MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
NORTHERN

# Office of the Chancellor

November 11, 2026

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

From: Dr. Jennifer Brown
Interim Chancellor
Montana State University - Northern

Dear Senior Manager Andrews,

On behalf of Montana State University–Northern (MSUN), I write to acknowledge receipt of the Office of Public Instruction's Final State Accreditation Program Report 2026 on November 6, 2026. I, our Educator Preparation Program (EPP) faculty, Provost, and administrative leadership have reviewed the findings carefully, and we appreciate the time and thought your evaluators have invested in identifying areas for program improvement. We truly value our partnership with the OPI and the State Superintendent, and we are grateful for the opportunity to engage collaboratively in strengthening our programs. We also appreciate the opportunity to respond to the findings of the OPI's Final Report.

Continuous improvement is foundational to who we are at MSU-Northern as we believe there is always room to grow. In that spirit, our EPP faculty regularly examine the effectiveness of their programs and make meaningful changes to program structure, curriculum, and placement procedures, guided by evidence collected and analyzed at regular intervals. All of this work serves to ensure our completers are fully prepared to give Montana's next generation of leaders a high-quality education.

We believe our submitted ISSRs and aligned evidence demonstrate substantial progress in addressing the prior stipulations and corrective actions recommended by the OPI and approved by the Board of Public Education in 2024. That evidence reflects ongoing data collection, active stakeholder involvement, continuous program review, new assessment processes, and documented programmatic changes informed by data and feedback. We also understand that having these systems in place is only the first step. The next is bringing them to the level of maturity and consistency the OPI expects, and we are committed to doing exactly that.

Given the considerable progress the EPP has made over the past two years, we had hoped that the offered evidence would be sufficient to move the items under ARM 10.58.314 and 10.58.608 from stipulation status to a status of "area for improvement". Nonetheless, MSU-Northern's campus, from EPP faculty and staff to the university's senior leadership, remain steadfast in their commitment to the success of our students and the health of our educator preparation programs. Indeed, meeting the state's standards for our programs is a top priority for the entire Northern

campus. The Provost and I have pledged our full support, and our faculty and staff are united in this effort. Over the next six months, every part of our campus will contribute to strengthening the EPP, from advising, assessment, and field placement, to data management and institutional support. We are eager to outwardly demonstrate this commitment by:

- submitting the required progress reports to the OPI on or before the required dates of March 1 and May 1, 2027;
- sharing progress updates with you and your team at the beginning of each month, from now through the end of May, so you are never left wondering where we stand; and
- presenting our continued growth to the Board of Public Education (BPE) in March and May of 2027.

MSU-Northern plays a vital role in the success of the State of Montana's educational goals, especially as those goals relate to the preparation of teachers that will support school districts operating in the most rural counties in the region. This is a role we do not take lightly, and we look forward to sharing more about Northern's story, and the critical, strategic importance Northern's EPP holds, with you and the members of the BPE at the November meeting.

Thank you for your continued support of our students and our Educator Preparation Program. We look forward to working with you in the months ahead to make Northern's EPP one of the strongest in the state.

With appreciation and respect,

Jennifer Brown, PhD
Interim Chancellor
Montana State University–Northern