

Serving the Profession and the Public

Montana's Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council is committed to serving the profession of education and the public interest. Members of the Council are available to speak to educators or the public about the work of the Council.

The Council welcomes the interest and participation of educators and the public. Your suggestions, recommendations, questions, and concerns are always of interest to the Council. Notice of Council meetings and minutes are available on the BPE/CSPAC website.

Council Membership

Kelly Elder, chairperson, Helena, MT

Ann Wake, vice-chairperson, Lolo, MT

Robert Watson, Missoula, MT

Teresa Marchant, Billings, MT

Tom Cubbage, Great Falls, MT

Barbara Brown, Missoula, MT

Dr. Trent Atkins, Sula, MT

CSPAC Staff

McCall Flynn, Executive Director

Kris Stockton, Administrative Assistant

Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant

CSPAC Contact Information

46 N Last Chance Gulch, 2B

PO Box 200601

Helena, MT 59620-0601

(406) 444-6576

Fax: (406) 444-0847

E-mail: bpe@mt.gov

Website: www.bpe.mt.gov

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Montana Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council



Working for Continued Quality in the Education Profession

Professional Practices and Ethical Conduct

Another function of the Council is to examine standards for professional practices and ethical conduct. Copies of the Code of Ethics for Montana Educators are available on the BPE/CSPAC website. The Code is intended to develop public and professional awareness of what constitutes professional conduct of educators.

The Council views the code as a document, which changes in response to those it serves. The Code of Ethics is now included as an integral part of the licensure process.

Denial, Suspension and Revocation of Teaching Licenses

The Council has a strong interest in studying the current policies and practices in Montana for the denial, suspension and revocation of licenses. Because the Council is comprised of people directly involved in the field of education, its work in this area represents a way for Montana educators to share the responsibility for "policing their own ranks."

Class 8 Dual Credit Only Post-Secondary Faculty License

The Council reviews and makes recommendations for licensure of all Class 8 applications.

Montana Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council

CSPAC's Beginning

The Montana Legislature established the Certification Standards and Practices Advisory Council in 1987. The Board of Public Education appoints its members. Members serve three-year terms.

Membership

The Council has seven members. The membership must include:

- one elementary teacher (K-8)
- one secondary teacher (9-12)
- one specialist or K-12 specialist
- one additional teacher representative from any of the above categories
- one faculty member from an approved education program offered by an accredited teacher education institution
- one school administrator
- one school district trustee

Council Funding

The licensure fee in Montana is \$6 for each year of the term of the certificate. The Montana Legislature designated \$4 of each yearly licensure fee for the operation of the Council. The Legislature appropriated the remaining \$2 of the fee for maintenance of the CSPAC research fund. This fund is to be used by the Council and the Board of Public Education to conduct research on the issues before the Council and the Board.

Operation

The Council elects its own officers and meets quarterly to conduct its business. All meetings are open to the public and are frequently attended by members of professional organizations. Once a year the Council meets on the campus of a Montana college which offers a teacher preparation program. The Council encourages educators to attend CSPAC meetings and to voice their questions and concerns on certification issues in Montana.

In addition to the work of the Council's staff, the staff of the Office of Public Instruction provides technical assistance.

The Council researches various issues, writes draft administrative rules and provides recommendations for policy changes to the Board of Public Education. In addition to its own projects, the Council considers matters referred by educators, professional organizations, the Office of Public Instruction, and Montana citizens.



Duties of the Council

The Council studies and makes recommendations in the following areas:

- licensure standards
- teacher education program standards in Montana
- standards for professional practices and ethical conduct
- policies on suspension, denial and revocation of teaching licenses

Licensure

The Council examines all aspects of the licensure process for teachers, administrators and specialists. These aspects include the training required for licensure, as well as the number and types of endorsements and licenses.

Questions on licensure can be numerous and complex, but the Council believes that the answers are important. Good standards and practices for licensure are one of the best safeguards Montanans have for quality education.

In 2016, the Council completed a comprehensive review of Chapter 57 of the Administrative Rules of Montana. These rules define the licensure processes for all teachers, administrators and specialists in Montana schools.

Teacher Education Programs

Also important to ensuring quality in the profession is maintaining and improving teacher education programs in Montana. To this end, the Council has examined the process utilized by the Board of Public Education to review the teacher education program standards.

Additionally, the Council has been involved in the review of the Professional Education Program Standards (Chapter 58 ARM).

Beginning Teacher Support

*The Council has published a self-help manual for schools and districts wishing to initiate beginning teacher mentorship programs, *The Single Best Thing*. The manual is the product of a three-year research project conducted in Montana schools. The research concluded that pairing a veteran teacher with a beginning teacher during their first year of teaching facilitates the pace and quality of the new teacher's development. *The Single Best Thing* manual is available on the BPE/CSPAC website.*