and respect the constitutional authority of the Board of Public Education.
- Collaborate with constitutional education authorities around initiatives to improve and support public education in Montana and implementation of legislative priorities and directives.
- Work with the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education, Office of Public Instruction, and education partners to implement Indian Education for All.
- Promote and maintain a transparent and open public participation process.
- Support professional development for Board members to improve their understanding of contemporary issues in education and to provide networking opportunities within the state and national educator communities.

Key Measures

- Analyze proposed legislation and education legislators when needed.
- Participate in meetings when appropriate.
- Refer to statute when managing the Board's six regularly scheduled meetings and other activities.



Priority

#2

PROMOTE A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Work with education partners to help school districts navigate federal and state regulations and funding.
- Assign a member of the Board of Public Education or designee to participate in the Montana School Safety Advisory Committee meetings.

Key Measures

- Share school safety information at Board meetings when appropriate.
- Maintain attendance and regular participation at Montana school Safety Advisory Committee meetings.



Priority

#3

EVALUATE AND ADOPT THE BOARD'S ACCREDITATION STANDARDS TO ENSURE THEY ARE CONTEMPORARY AND EFFECTIVE TO IMPROVE QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL MONTANA STUDENTS

- Maintain the Board's commitment to rigorous standards and assessments, and support flexibilities within the current frameworks.
- Collaborate with education partners in support of drafting and implementing state standards, including efforts around licensing, content, transportation, assessment, accreditation, educator preparation programs, and other standards within the Board of Public Education's authority.

Key Measures

- Use research and data to guide standards revisions when necessary.



Priority

#4

FOSTER QUALITY TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

- Work with legislators and other entities to ensure they understand the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Public Education.
- Adopt revisions to the Administrative Rules of Montana that are within the Board of Public Education's authority.
- Work with partners in P-12 and higher education to coordinate recruitment and retention efforts of teachers, staff, and school leaders.
- Receive guidance from professional education organizations and act on their recommendations, when appropriate.

Key Measures

- Increase communication and participation in legislative meetings, events, and gatherings.
- Use research and data to guide standards revisions when necessary.
- Use research and licensure data to guide decision-making and strategies.
- Evaluate data and research necessary to the work of the Board and request guidance.



Priority


#5

SUPPORT PREPARATION OF ALL MONTANA STUDENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT, POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION, AND CIVIC LIFE

- Work to support and expand pathways to career and life success through dual enrollment, internships, work-based learning, etc.
- Collaborate with the Montana Digital Academy to support online instruction for students, and assign a member of the Board of Public Education or designee to serve on the Montana Digital Academy Governing Board.
- Plan and prepare for the Board of Education meetings to support P-20 priorities and adopt a unified education budget.
- Work with school districts and education partners to promote the Montana Seal of Biliteracy.
- Prioritize and support innovation through the public charter school application process.
- Work with and administratively support the Montana Community Choice School Commission.
- Receive guidance from the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education and take action on their recommendations, when appropriate.

Key Measures

- Use research and data to guide standards revisions when necessary, and promote flexibility to ensure implementation of these programs.
- Increase communication and participation in Montana Digital Academy meetings to support the increase in digital programming.
- Work with the Office of Budget and Program Planning and Governor's Office to prepare for Board of Education meetings.
- Evaluate data and research necessary to the work of the Board and request guidance.

 <p>Priority #6</p>	RECOGNIZE AND FULFILL THE BOARD’S STATUTORY OBLIGATION TO THE MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire, support, and evaluate the Superintendent of the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB). • Support and take action on personnel items, out of state travel requests, policies, and other items. • Assign the Executive Director and MSDB liaison to participate in the Montana School for the Deaf and Blind Foundation meetings. • Advocate for budgetary resources to support MSDB’s programmatic and facility requests. 	
	Key Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement hiring and evaluation processes.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure information is included in Board agendas and time is available for discussion pertaining to MSDB items.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain attendance and regular participation in MSDB Foundation meetings.