

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

**March 19, 2026
Ronan Middle School, Library
35885 Round Butte Rd
Ronan, MT**

**March 20, 2026
Ronan High School, Library
130 3rd Ave NW
Ronan, MT**

AGENDA

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING AGENDA

March 19, 2026
Ronan Middle School, Library
35885 Round Butte Rd
Ronan, MT

March 20, 2026
Ronan High School, Library
130 3rd Ave NW
Ronan, MT

Thursday, March 19, 2026
Ronan Middle School
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. January 15-16, 2026 Meeting Minutes
- B. Financials

ADOPT AGENDA

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-5)

- Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #26
Dr. Tim Tharp
 - Welcome from Superintendent Mark Johnston, Ronan School District
 - Committee Assignments
- Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #28
McCall Flynn

Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 45 Minutes, page #29
State Superintendent Susie Hedalen

- Assessment Update
- Federal Update
- Content Standards Update
- Annual Food Services Report

Item 4 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #76
Dr. Angela McLean

Item 5 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #83
Lydia Comstock

❖ CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Items 6-7)

Item 6 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 15 Minutes, page #84
Cathy Kincheloe

Item 7 ACTION ON THE EXECUTION OF NEW AND REVISED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
CONTRACTS – 5 Minutes, page #86
Lisa Schmidt

❖ BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TOURS & ACTIVITIES

10:45AM TRAVEL TO CSKT TRIBAL COMPLEX

11:00AM MEET WITH CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES TRIBAL COUNCIL
42487 COMPLEX BLVD, PABLO, MT

11:45AM TRAVEL TO RONAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

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

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

12:15PM DISCUSSION OF MISSION AND VISION CONT.

12:45PM DISCUSS COMMITMENTS AND INITIAL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1:45PM WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

*****TIME CERTAIN AT 2:00PM*****

❖ LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 8-14)

Item 8 ACTION AND INFORMATION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2026-01, DAVIS –
15 Minutes, page #90
Brenton Craggs

ACTION ITEMS:

- Action on Initial Review
- Action on Summary Suspension

- Item 9 **ACTION AND INFORMATION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2026-02, LARSON**
 – 15 Minutes, page #91
 Brenton Craggs
- ACTION ITEMS:**
- Action on Initial Review
 - Action on Summary Suspension
- Item 10 **ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION 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 #92
 Dr. Ron Slinger
- Item 11 **ACTION ON THE SITE VISIT AND ACCREDITATION STATE EXIT REPORT OF ABCTE**
FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING – 10 Minutes,
 page #95
 Crystal Andrews
- Item 12 **ACTION ON THE SITE VISIT AND JOINT ACCREDITATION STATE EXIT REPORT OF**
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY BILLINGS EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROVIDER IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – 10 Minutes, page #122
 Crystal Andrews
- Item 13 **ACTION ON MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY NORTHERN GOOD CAUSE EXTENSION**
REQUEST – 10 Minutes, page #202
 Crystal Andrews
- Item 14 **INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ON CLASS 8 DUAL CREDIT POSTSECONDARY**
FACULTY LICENSE – 15 Minutes, page #205
 Dr. Julie Murgel, Crystal Andrews
- ❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Items 15-17)**
- Item 15 **ACTION ON PROVISIONAL ACCREDITATION STATUS FOR PUBLIC CHARTER**
SCHOOLS – 15 Minutes, page #211
 Crystal Andrews
- Item 16 **ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION ON THE INTENSIVE**
ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION – 30 Minutes, page #217
 Dr. Julie Murgel, Christy Mock-Stutz
- Item 17 **INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED PROCEDURES AND SCHEDULES FOR**
REVIEWING THE ACCREDITATION STATUS OF EACH SCHOOL – ASSURANCE
STANDARDS – 30 Minutes, page #243
 Crystal Andrews
- ❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – Dr. Tim Tharp (Item 18)**
- Item 18 **ACTION ON MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANT APPLICATION FOR**
LAME DEER – 5 Minutes, page #264
 Krystal Smith
- ❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – Renee Rasmussen (Item 19)**
- Item 19 **ACTION ON THE APPROVED LIST OF SCREENING TOOLS PERTAINING TO TITLE**
10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY NUMERACY TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS – 5
 Minutes, page #269
 Renee Rasmussen

**Ronan High School, Library
130 3rd Ave NW
Ronan, MT**

Friday, March 20, 2026
Ronan High School
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER

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

❖ **MACIE LIAISON – Julia Maxwell (Item 20)**

Item 20 **MACIE REPORT – 15 Minutes, page #276**
Jordann Lankford Forster

❖ **MSDB COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Item 21)**

Item 21 **MSDB REPORT – 30 Minutes, page #280**
Superintendent Paul Furthmyre

ACTION ITEMS:

- **Action on Out of State Travel Requests**
- **Action on Personnel Items**
- **Action on 2026-2027 MSDB Calendar**

PUBLIC COMMENT

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❖ **BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TOURS & ACTIVITIES**

9:15AM **RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL TOUR – AUTOMOTIVE SHOP**
130 3RD AVE NW

10:00AM **RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL TOUR – AG/GARDENING**
35885 ROUND BUTTE RD

10:30AM **RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL TOUR – SMALL ENGINES**
35885 ROUND BUTTE RD

11:00AM **RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**
130 3RD AVE NW

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS May 21-22, 2026, Great Falls, MT
Student Representative – Last Meeting & Recognition
MACIE Update
Review Public Charter School Performance Reports

Action on K-12 Schools Payment Schedule
Assessment Update
Federal Update
Content Standards Revision Update
Accreditation Update – Student Performance Standards
Action on Accreditation Procedures and Schedules
Action on Accreditation Status of All Schools
Review Draft CAEP MOU
Executive Director Performance Evaluation

ADJOURN

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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.

CALL TO ORDER

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Items may be pulled from Consent Agenda if
requested

- A. January 15-16, 2026 Meeting
Minutes**
- B. Financials**

CONSENT AGENDA

MINUTES

BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

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

January 15, 2026
8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER – 00:02:05

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

Board members: 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, Office of Public Instruction (OPI); Dr. Angela McLean, Office of Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE); Ms. Rachel Green, Governor's Office. Staff: Ms. McCall Flynn, Executive Director; Ms. Kris Stockton, Administrative Specialist; Ms. Julie Balsam, Administrative Assistant; Ms. Lea Ann Munkres, Program Officer. Guests: Superintendent Paul Furthmyre, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind (MSDB); Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel; Commissioner Sarah Swanson, Department of Labor and Industry (DLI); Ms. Crystal Armstrong, DLI; Ms. Crystal Andrews, OPI; Ms. Isabelle Welch, ABCTe; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Mr. Patrick Cates, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Krystal Smith, OPI; Deputy Superintendent Craig Barringer, OPI; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, University of Montana (UM); Ms. Aislinn Brown, OPI; Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Ms. Marie Judisch, OPI; Ms. Katie Madsen, OPI; Ms. Elsie Workman, OPI; Ms. Nancy Hall, Office of Budget and Program Planning; Superintendent Chad Johnson, Livingston Public Schools (LPS); Superintendent Cory Dziowgo, Columbia Falls Public Schools (CFPS); Ms. Jane Hamman; Dr. Melanie Reaves, Montana State University Billings (MSUB); Ms. Julia Gustafson, Friends of the Montana Constitution; Dr. Joe Helbling, Carroll College; Ms. Nicole Bookheimer, MSUB; Ms. Hannah Scheiderer, LPS; Mr. Todd Wester, LPS; Ms. Becky Ayler, LPS.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 00:04:16

No public comment was made.

CONSENT AGENDA – 00:04:29

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

ADOPT AGENDA – 00:05:00

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

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ REPORTS – Dr. Tim Tharp (Items 1-6)

Item 1 CHAIRPERSON REPORT – 00:05:22 **Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tim Tharp thanked the Montana Heritage Center for their hospitality and reviewed meetings and conferences he attended since the November Board meeting.

**Item 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT – 00:11:23
McCall Flynn**

Ms. McCall Flynn thanked the Montana Heritage Center for the use of their space then reviewed work pertaining to Public Charter Schools, a presentation given at the Education Interim Budget Committee, and Board Committee meetings.

**Item 3 STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT – 00:17:08
State Superintendent Susie Hedalen**

Superintendent Susie Hedalen thanked the Montana Heritage Center for the meeting space, then shared an update on the following information: the Indian Education for All Annual Conference, a Request for Proposal for Indian Education for All, the new Teacher Learning HUB that will interface with MT Teach, Land Board meetings, Data Modernization, work with Montana agriculture to provide locally grown products for schools, work for the Montana 250 Commission, and Federal funding.

Assessment Update: Ms. Cedar Rose provided an update on the MAST Assessment and answered Board members' questions.

Content Standards Update: Ms. Marie Judisch provided an update on the Content Standards revisions.

Accreditation Update: Ms. Crystal Andrews provided an Accreditation Update and answered Board members' questions.

HiSET Report: Ms. Katie Madsen presented the HiSET Report and answered Board members' questions.

Transportation Report: Ms. Elsie Workman presented the Transportation Report and answered Board members' questions.

**Item 4 COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT – 01:29:04
Dr. Angela McLean**

Dr. Angela McLean reviewed projects at OCHE that included FAFSA completion efforts, the ACT Score Report Code, and Future Ready efforts.

**Item 5 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE REPORT – 01:33:19
Rachel Green**

Ms. Rachel Green announced the receipt of a Federal Grant to fund the Montana Rural Healthcare Transformation Program and stated that a portion of the award will help fund primary and behavioral health services in schools and the Presidential Fitness Test. Ms. Green concluded her report with a review of work completed by the School Funding Interim Commission.

**Item 6 STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – 01:36:30
Lydia Comstock**

Ms. Lydia Comstock updated the Board on a National Summit attended by the President of the Montana Association of Student Council and reviewed advocacy the President completed at the Summit, then provided an update on the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Student Representative Committee meetings she attended.

❖ ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE – Dr. Hannah Nieskens (Item 7)

**Item 7 ACTION ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION RESOLUTION – 02:19:30
Dr. Hannah Nieskens**

Dr. Hannah Nieskens reviewed the Artificial Intelligence in Education Resolution for Board members and outlined the process of writing the proposed resolution. Board members expressed appreciation of Dr. Nieskens' work on this issue.

Dr. Nieskens moved to approve the Artificial Intelligence in Education Resolution. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 8-9)**

**Item 8 ACTION ON UPDATED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL CONTRACTS – 02:30:55
Dr. Ron Slinger**

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the proposed revisions to the Public Charter School contracts and answered Board members' questions.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the proposed updates with the stipulated changes to the Public Charter School Contracts as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Dr. Nieskens.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 9 WORK SESSION ON THE APPROVAL AND DENIAL OF PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS
– 02:55:27**

Dr. Ron Slinger

Vice Chair Slinger thanked Board members for their review of the applications and noted that action would occur the following day. Vice Chair Slinger reviewed the Board Charter Committee recommendations before Board members discussed the approval or denial of applications.

❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – Dr. Ron Slinger (Items 10-15)**

Item 10 INFORMATION ON THE TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP GRANT AND REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL – 04:32:55

Commissioner Sarah Swanson and Crystal Armstrong

Commissioner Sarah Swanson and Ms. Crystal Armstrong reviewed the Teacher Apprenticeship Grant, progress on the Request for Proposal, and answered Board members' questions.

Item 11 INFORMATION ON ANNUAL EDUCATOR LICENSURE REPORT – 05:20:02

Crystal Andrews

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

Item 12 INFORMATION ON ABCTE PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING – 05:32:54

Isabelle Welch, ABCTE and Crystal Andrews

Ms. Isabelle Welch and Ms. Crystal Andrews presented an update on the ABCTe Program for Alternative Credentialing and answered Board members' 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 – 05:54:46

Crystal Andrews

Ms. Crystal Andrews presented the Site Visit and Joint Accreditation State Exit Report for MSU Billings Educator Preparation Program. Interim Dean Dr. Melanie Reaves discussed commendations and key takeaways from the review. Ms. Andrews and Dr. Reaves answered Board members' questions.

Item 14 INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY EDUCATOR LOAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – 06:13:57

Christy Mock-Stutz

Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz presented the Quality Educator Loan Assistance Program update to the Board and answered Board members' questions.

Item 15 INITIAL REVIEW AND WORK SESSION ON TITLE 10, CHAPTER 57 CLASS 9 SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICIAN LICENSE – 06:21:23

Patrick Cates and Dr. Julie Murgel

Mr. Patrick Cates and Dr. Julie Murgel reviewed the proposed Class 9 Special Education Technician License and answered Board members' questions.

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

Item 16 ACTION ON THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING PHASE II GRANTS – 07:02:29
Krystal Smith

Ms. Krystal Smith presented information on the Transformational Learning Phase II Grants and discussed the process used to select recipients. Ms. Smith answered Board members' questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve the funding for the five districts for the Transformational Learning Phase II Grants as recommended by the Superintendent. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

Public comment from Mr. Todd Wester who provided context on the application from Livingston Public Schools.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 17 ACTION ON MONTANA ADVANCED OPPORTUNITY GRANTS – 07:26:25
Krystal Smith

Ms. Krystal Smith presented the Advanced Opportunity Grants and answered Board members' questions.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Montana Advanced Opportunity Grant applications as presented. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Quinlan moved to approve the Montana Advanced Opportunity Grant Annual Reports as presented. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

No discussion. Motion passed with Dr. Nieskens abstaining due to her district's application.

Item 18 INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF THE CREATION OF THE SEAL OF CIVICS LITERACY – 07:35:50
Tyler Capece and Chris Averill

Ms. Tyler Capece and Mr. Chris Averill reviewed the proposed Seal of Civics Literacy for high school students and answered Board members' questions.

Public comment from Ms. Jane Hamman in support of the Seal of Civics Literacy.

❖ MSDB COMMITTEE – Lisa Schmidt (Item 19)

Item 19 MSDB REPORT – 07:53:30
Superintendent Paul Furthmyre

Superintendent Paul Furthmyre presented the MSDB Report and highlighted Quality Educator payments received by MSDB, the parking lot project, financials, enrollment, a newly created student band, the 2026-27 School Calendar, and the Cognia Accreditation Review. Superintendent Furthmyre reviewed the action items and requested Board approval.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Out of State Travel requests as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the MSDB Personnel Items as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Slinger.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the second reading of MSDB Policy 8210 – Procurement for Food Service – as listed in the agenda packet. Motion seconded by Board member Maxwell.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

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

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

Item 20 MSDB SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

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

The Board recessed for the day at 5:19 PM.

January 16, 2026

8:30AM

CALL TO ORDER 00:00:19

Chair Tim Tharp called the meeting to order at 8:30 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. Ex Officio members: State Superintendent Susie Hedalen, OPI; Dr. Angela McLean, OCHE. 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. Guests: Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster, Chair, Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE); Ms. Cedar Rose, OPI; Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI; Ms. Tyler Capece, OPI; Deputy Superintendent Craig Barringer, OPI; Mr. Rich Batterman, Board Legal Counsel; Superintendent Chad Johnson, LPS; Ms. Kristi Steinberg, UM; Ms. Christy Mock-Stutz, OPI; Dr. Jane Karas, Flathead Valley Community College; Superintendent Cory Dziowgo, CFPS; Ms. Jane Hamman; Superintendent Laurie Barron, Evergreen Public Schools; Mr. Todd Wester, LPS; Ms. Hannah Scheiderer, LPS; Ms. Becky Ayler, LPS; Mr. Tony Warren; Ms. Julia Gustafson, Friends of the Montana Constitution; Mr. Paolo DeMaria, NASBE; Mr. Joey Hedger, NASBE.

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

**Item 21 UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE SCHOOLS COMMISSION – 00:03:19
Cathy Kincheloe**

Ms. Cathy Kincheloe updated the Board on work the Commission completed to prepare for Choice Schools including draft policies and procedures for the application process, templates for schools, and a draft Annual Report. Ms. Kincheloe answered Board members' questions.

**Item 22 ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS TO APPROVE AND DENY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS – 00:22:01
Dr. Ron Slinger**

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the Resolution to Approve Public Charter Schools.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Resolution to Approve the applications for Public Charter Schools. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

Vice Chair Slinger thanked the Board members, schools, and districts for their work.

Board member Rasmussen requested Director Flynn to discuss with the schools that were not approved the reasons for the Board's decision.

Superintendent Johnson thanked the Board for their work.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the Resolution to Deny Public Charter Schools.

Board member Rasmussen reiterated her previous statement that clarification is needed on the requirements of the law and what “innovative” means.

Dr. Nieskens concurred with Board member Rasmussen and stated that work may be needed to define “innovative”.

Board member Maxwell also concurred and stated that the Board should communicate what the expectations are to the applicants that were denied.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve the Resolution to Deny the applications for Public Charter Schools. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Chair Tharp stated that the Board is still working to determine the intent of the law.

No further discussion. Motion passed with Board member Rasmussen dissenting.

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

**Item 23 MACIE REPORT – 00:35:25
 Jordann Lankford Forster**

Ms. Jordann Lankford Forster reviewed the recent MACIE meeting and answered Board members’ questions.

❖ **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 – 00:38:41
 Renee Rasmussen**

Board member Renee Rasmussen noted that no comments were received during the public comment period. Ms. McCall Flynn stated that without any public comments the Board can act now and the rules will become effective upon publication. Ms. Flynn answered Board members’ questions.

Board member Rasmussen moved to approve 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. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

No discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 25 INFORMATION ON MAST ASSESSMENT IMPLEMENTATION – 00:44:41
 Cedar Rose**

Ms. Cedar Rose provided an update to the Board on the MAST Assessment Implementation and answered Board members’ and public members’ questions.

Public comment from Superintendent Laurie Barron who stated her concerns with the test.

❖ **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 – 01:52:36
Dr. Ron Slinger**

Vice Chair Ron Slinger reviewed the presentation that was given the previous day by OPI that proposed a new Special Education Technician License and reviewed the proposed dates for the public hearing and rulemaking process.

Vice Chair Slinger moved to approve 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. Motion seconded by Board member Rasmussen.

Board member Rasmussen stated her appreciation for this work and extended her thanks to OPI.

Chair Tharp noted that additional revisions will be needed in Chapter 55 once the license is approved.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

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

**Item 27 INFORMATION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION ON THE INTENSIVE ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR ACCREDITATION – 01:56:57
Dr. Julie Murgel and Tyler Capece**

Ms. Tyler Capece presented the Superintendent’s recommendation on the Intensive Assistance Process for Accreditation and Dr. Murgel discussed the timeline for approval and implementation. Ms. Capece and Dr. Murgel answered Board members’ questions.

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

**Item 28 ACTION ON MSDB SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT – 02:45:58
Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tim Tharp reviewed the MSDB Superintendent Contract and answered Board members’ questions.

Chair Tharp moved to approve the \$6,000 pay increase for Superintendent Furthmyre to align with increases in the STARS Act. Motion seconded by Board member Schmidt.

Board member Quinlan expressed her support for the motion.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Board member Schmidt moved to approve the 2026 MSDB Superintendent Contract. Motion seconded by Dr. Nieskens.

Dr. Nieskens noted items in the contract that pertain to benefits and disability that may need revision.

Mr. Batterman noted that the Board can act on the contract and still modify the contract to address the benefits and disability concerns noted but the change does not affect the employment status.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Item 29 ACTION ON THE CREATION OF THE SEAL OF CIVICS LITERACY – 02:54:34
Dr. Tim Tharp**

Chair Tim Tharp reminded the Board about the presentation on the proposed Seal of Civics Literacy from the previous day and answered Board members’ questions.

Board member Maxwell moved to approve the creation of the Seal of Civics Literacy. Motion seconded by Board member Quinlan.

Public comment from Ms. Julia Gustafson in support of the Seal of Civics Literacy.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 30 RECOGNITION OF EXITING BOARD MEMBER – 02:58:10

Dr. Tim Tharp

Chair Tim Tharp thanked exiting Board member Madalyn Quinlan for her service to the Board and her years of service in public education. Ms. McCall Flynn presented Board member Quinlan with a gift of appreciation for her service.

Ms. McCall Flynn reviewed the upcoming March meeting in Ronan and items that will be on the agenda.

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

No public comment was made.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 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 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**

The Strategic Planning adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Public Comment
Public Charter School Applications

Columbia Falls Trades Academy

1. Deana Payne

In response to the application for Columbia Falls Trades Academy for a public charter school, I whole heartedly support this agenda.

This program will support those students who choose not to go to college and endure the heavy burden of student loans but instead use their hands and minds to accomplish work tasks and add to the community. The ability to add internships and workdays, will be such a win for students to learn.

Our world is ever changing to the technology boom, and we need to continue being focused on trades that help build our communities and toning the skills needed to continue growth and for our future.

The academy will open a vast variety of opportunity for so many students. It will keep them involved in school because it will be something they really want to do, not just told to do.

The Flathead Valley is growing every day, which adds needs for housing, businesses, infrastructure, and so many other things trades will help with. If we as a community are adding to the workforce with our own, we will be more self sufficient and keep it local.

I encourage you to support this initiative and help the valley give more opportunity to our students and community.

Columbia Falls School District #6

Home of the Wildcats/kats



Date: January 7, 2026

Subject: Public Comment and Clarification

Dear Board of Public Education,

This memorandum provides detailed responses to the follow-up questions raised regarding the Columbia Falls Trades Academy (CFTA) public charter school application. The District aims to clarify facility readiness, community and educational partnerships, and instructional design to support the Board's upcoming vote in January.

1. Facilities and Site Readiness (Canyon Elementary School)

The CFTA will transition to a permanent home at the Canyon Elementary campus in 2027, after an initial year at the Columbia Falls High School. The District wishes to clarify the following regarding the site:

- **Infrastructure Upgrades**: During the fall of 2024, the campus was prepared with updated sewer systems, electrical capacity, and modern IT infrastructure, including CAT6 cabling, new switches, and wireless access points to support a high-tech learning environment.
- **Building Status and Size**: While the school closed to K-5 students in 2009 for budget reasons, the building has not been dormant; it has been consistently leased to the county and various community organizations. The main building is 23,052 square feet and sits on 12.50 acres, providing significant room for growth.
- **Construction Lab Space**: There will need to be a larger building constructed at the Canyon Elementary site in Hungry Horse, MT to allow for a high quality construction lab space. With the program beginning with the existing space at Columbia Falls High School and the Glacier Park Cabin Project will allow for the necessary time for construction and partnerships. The students will also be able to be involved in the construction of their learning space, a true hands on project!
- **Expansion and Specialized Labs**: The District plans to utilize two out-buildings to serve as additional classrooms and dedicated work spaces, specifically designed for HVAC and Plumbing Learning Labs. These modules are approximately 900 square feet each in learning space already set up for educational use.
- **Existing Community Clinic**: Since 2016, 3,500 square feet of the facility has been remodeled into a fully operational outpatient medical clinic (currently Greater Valley Community Health), demonstrating the building's versatility and ongoing community integration.

501 Sixth Avenue W
Columbia Falls, MT 59912
406.892.6550



Columbia Falls School District #6

Home of the Wildcats



2. Strategic Partnerships and Workforce Alignment

The CFTA relies on deep-rooted connections with local industry and higher education to ensure student success.

- Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC): The District has a proven history of success with FVCC through dual-credit courses, particularly in welding. We hope this partnership will continue through the design process and future program expansion to offer students a direct pathway to post-secondary technical education.
- Industry Support: Organizations such as the Flathead Building Association serve as vital resources for the academy. Regional contractors and trade associations have been contacted about providing mentorship, materials, and potential donations of tools and buildings to support hands-on learning. No established commitments have been made at this time as we feel they are waiting for definitive direction. There is definitely a buzz in the air about this possibility.

3. Instructional Design and Staffing Clarifications

- Clarification on "Year-Round Facility": During previous discussions, the term "year-round facility" was used to indicate that the building is equipped for all four seasons of Montana's climate; the CFTA will not be a year-round school. It will follow a four-day school week (Monday–Thursday), with Fridays reserved for extended projects and internships.
- Staffing and Licensure: To ensure high-quality technical instruction, the District will utilize Class 4 Licensure for hiring trades instructors, allowing industry experts to transition into the classroom. Instruction will occur in small cohorts of 12–15 students to maintain safety and provide individualized support.
- Proficiency-Based Model: Students will progress through the curriculum by demonstrating mastery of skills rather than traditional seat time, culminating in certifications such as OSHA-10 and NCCER.

Conclusion

The Columbia Falls Trades Academy is a community-driven initiative that leverages existing District assets and strong regional partnerships to meet the Flathead Valley's growing demand for skilled labor. By providing a professional, jobsite-like environment at the Canyon Elementary campus, CFTA will empower students to graduate with marketable skills and a clear path to both the workforce and advanced technical degrees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Cory J. Dziowgo', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cory J. Dziowgo
Superintendent of Columbia Falls School District #6

Montana Board of Public Education
Attention: McCall Flynn, Executive Director
Via e-mail: mflynn@mt.gov

RE: Columbia Falls Trade Academy

Dear Ms. Flynn,

The purpose of this letter is to voice our support for the formation of a new Columbia Falls Trades Academy utilizing the funds appropriated for formation of charter schools in Montana. As an established general contractor in the Flathead Valley we experience firsthand the difficulties in securing employees with requisite skills for work in the trades. The Columbia Falls Trades Academy will help alleviate some of these difficulties, without a doubt.

Construction, as an industry, has been broadly hampered by the exit of skilled workers in the boomer generation without sufficient replacement due to overemphasis on the value of college education. This has led to a scarcity of qualified tradespeople over the past 2 decades and driven consumer costs to all-time highs. Efforts, such as the Columbia Falls Trades Academy are part of the solution to providing a balanced and prepared workforce.

As our economy and society shifts to more utilization of artificial intelligence, robotics and supercomputing it seems very prudent for the educational institutions in our state to promote craft and trade skill development as skilled construction jobs are extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to entirely replicate through computing, whereas functions such as accounting, finance and engineering are being quickly replaced by automation and AI.

The Columbia Falls School District's request for grant funds in the amount of \$347,000 seems to be a very modest and reasonable request. Furthermore, their established track record indicates a high likelihood for a return on the investment of these taxpayer dollars. To that end, we urge full funding of their request.

Thank you,

John P. Lobbestael
Managing Member
Finmark Construction, LLC



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Nicolas Ream. I graduated from Columbia Falls High School with an Honors Diploma and High Honors in 2016. I earned an Associate of Arts, Summa Cum Laude; a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Management and Entrepreneurship, Summa Cum Laude, University Scholar; and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration – Marketing, Summa Cum Laude, University Scholar, from the University of Montana in 2020. In 2022, I earned a Master of Science in Real Estate and the Built Environment from the University of Denver as a Daniels Scholar. I am the Chief Experience Officer, Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing, and Project Manager at Montana Heritage Home Builders, Inc., a high-end luxury, high-performance, full-service, design/build custom home building, remodeling, light-commercial construction, and real estate development company. Montana Heritage Home Builders was founded in Columbia Falls in 1997. I am a proud member of the Board of Directors of the Columbia Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, where I serve as Chair of the Economic Development Committee. I also serve on the Leadership Council of the National Association of Home Builders and the Board of Directors of the Montana Building Industry Association, and I previously served on the Board of Directors of the Flathead Building Association. I currently serve as the Second Vice Chair of the National Association of Home Builders Education Committee and the Chair of the Montana Building Industry Association Membership, Education, and Research Committee.

In August 2025, there were 188,000 open construction positions, with that number expected to increase significantly in the near future. I have had several conversations with the Superintendent of Columbia Falls #6, Cory Dziowgo, about the potential for the Columbia Falls Trades Academy (CFTA). The addition of the Columbia Falls Trades Academy would be a massive benefit to the community and the industry, helping achieve housing affordability. One impact on housing affordability is the shortage of the skilled workforce. I would be honored to work with the Columbia Falls Trades Academy to help it succeed and connect it with the resources provided by the Home Builders Institute.

The construction industry offers excellent opportunities for career development, and the Columbia Falls Trades Academy will expand students' opportunities to succeed.

I am honored to support the establishment of the Columbia Falls Trades Academy. The future is bright! I appreciate your consideration of my letter of support for the Columbia Falls Trades Academy.

Sincerely,

Nicolas R. Ream

Nicolas R. Ream, MS REBE, CAPS, CGA, CGB, CGP, CGR, CSP, GMB, Master CGP, Master CSP, CGSP, NGBS Green Pro, LEED® Green Associate™, WWYW CERTIFIED®
Chief Experience Officer | Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing | Project Manager
Montana Heritage Home Builders, Inc.
(406) 250-4918

CONSENT AGENDA

FINANCIALS

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

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 09 (Mar)/2026

This report compares ORG Budgets (ORG_BD) to Actuals expended amounts

OBPP Program	Subclass	Fund	Org	Acct Lvl 2	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	A Accrual Amt	ORG Bud Balance
01 K-12 EDUCATION					620,517.00	352,868.40	0.00	267,648.60
235F5 FY 2025 CARRYFORWARD					43,589.00	43,589.00	0.00	0.00
01100 General Fund					43,589.00	43,589.00	0.00	0.00
1 BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION					43,589.00	43,589.00	0.00	0.00
62000 Operating Expenses					43,589.00	0.00	0.00	43,589.00
62100 Other Services					0.00	10,237.60	0.00	(10,237.60)
62200 Supplies & Materials					0.00	8,474.53	0.00	(8,474.53)
62300 Communications					0.00	51.80	0.00	(51.80)
62400 Travel					0.00	17,365.66	0.00	(17,365.66)
62500 Rent					0.00	6,979.41	0.00	(6,979.41)
62800 Other Expenses					0.00	480.00	0.00	(480.00)
235H1 ADMINISTRATION					556,579.00	299,966.84	0.00	256,612.16
01100 General Fund					556,579.00	299,966.84	0.00	256,612.16
1 BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION					556,579.00	299,966.84	0.00	256,612.16
61000 Personal Services					371,691.00	0.00	0.00	371,691.00
61100 Salaries					0.00	158,864.86	0.00	(158,864.86)
61300 Other Compensation					0.00	4,000.00	0.00	(4,000.00)
61400 Employee Benefits					0.00	63,589.02	0.00	(63,589.02)
62000 Operating Expenses					184,888.00	0.00	0.00	184,888.00
62100 Other Services					0.00	10,391.04	0.00	(10,391.04)
62200 Supplies & Materials					0.00	7,247.04	0.00	(7,247.04)
62300 Communications					0.00	3,968.98	0.00	(3,968.98)
62400 Travel					0.00	10,386.92	0.00	(10,386.92)
62500 Rent					0.00	9,556.98	0.00	(9,556.98)
62800 Other Expenses					0.00	31,962.00	0.00	(31,962.00)
235H4 STATE ITSD/RST					20,342.00	9,312.56	0.00	11,029.44
01100 General Fund					20,342.00	9,312.56	0.00	11,029.44
1 BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION					20,342.00	9,312.56	0.00	11,029.44
62000 Operating Expenses					20,342.00	0.00	0.00	20,342.00
62100 Other Services					0.00	3,898.10	0.00	(3,898.10)
62200 Supplies & Materials					0.00	2,620.32	0.00	(2,620.32)
62300 Communications					0.00	2,794.14	0.00	(2,794.14)
235Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION					7.00	0.00	0.00	7.00
01100 General Fund					7.00	0.00	0.00	7.00
1 BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION					7.00	0.00	0.00	7.00
61000 Personal Services					7.00	0.00	0.00	7.00
Grand Total					620,517.00	352,868.40	0.00	267,648.60

❖ **REPORTS – (Items 1-5)**

Dr. Tim Tharp

ITEM 1

CHAIRPERSON REPORT

- **Welcome from Superintendent Mark Johnston, Ronan School District**
 - **Committee Assignments**

Dr. Tim Tharp



Board of Public Education

Board of Public Education Committee Assignments March 2026

STANDING COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Tim Tharp, Chair
Ron Slinger, Vice Chair
McCall Flynn, Executive Director

Licensure Committee

Ron Slinger, Chair
Amanda Mills, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Charter School Committee

Lisa Schmidt, Chair
Amanda Mills, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

MSDB Committee

Lisa Schmidt, Chair
Julia Maxwell, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Legislative Committee

Renee Rasmussen, Chair
Ron Slinger, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Assessment Committee

Renee Rasmussen, Chair
Hannah Nieskens, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

Accreditation Committee

Hannah Nieskens, Chair
Julia Maxwell, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Artificial Intelligence and Technology Committee

Hannah Nieskens, Chair
Ron Slinger, Member
Tim Tharp, Member

ADVISORY GROUP LIAISONS

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education – Julia Maxwell
Montana School Safety Advisory Committee – McCall Flynn

OTHER COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Education and Workforce Data Governing Board – Tim Tharp
Montana Digital Academy Governing Board – Hannah Nieskens

ITEM 2

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

McCall Flynn

ITEM 3

STATE SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

- **Assessment Update**
 - **Federal Update**
- **Content Standards Update**
- **Annual Food Services Report**

State Superintendent Susie Hedalen

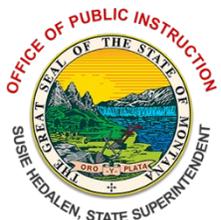


MARCH ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Marie Judisch &
Cedar Rose
OPI

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent

	Anticipated SY2025-26 Test Windows	Required Subjects	Student Group	Grades Tested	Window Period
Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST)	Window 1 October 13-December 5	Math and ELA	General	Grades 3–8	3 windows: 8 weeks each
	Window 2 January 12-March 6				
	Window 3 March 30-May 22				
Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate ELA and Math	Fall Window September 8- December 19	Math and ELA	SwSCDs	Grades 3-8, 11	2 windows: 15 weeks each
	Spring Window 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	Window 1 March 24-April 3	Math, ELA, and Science	General	Grade 11	3 windows: 2 weeks each
	Window 2 April 7-17				
	Window 3 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.		



TRADITIONAL END-OF-YEAR ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS:

Provides important accountability information too late to influence instruction and underused

Reports information at an grain-size too large to be actionable

Leaves a gap between classroom learning and statewide reporting

Result: Educators lack timely, coherent, aligned data to guide instructional decision across the year and support the work they are doing with their own classrooms



MAST THEORY OF ACTION

Assessment Design and Implementation Considerations for the Montana Alternate Student Testing (MAST) Pilot Program

Final Report From the Montana Alternate Student Testing Task Force

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Montana Office of Public Instruction



MAST is designed as a through-year, modular assessment system with two primary goals:

- 1) provide instructionally useful information support
- 2) comparable annual determinations

To accomplish these, the system must:

- Provide instructionally useful, standards-aligned feedback during the school year
- Maintain valid, comparable annual determinations
- Align standards, instruction, and assessment into one coherent system
- Build educator capacity to interpret and use data effectively

If we design for instructional utility and technical quality simultaneously,

then assessment becomes a tool for improvement not just accountability.



CORE AIMS TOA & CGSA

Provide Instructionally Useful Data	Maintain Strong Annual Determinations	Build a More Coherent System	Strengthen Assessment Literacy & Trust
Cadence & levels of reports: testlet, progress reports, through-year	Technically sound standard setting process	Supporting district in analyzing full assessment system (Assessment Review Tool)	Professional learning at Summer Institute, through the Learning Hub, throughout the school year
Standards-aligned reporting	Strong correlations between previous summative assessment results	Completed alignment study to ensure item alignment and standards coverage; guide future item development	Individual support sessions with schools both in-person and virtually
Interactive reporting in Window 3 with results available the Monday after testing	Early indicators of students at risk of not meeting proficiency	Information gathering around growth usage to ensure future metrics contribute to student outcomes	Teacher leader cohort (Spring 2026)
Continued stakeholder feedback (AIC, interviews, student surveys, conversations with educational leaders and teachers)			



INTERACTIVE REPORTING

- Platform for educators (teachers, building coordinators, and district coordinators) to access MAST testlet results
- Allows for custom aggregation of data and navigation between levels
- Supports PDF printing
- **Provides testlet information the Monday following testlet administration by 12:00 MST compared to Thursday in previous windows**

Classroom Testlet Report

DeGrassi 7th Grade Math Class

Grade 7 Math BOY

School: Alpha Middle School

Summary Results

19 TOTAL

Item Standard	Average Percent of Public Exam
TDE.A.6	80%
TMA.2	50%
TMA.3	50%
TMA.4	47%

Misconceptions

Misconception	Description	# of Students
CA.3	Made error in division fact	5
DS.6.b	Made error indicating whether a given probability represents a likely or unlikely event	3
CA.7	Made negative sign error while performing a calculation	2
PR.2.a	Misunderstood ratio relationship	1

Student Details

Student Name	Student ID	Test Date	Performance	Misconceptions
Agulera, Javier	100014	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.7, DS.6.b
Aries, James	ames120	09/30/2025	Level 1	
Coleman, Aimee	100005	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.3
Chen, Lisa	100048	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.3

Student Details Filtering on Level 2, CA.3, DS.6.b Showing 4 of 19

Student Name	Student ID	Test Date	Performance	Misconceptions
Agulera, Javier	100014	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.7, DS.6.b
Coleman, Aimee	100051	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.7, DS.6.b
Delgado, Martina	100008	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.3, DS.6.b
Pitambar, Suresh	100047	09/25/2025	Level 2	CA.3



GROWTH ENGAGEMENT



Partnering with the Center for Assessment to explore how Montana educators and leaders use student growth data to guide instructional and program decisions and identify opportunities to incorporate growth into MAST



Interviews with district, school leaders, and teachers



Focus on current growth measures, decision-making practices, report features needed, and challenges in using growth data effectively



Goal: develop use cases and recommendations alongside the technical recommendations for MAST growth reporting to support educator decision making and student outcomes

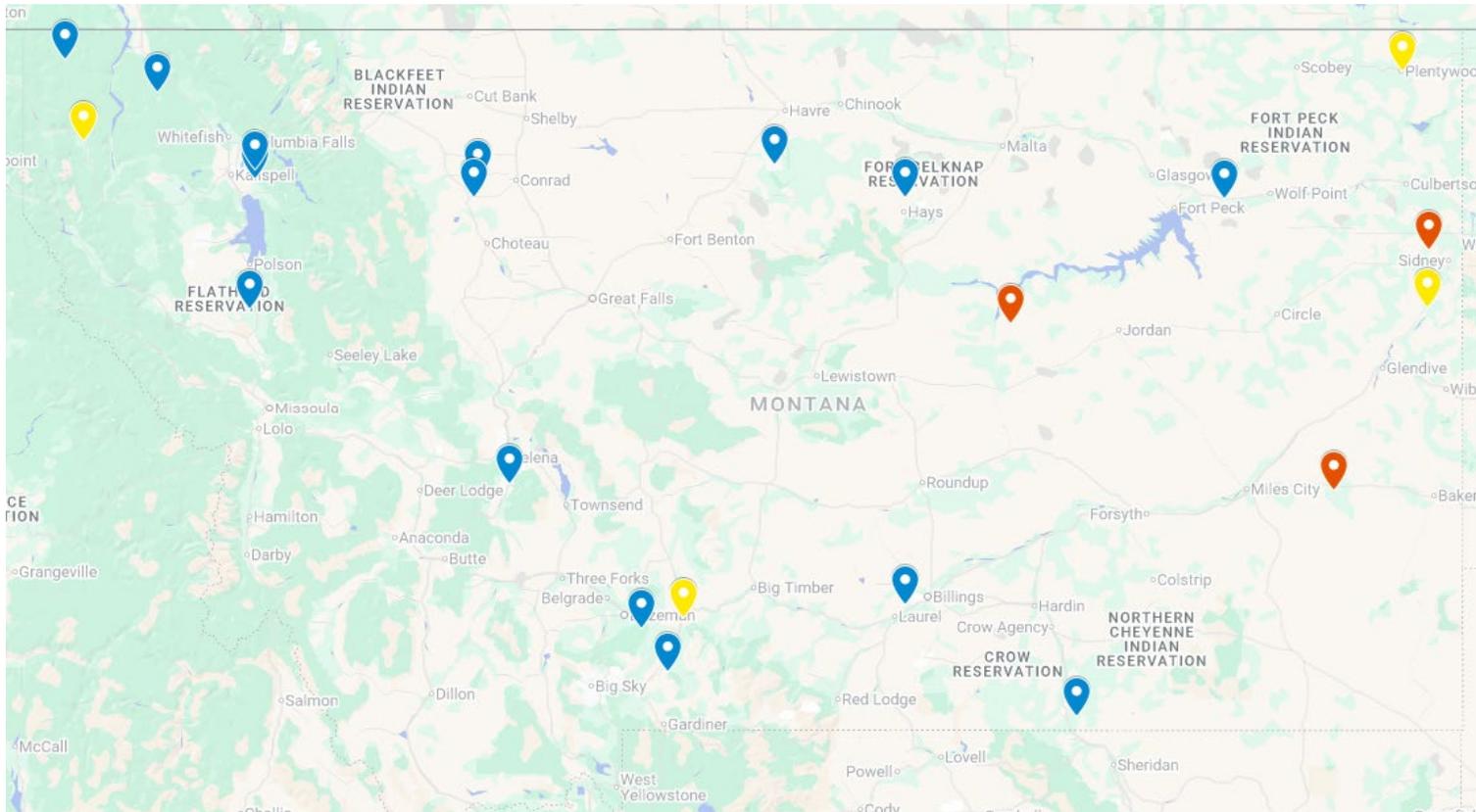


TEACHER LEADER COHORT

- OPI is partnering with KnowledgeWorks and up to 50 3rd-8th grade educators to strengthen standards-aligned instruction connected with MAST
- Deep focus on proficiency-based learning, acceleration, and effective instructional strategies aligned to Montana Content Standards
- Develop expertise in interpreting MAST reports, model best practices, and facilitate progressional learning in schools and communities
- Stipend provided, plus travel, lodging, and meals for in-person meetings (Summer Institute kick-off)
- KnowledgeWorks also supporting development of additional MAST-aligned Teacher Learning Hub courses



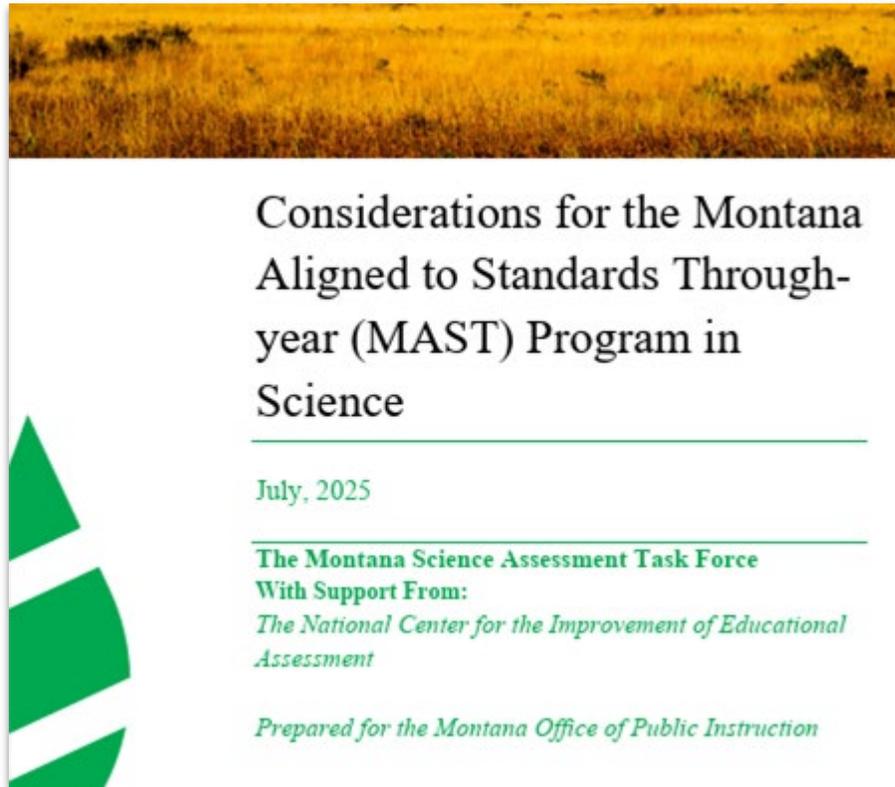
SUPPORT SESSIONS



- Any new STCs scheduled for annual monitoring able to choose support visit instead of observation
- Support visits for all Comprehensive Schools with their assigned specialist
- Virtual professional learning/support sessions scheduled with districts as requested



MAST SCIENCE THEORY OF ACTION



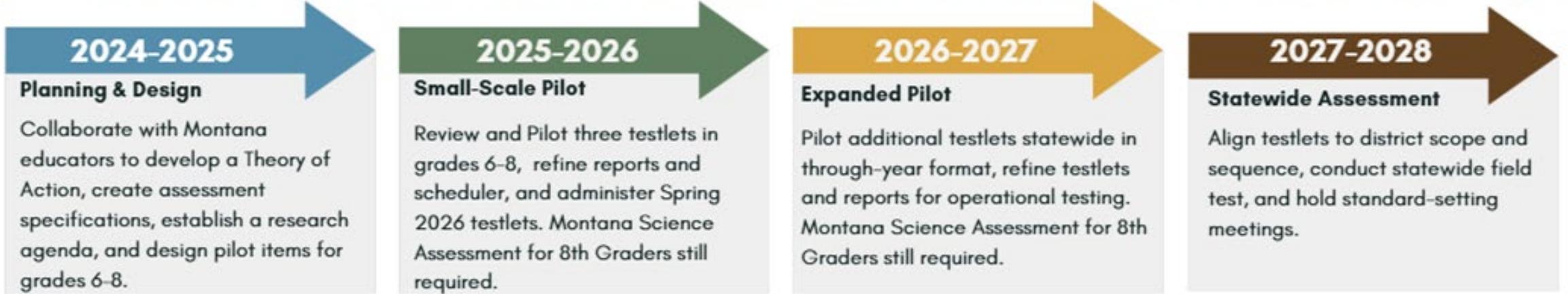
MAST Science expands Montana’s through-year assessment system to include science in grades 6–8, building on the existing MAST framework in math and ELA. The goal is to create a single, cohesive assessment system that supports teaching and learning while meeting state and federal requirements

- Support stronger alignment to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and Montana Science Content Standards, including clearer cross-grade scope and sequence.
- Reduce local assessment burden by providing one streamlined system with timely, meaningful, and actionable data for educators, leaders, students, and families.
- Make MT Content Standards/NGSS-aligned through-year assessment resources publicly available and accessible to Montana educators and national partners.
- Strengthen educator assessment literacy through professional learning





MAST SCIENCE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



KEY GRANT ACTIVITIES TO DATE



SMALL-SCALE PILOT

- **When:** April 13th - May 8th, 2026
 - Initial Training: March 19th 3:30 - 4:30pm
- **Who:** Grades 6–8 science classrooms statewide
 - ~1,500 students across each grade level, Recruitment has the completion of 5,090 testlets
- **What:** One to Two testlets, ~30 Minutes Each, 10-12 Items per Testlet
 - [Forces & Interactions \(Physical Science\)](#)
 - [Growth, Development, and Life Cycles of Organisms \(Life Science\)](#)
 - [Earth's Systems \(Earth and Space Science\)](#)
- **Purpose:**
 - Provide formative insight into student understanding
 - ***Inform future assessment design and development***
- **How:** Administered through the KITE Portal
- **Additional Notes:**
 - Raw score reports only (correct or incorrect)
 - Brief student and educator survey after testing
 - Grade 8 students still take the Montana Science Assessment in 2025-



STUDENT REPORT:

GRADE: 8 MAST Science / STATE ID:
 SCHOOL: Bigfork Elementary
 DISTRICT: Bigfork /
 COMPLETION: April 2026

Topic: Life Science - Evolution

This chart shows how your student performed on each question that appeared on the assessment. The Credit Earned column provides a symbol indicating whether the student received full, partial, or no credit for the question or that the question was not answered.

Your Student's Results

Key: ☒ No Credit Earned ◐ Partial Credit Earned ● Full Credit Earned ○ Question Unanswered

	Skill Description	NGSS PE	Credit
1	Analyze fossil patterns to identify species changes over time	MS-LS4-1	☒
2	Compare anatomical structures to find similarities among organisms	MS-LS4-2	☒
3	Interpret genetic data to explain relationships between organisms	MS-LS4-3	☒
4	Explain how natural selection changes trait frequencies	MS-LS4-4	●
5	Analyze environmental factors that affect survival and reproduction	MS-LS4-4	☒
6	Predict trait shifts when environmental conditions change	MS-LS4-5	●
7	Evaluate how adaptations improve chances of survival	MS-LS4-6	●
8	Explain how mutations create variation in populations	MS-LS3-1	●





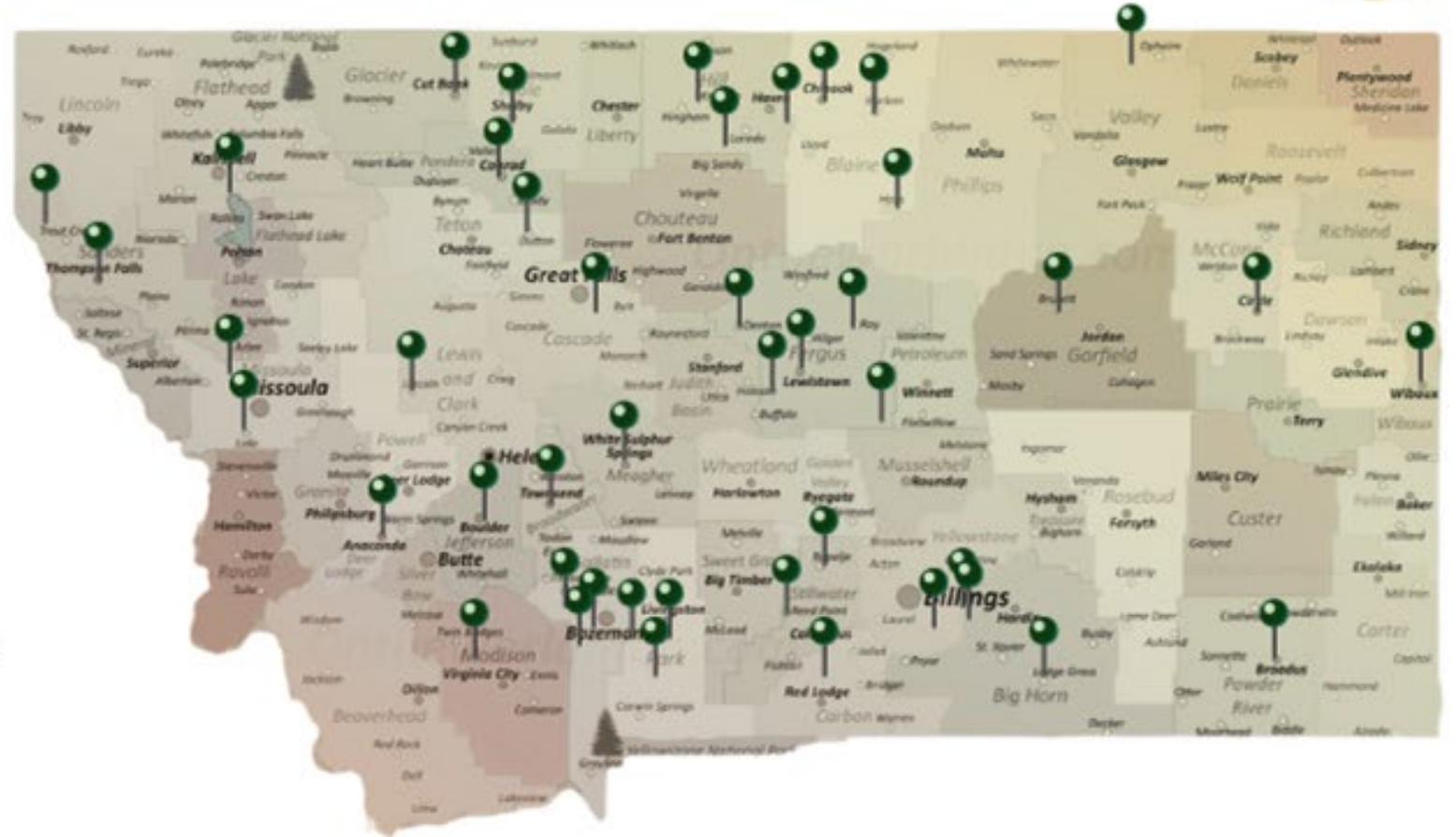
MAST SCIENCE SMALL-SCALE PILOT



Pilot Schools 2025-2026

Amsterdam Elementary
 Anaconda Public Schools
 Anderson Elementary
 Arrowhead Schools
 Blue Creek Elementary
 Boulder Elementary
 Box Elder Elementary
 Broadus Public Schools
 Canyon Creek Elementary
 Centerville Public Schools
 Chinook Public Schools
 Circle Public Schools
 Conrad Public Schools
 Cut Bank Public Schools
 Davey Elementary
 Denton Public Schools
 Dutton/Brady K-12 Schools
 Evergreen Elementary
 Frenchtown Schools
 Gallatin Gateway Elementary
 Gildford Colony Elementary
 Grass Range Public Schools
 Hays-Lodge Pole K-12 Schools

Harlem Public Schools
 LaMotte Elementary
 Lewistown Elementary
 Lincoln K-12 Schools
 Lolo Elementary
 Moore Public Schools
 Noxon Public Schools
 Pine Creek Elementary
 Pine Grove Elementary
 Pioneer Elementary
 Rapelje Public Schools
 Reed Point Schools
 Roberts K-12 Schools
 Roy K-12 Schools
 Shelby Public Schools
 Shepherd Public Schools
 Sheridan Public Schools
 Thompson Falls Public Schools
 Townsend K-12 Schools
 White Sulphur Springs Public Schools
 Whitewater K-12 Schools
 Wibaux K-12 Schools

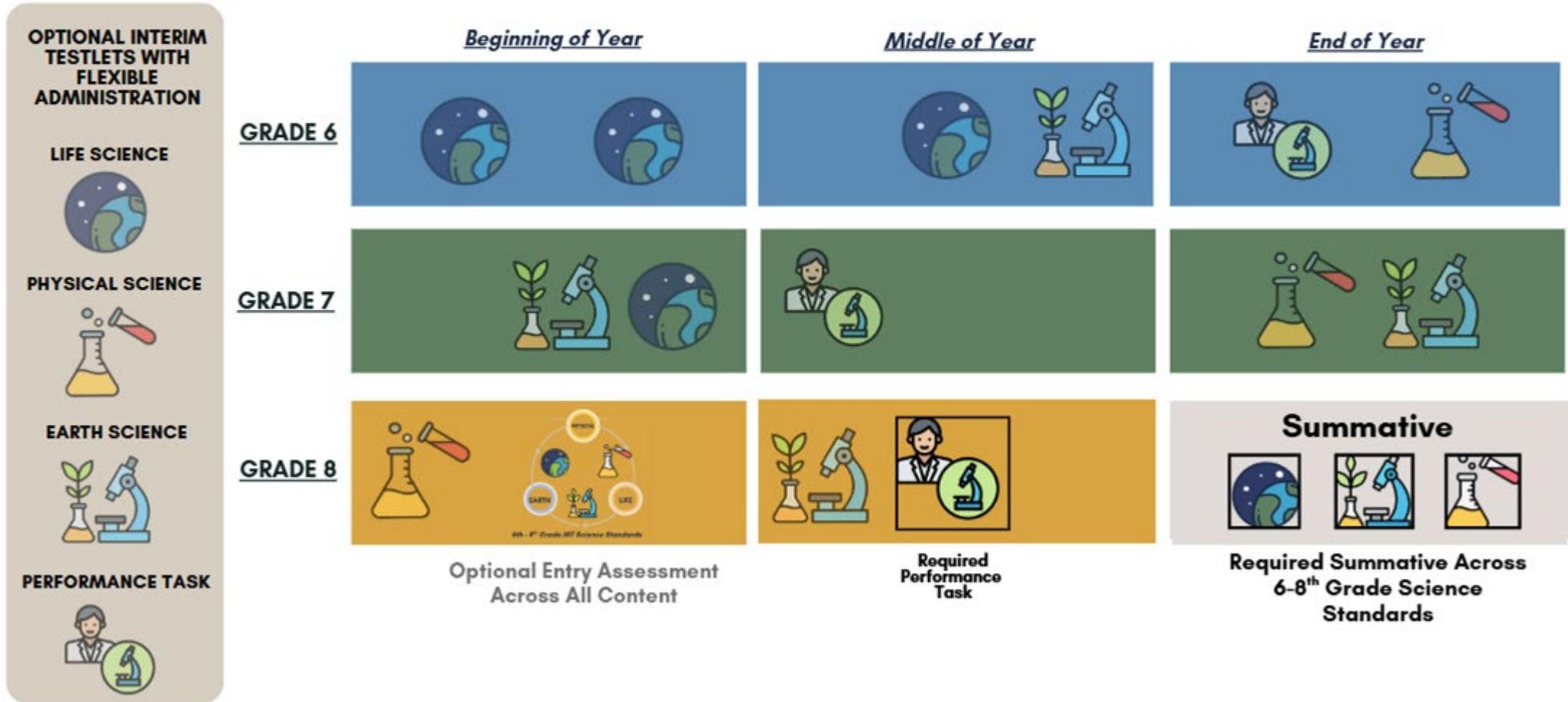




MAST SCIENCE PROPOSED ASSESSMENT MODEL



Optional Interim Assessments - Flexibly Aligned Testlets to School Scope and Sequence



Rethinking the Test Pile:

A National Study of K–8 Academic Assessments

February 2026



National research and Montana feedback point to consistent challenges:

- **Assessment clutter:** Layered state requirements and district adoption across screening, interims, MTSS and instructional guidance are creating overlapping systems that are difficult to streamline.
- **Limited evidence of quality and instructional value:** Many tools are positioned as “instructionally useful,” yet there is limited transparent evidence of validity, reliability and true instructional utility.
- **Incoherence with teaching and learning:** Assessment expectations often develop separately from curriculum and instructional strategy leaving educators juggling layered data streams that send mixed signals.

Key Research Finding:

There is **no statistically significant relationship between testing volume and proficiency or growth**. More testing does not produce better outcomes.



After a decade of progress on implementing high-quality instructional materials, incoherent assessments now threaten to stall the momentum

Instructional materials have come a long way.

Over the past decade, states and districts have invested heavily in High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) adoption and professional learning to strengthen teaching and learning.



But assessment systems haven't kept pace.

Many school systems still rely on layered, redundant and misaligned tests that offer limited instructional value and send mixed signals about what matters for learning.



This disconnect creates noise, not insight.

Teachers and leaders are left with conflicting data from multiple sources—obscuring what students actually know and can do within the context of HQIM.

As a result, time, trust and coherence are lost.

This study begins to scratch the surface of these challenges. It offers an early look at how local assessment ecosystems are evolving and where the next wave of coherence work must focus.



Education First. (2026). Rethinking the test pile: a national study of K–8 academic assessments.

Montana Office of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent

CONTACT

Cedar Rose, Assessment Director OPI
cedar.rose@mt.gov





Federal Update- as of March , 2026

Ed- Flex Waiver

In February the Office of Public Instruction submitted an application for an Ed-Flex waiver through the Department of Education. With this flexibility, the OPI can provide district level waivers for select Federal statutory requirements or regulations upon prior approval by the the U.S. Department of Education to do so. If the Office of Public Instruction is granted Ed-Flex authority, it may waive requirements for programs authorized under the following provisions of the ESEA, as amended, and under which the Secretary of Education provides funds to SEAs on the basis of a formula. District programmatic waivers would include the following:

- Title I, Part A
- Title I, Part C
- Title I, Part D
- Title II, Part A
- Title IV, Part A

The Department must respond within 90 days.

Department of Education Updates

In February the Department of Education released the following guidance and entered two new Interagency Agreements:

- On February 5th the Department of Education released updated guidance on constitutionally protected prayer and religious expression in public schools. It affirms that students, parents, and staff may express their faith individually, provided they respect others' rights and avoid school-sponsored religious activity. Schools cannot favor secular views over religious ones or one faith over another. Religious speech and student organizations must be treated the same as secular counterparts, and schools may regulate disruptions consistent with other forms of speech.
- On February 23rd the Department of Education announced two new Interagency Agreements with the Department of State and the Department of Health and Human Services. State will partner with ED on the Section 117 foreign gift reporting, and HHS will partner with ED on family engagement and school support programs.

US Presidential Scholars Program

Nominees for the US Presidential Scholars Program have been submitted to the Department of Education for the arts, career and technical education and the general scholars candidates. These students represent excellence in academics, leadership, and community service and engagement. All



candidates represent excellence in education and promise for Montana and our nation. Congratulations to all the candidates!

Background: The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program, established in 1964 by executive order, recognizes and honors the nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. The program later expanded to include students excelling in the visual, creative, and performing arts (1979) and those demonstrating ability in career and technical education fields (2015). Up to 161 students are recognized annually with this high national honor.

National Association of ESEA State Program Administrators Conference

In February, staff from the Office of Public Instruction attended the NAESPA Conference in Denver. Lindsay Mahoney, School Improvement Director, presented on supporting tribal schools. Dr. Julie Murgel presented alongside other state leaders and staff from the Department of Education on the recently awarded Education Innovation and Research grant. Staff from the OPI participated in sessions covering updates from the U.S. Department of Education, effective strategies for utilizing federal funds to improve student outcomes, and proven best practices in the area of school improvement.



March 2026 BPE Content Standards Update

General Update:

- The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) continues to receive inquiries regarding potential revisions to content standards. Of particular interest has been the implementation of Alternative Standards for students with significant cognitive delays. At present, our alternative assessments are aligned with standards adopted from other states, highlighting a potential need to determine whether Montana-specific alternative standards should be developed.

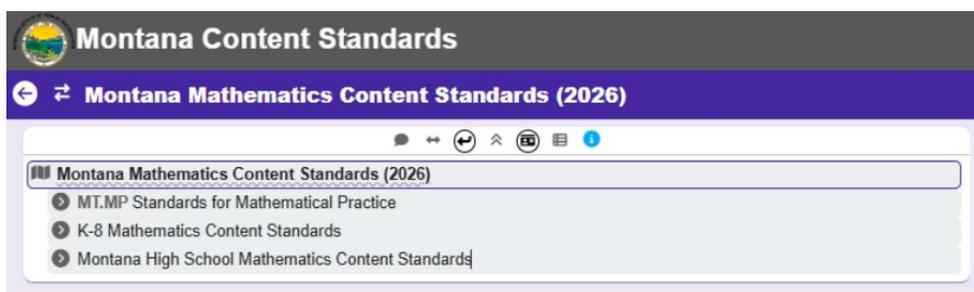
Adoption, Revision, and Repeal History for Montana Content Standards

Standards	Initial Adoption	Revised	Revised	Revised	Repealed	ARM Chapter	Current Framework
Mathematics	1999	2009	2011	2025		10.53	K-8 Grade Level Standards, 9-12 Standards
Science	1999	2006	2016			10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
World Languages	1999	2025				10.53	K-12 Standards/ Performance Descriptions
Arts	2000	2016				10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
Career and Technical Education	2000	2020				10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
Library Media	2000	2008	2020			10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
Social Studies	2000	2020				10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band
Computer Science	2000	2008	2020			10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
Technology Integration	2000	2008	2020			10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards
Workplace Competencies	2000				2021	10.54	
English Language Arts	2011	2026				10.53	K-8 Grade Level Standards, 9-10 & 11-12 Grade Band Standards
English Language Proficiency	2011	2024				10.53	K-12 Proficiency Standards
Health & Physical Education	2016					10.53	K-5 Grade Level Standards, 6-8 & 9-12 Grade Band Standards

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

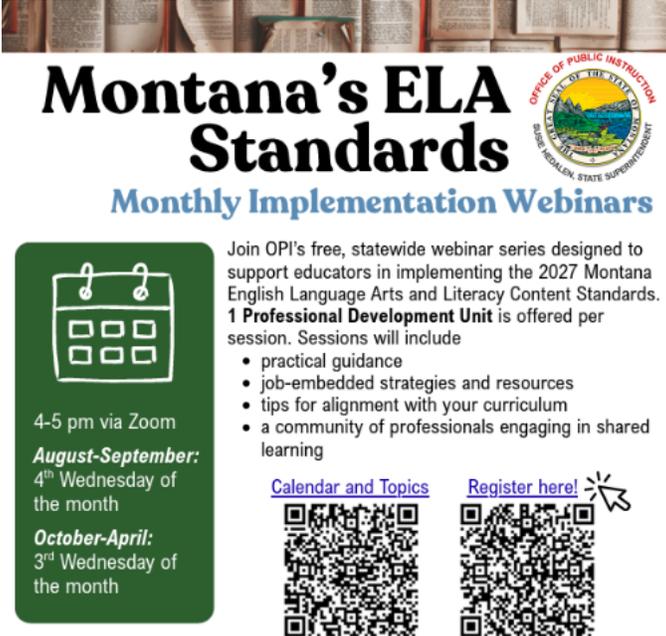
- August: [*Why the Change? Understanding the New Math Standards*](#)
- September: [*Exploring the Changes and Structure: Navigating the Standards Document*](#)
- October: [*Mathematical Practices: What They Are & Why They Matter*](#)
- November: [*From Fluency to Flexibility: Understanding Mathematical 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 Revisions

ELA Standards Implementation Webinars [Calendar and Topics](#)

- August 26, 2026: Why the Change? Understanding the ELA Standards
- September 23, 2026: Literacy Practices: What They Are and Why They Matter
- October 21, 2026: Expanding on the Foundational Standards: Elementary
- November 18, 2026: Expanding on the Foundational Standards: Secondary
- December 16, 2026: Aligning Your Curriculum: Where Do You Stand?
- January 20, 2027: Assessment and Standards: What Needs to Change?
- February 17, 2027: Differentiation and Access: Supporting All Learners

- March 17, 2027: IEFA and Cultural Relevance: Making Meaning for Montana Students
- #April 21, 2027: Next Steps: Identifying District and School Needs for Implementation
 - [Registration](#)



Montana's ELA Standards
 Monthly Implementation Webinars

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
 STATE OF MONTANA
 DIVISION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



4-5 pm via Zoom

August-September:
4th Wednesday of the month

October-April:
3rd Wednesday of the month

Join OPI's free, statewide webinar series designed to support educators in implementing the 2027 Montana English Language Arts and Literacy Content Standards. **1 Professional Development Unit** is offered per session. Sessions will include

- practical guidance
- job-embedded strategies and resources
- tips for alignment with your curriculum
- a community of professionals engaging in shared learning

[Calendar and Topics](#)
[Register here!](#) 




English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy Standards:

- ***NEW*** [MT ELA Standards and Coding](#)
- ***NEW*** [PK-12 Standards Basic Guidance](#)
 - **In Development:**PK-12 Expanded Guidance Document
- **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](#)

For questions, please contact: Marie Judisch, marie.judisch@mt.gov



MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

School Year 2024-2025 Annual Report

406-444-2501

Helena, MT 59620

<https://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Management-Operations/School-Nutrition>

** indicates small font size warning.*



MEET THE TEAM

OPI School Nutrition Programs

Director	Christine Emerson, MS, RD
Assistant Director	Erin Turner, BS, DTR, SNS
Summer Food Service Program Specialist	Sarah Kuhn, RD
Program Specialist, FFVP Manager	Sydney Dickinson, MS, RD, LN
Program Specialist	Rachel Ariaz, BS
Program Specialist	Valerie Evans, MPH, RD
Program Specialist	Ryan Beaudoin, BS
Food Distribution Manager	Erin Benson
Farm to School Specialist	Amber Lewis, BS
Data Analyst	Alie Wolf
Data Processor	Ashley Bodle
Administrative Assistant	Tarryn Erickson
Project Manager	Bitsey Draur
Software Developer	Kelley Larsen



MEET THE TEAM

Montana Team Nutrition

Team Nutrition Co-Director	Molly Stenberg, RD, LN
Team Nutrition Co-Director Farm to School Coordinator	Jay Stagg
Program Lead	Haley Scott, MPH
Administrative Coordinator	Kylie Cassidy, BA
School Meals Support Program Coordinator	Kate Huston

Contact Information

Montana Team Nutrition Programs

Montana State University
PO Box 173370
Bozeman, MT 59717-3360

406-994-7217

<https://www.montana.edu/teamnutrition/contact.html>
<https://www.montana.edu/mtfarmtoschool/>

Montana Office of Public Instruction

School Nutrition Programs
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

406-444-2501

<https://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Management-Operations/School-Nutrition>



MONTANA STUDENTS THAT QUALIFY FOR FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH



48.70% of students



Bainville Public Schools

Noxon Public Schools



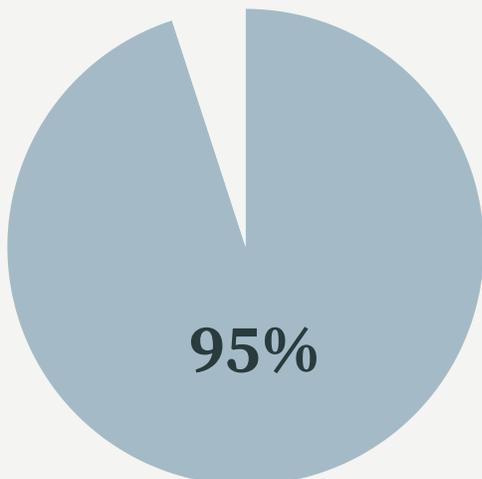
TOTAL LUNCHES SERVED

12.09 MILLION

TOTAL REVENUE TO SCHOOLS

61.7 MILLION

SCHOOLS THAT OFFER BOTH BREAKFAST AND LUNCH



SCHOOL SITES PROVIDING ALL FREE MEALS THROUGH THE COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROVISION



251 out of 567 eligible school sites.



Mountain Plains Regional Farm to School Summit *

PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED*

In school year (SY) 2024-2025 the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) School Nutrition Programs (SNP) administered U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs:

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

SNPs reimburse sponsors and distribute USDA Foods for meals served to children, teach workshops for school personnel, ensure that schools implement federal regulations, and provide nutrition education for students. Sponsors include: public and private schools; government agencies; and nonprofit residential child care institutions, organizations, and camps.

VISION*

Empower school nutrition program professionals with knowledge as community leaders to provide **equitable** access to healthy meals, **nutrition education**, and food systems that **support the success** of Montana's children.

MISSION*

The OPI School Nutrition, including Montana Team Nutrition, **collaborates** with partners to provide program sponsors with **training**, support, and resources to **strengthen program integrity** and access to **healthy meals**.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES*

- Children's health and academic success are furthered through community-driven partnerships and solutions, bringing recognition to the vital role of Montana's passionate child nutrition professionals.
- As stewards of public trust and funds, equitable resources and benefit provisions are effectively and efficiently offered with indiscriminate respect for all.
- Dedication to providing exceptional customer service by remaining responsive and adaptable to the dynamic experiences and strengths of sponsors and community partners.
- Decision making and operations management are seeded in evidence-based practices and real-time data.
- Valuing continuous learning inspires ongoing professional development and leads to opportunities for the celebration of progressive accomplishments.
- Training and technical assistance activities yield strengthened self-efficacy and program outcomes.
- Investments in local food sources promote sustainable food system procurement and practices.
- Sponsor and school wellness culture are inclusive, supportive, and strengthen academic success and wellbeing.



TRAINING PROGRAM STAFF

OPI and Montana Team Nutrition staff are located statewide to better serve **rural districts**, providing essential professional development for all roles, including food service directors, claim contacts, business clerks, and determining officials.

OPI School Nutrition Programs

+80 hours of continuing education provided by OPI SNP

32 webinars hosted online and shared to an online repository

2 conferences presented at to provide training to school nutrition staff including:

- Montana School Nutrition Association (SNA) Conference
- Montana Association of School Business Officials Conference



Montana SNA Conference Room

Montana Team Nutrition

- **10 webinars** for school nutrition program staff on topics related to reducing sugar and sodium, scratch cooking, and Indigenous recipes.
- **3 culinary events** trained 65 school nutrition professionals in knife skills and advanced culinary techniques.
- **Technical assistance provided to 57 schools/partners** to expand Team Nutrition and Farm to School reach.



Menu Planning & Production Records

10-2-2024

Putting Montana Students First

OPI School Nutrition Wednesday Webinars



GRANTS *

\$31,220

FY 2025 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024, distributed \$10 million to state agencies to competitively award Equipment Assistance Grants to eligible school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Montana OPI School Nutrition Programs competitively awarded these funds to nine school districts to make equipment purchases improving their school nutrition programs.

\$727,981

Local Food for Schools Cooperative Agreement

November 2022 - July 2025

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

\$682,693

Farm to School State Formula Grant

September 2022 - September 2026

Section 1001 of the American Rescue Plan Act (Public Law 117-2). American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to State agencies administering the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) to improve food and agricultural supply chain resiliency (supply chain resiliency). The funds support State agency efforts to coordinate and provide technical assistance to build and increase the capacity of participating institutions to procure and use local foods in program meals as well as provide agricultural education opportunities for participating children.

\$1,890,997

FY 2021 Technology Innovation Grant (nTIG)

September 2021 - September 2025

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103). Funds provided to State agencies for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems used to operate and manage all Child Nutrition (CN) Programs.

\$373,134

FY 2023 Technology Innovation Grant (nTIG)

September 2023 - September 2026

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 (Public Law 117-103). Funds provided to State agencies for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems used to operate and manage all Child Nutrition (CN) Programs.



GRANTS CONTINUED *

\$957,836

FY 2025 Direct Certification Improvement Grant

November 2024 – September 2027

Section 749(h)(1)(A) and (C)(i) of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111–80). Funds provided to State Agencies for the purposes of implementing, maintaining, and improving high performing direct certification systems.

\$339,958

FY 2024 Farm to School Grant

July 2024 - June 2026

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) establishes a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

\$798,030

FY 2024 Team Nutrition Training Grant

September 2024 - September 2027

Team Nutrition Training Grants for State agencies that administer the NSLP are authorized under Public Law 111–296, which amended Section 19 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966. As authorized under Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1755(a)(3), USDA FNS provides Team Nutrition Training Grants to support training and technical assistance for School Nutrition Professionals, nutrition education for students and their caregivers, and activities to build a healthy school nutrition environment.

\$746,268

FY 2024 Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant

September 2024 - September 2028

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (Public Law 117-328) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118-122), to State agencies for the purposes of developing, improving, and maintaining automated information technology systems used to operate and manage Child Nutrition (CN) Programs (i.e., National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)).

\$541,924

FY 2025 Non-Competitive Technology Innovation Grant

September 2025 - September 2028

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2024 (Public Law 118- 42) and the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (Public Law 119-4) to State agencies for the purposes of developing, implementing, improving, and maintaining modernized information technology systems used to operate and manage Child Nutrition (CN) Programs (i.e., National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer EBT).



GRANTS CONTINUED

FY 2025 NSLP Equipment Assistance Grants

Funded by the USDA through the Agriculture Appropriations Act, these competitive grants help schools purchase equipment to improve food safety, support healthier meals, and expand student access to school lunches.

Total Grant: \$31,220

\$5,000	Geraldine Public Schools
\$5,000	Richey Public Schools
\$2,241	Cayuse Prairie Elementary
\$2,904	Box Elder Public Schools
\$4,881	Rau Elementary
\$4,131	Sweet Grass County HS
\$2,794	Glasgow K-12 Schools
\$3,021	Wibaux K-12 Schools
\$1,248	North Star Public Schools

Healthy Meal Incentive (HMI) Recognition Award Sub Grant

The Healthy Meals Incentives (HMI) Initiative, led by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and Action for Healthy Kids, provided sub grants and recognition awards to schools for improving student nutrition.

Total Grant: \$7,000

\$1,000	Dillon Elementary
\$1,000	Geraldine Public Schools
\$1,000	Somers Elementary
\$1,000	Whitefish Public Schools
\$1,000	Bozeman Public Schools
\$1,000	Three Forks Public Schools
\$1,000	Belgrade Public Schools



FEDERAL MEAL REIMBURSEMENT RATES

Effective July 1st 2024 – June 30th 2025

National School Lunch Program

Category	60% or More	+ 9 cents	Less Than 60%	+ 9 cents
Free	4.45	4.54	4.43	4.52
Reduced	4.05	4.14	4.03	4.12
Paid	0.44	0.53	0.42	0.51

Schools may qualify for the “60% or more” lunch reimbursement if during the second preceding year 60% or more of lunches served were free or reduced price. The additional nine cents lunch reimbursement is made available to schools certified to be in compliance with the meal pattern requirements.

Average increase from SY23-24 to SY24-25 rates across all categories is approximately **4.59%**.

School Breakfast Program

Category	Severe Need	Non-Severe Need
Free	2.84	2.37
Reduced	2.54	2.07
Paid	0.39	0.39

Schools may qualify for the "severe need" breakfast reimbursements if during the second preceding year 40% or more of lunches served were free or reduced price.

Average increase from SY23-24 to SY24-25 rates across all categories is approximately **3.72%**.



Afterschool Snack Program

Category	Area Eligible	Regular
Free	1.21	1.21
Reduced	N/A	0.60
Paid	N/A	0.11

An Afterschool Snack Program site is area eligible if it is located at a school or in the attendance area of a school where at least 50% of the enrolled children are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. All students at an area-eligible site receive an afterschool snack at no charge and schools claim all snacks served at the free rate.

Average increase from SY23-24 to SY24-25 rates across all categories is approximately **5.07%**.

Special Milk Program

Program	All Milk	Paid Milk	Free Milk
Pricing Program without Free Option	0.27	N/A	N/A
Pricing Programs with Free Option	N/A	0.27	Average cost per ½ pint of milk
Non-pricing Programs	0.27	N/A	N/A

Average increase from SY23-24 to SY24-25 rates across all categories is approximately **2.86%**.

Summer Food Service Program

Meal Type	Rural and Self-Prep Sites	Vended Urban Sites
Breakfast	3.08	3.03
Lunch/Supper	5.40	5.30
Snacks	1.28	1.25

Average increase from SY23-24 to SY24-25 rates across all categories is approximately **3.91%**.



PROGRAMS AT A GLANCE



Choteau Public Schools



Medicine Lake K-12 Schools

Program	Meals/Snacks	Reimbursement / Entitlement
School Breakfast Program	6,259,047	\$12,947,653
National School Lunch Program	12,086,574	\$34,876,902
Afterschool Snack Program	257,316	\$278,069
Special Milk Program	16,937	\$4,990
Summer Food Service Program	1,051,604	\$4,554,685
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program	—	\$2,965,171
USDA Foods Entitlement & DOD Fresh	—	\$6,116,828
Totals	19,671,478	\$61,744,297



SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The federally funded School Breakfast Program (SBP) ensures students begin their day with a nutritious meal by providing free or low-cost breakfasts. Administered by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, the program flows from state agencies to local school food authorities, which receive reimbursements to operate nonprofit meal services in schools and residential childcare institution.*

69% of breakfast meals are served to Free & Reduced priced-eligible students *



Total Meals Served

6,259,047



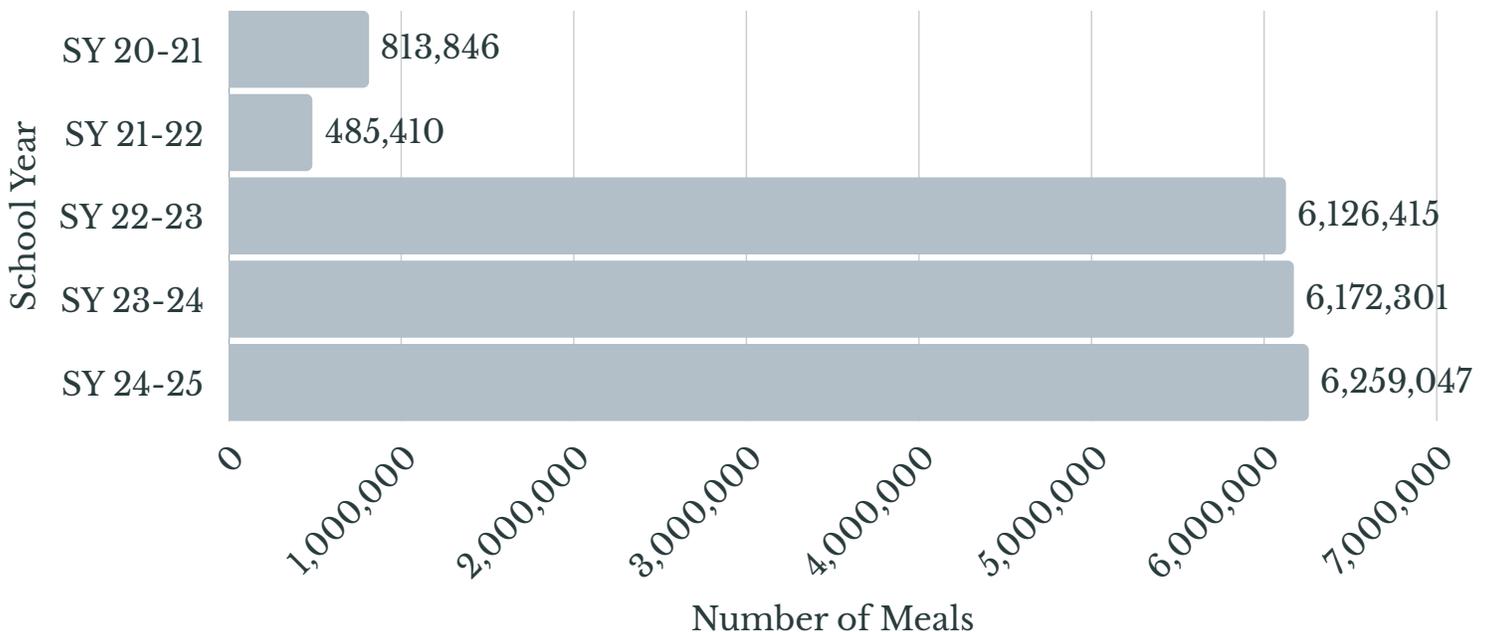
+1.39%

Increase from SY23-24



Fairview School District

5-Year Growth in School Breakfasts





NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM



Total Meals Served

12,086,574



-0.09%

Decrease from SY23-24

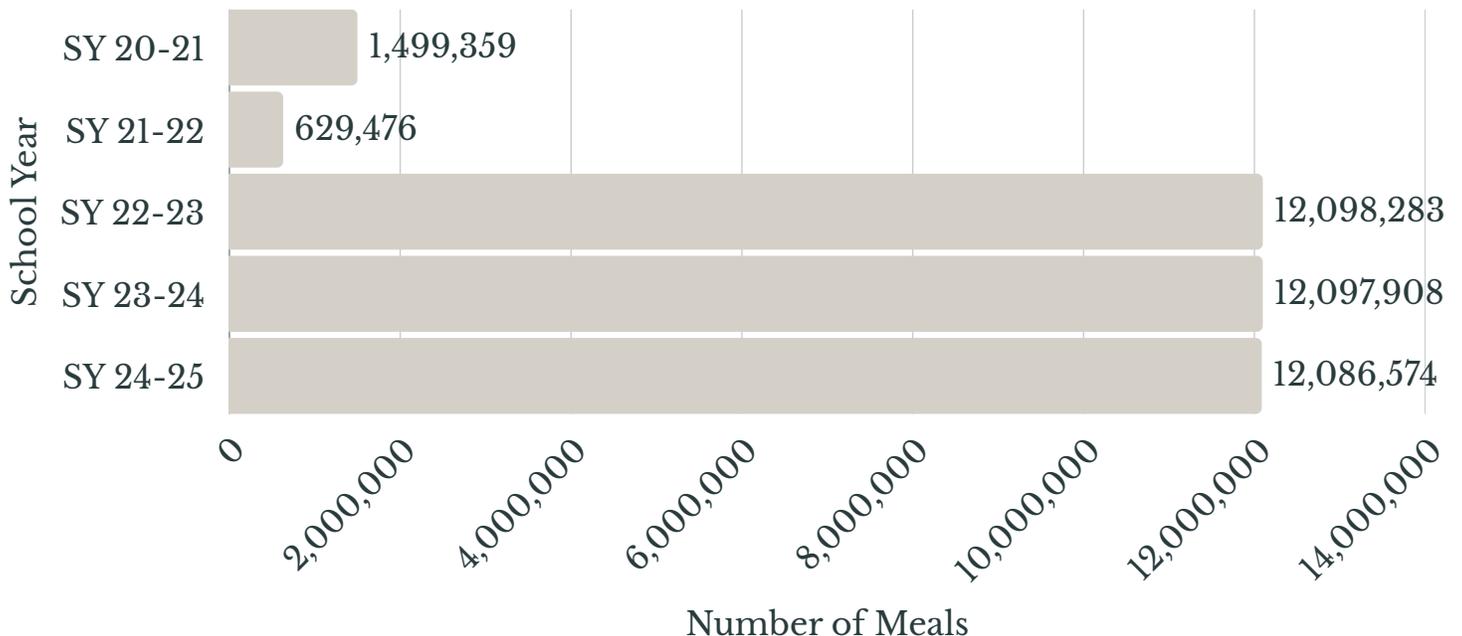
Established in 1946, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to students daily. Administered by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and flowing through state agencies, the program provides federal reimbursements to schools and residential childcare institutions to support nonprofit meal services.*

62% of lunch meals are served to Free & Reduced priced-eligible students *



Power Public Schools

5-Year Growth in School Lunches





FRESH FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PROGRAM

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) is a federally assisted grant program that provides elementary school students with a free fresh produce snack during the school day. By introducing children to different fruits and vegetables they might not otherwise experience, the program helps build lifelong healthy eating habits, improve overall nutrition, and supports a more vibrant learning environment.



Kalispell Public Schools, Local Apples

214

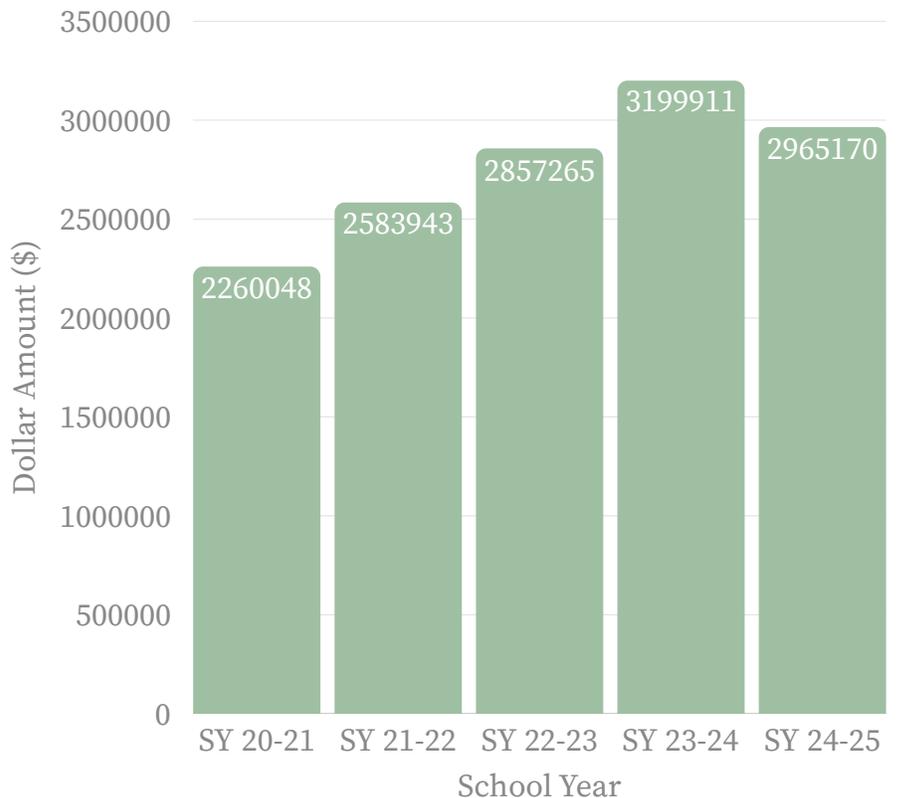
participating school sites

39,949

students with access to the FFVP snack at participating sites

Annual FFVP Allocations by School Year

*Note: The SY 24-25 decrease reflects higher school spending of FY 23 FFVP funds, resulting in less carryover to SY24-25. Total federal grant support from the USDA remained stable.**



Mission Mountain Food Enterprise Center, Local Butternut Squash



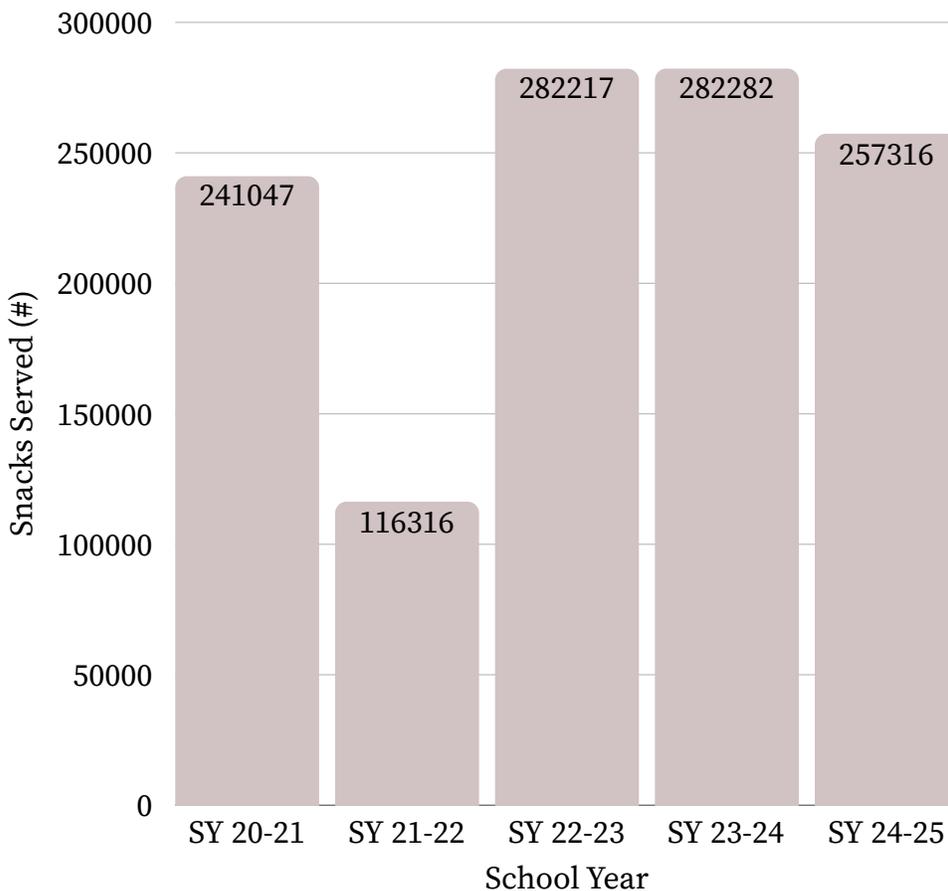
AFTERSCHOOL SNACK PROGRAM



Potomac Schools

The Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) provides reimbursements to schools for serving nutritious snacks to children in supervised afterschool activities. To qualify, programs must offer regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a structured environment. This service helps fill the afternoon hunger gap, ensuring students receive a nutritional boost after the school day ends.

Snacks Served Per School Year



114

number of participating school sites



SPECIAL MILK PROGRAM

The Special Milk Program (SMP) provides federal reimbursements to help public and nonprofit schools, child care institutions, and summer camps offer fluid milk to children who do not operate other federal meal programs like the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).



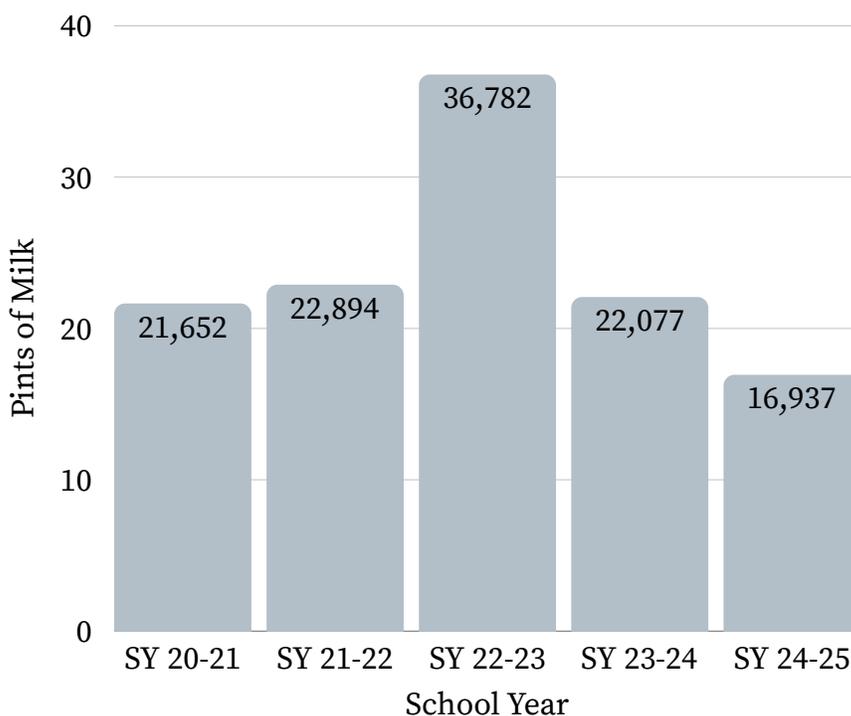
16,937

pints of milk served in the SMP this school year

7

small schools operated the SMP that *do not* offer breakfast or lunch to students.

Pints of Milk Served Per School Year





USDA FOOD AND DOD FRESH

USDA Foods provides schools with quality, 100% American-grown foods, helping to lower overall food costs while supporting domestic agriculture. This includes staples like meats, grains, fruits, and vegetables.

DoD Fresh is a partnership with the Dept. of Defense that allows schools to use a portion of their USDA Food entitlement to purchase a wide variety of fresh and regional produce for student meals.

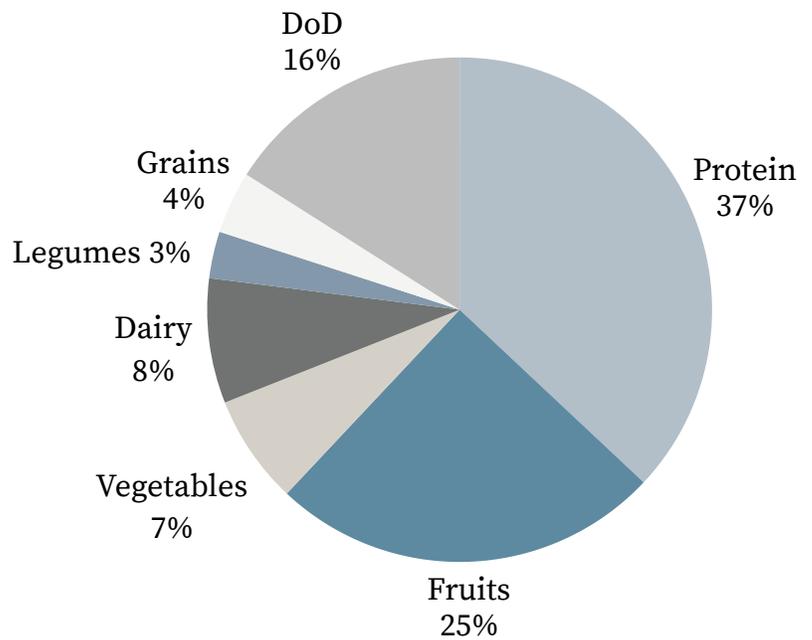
\$6,116,828

Total Annual Entitlement

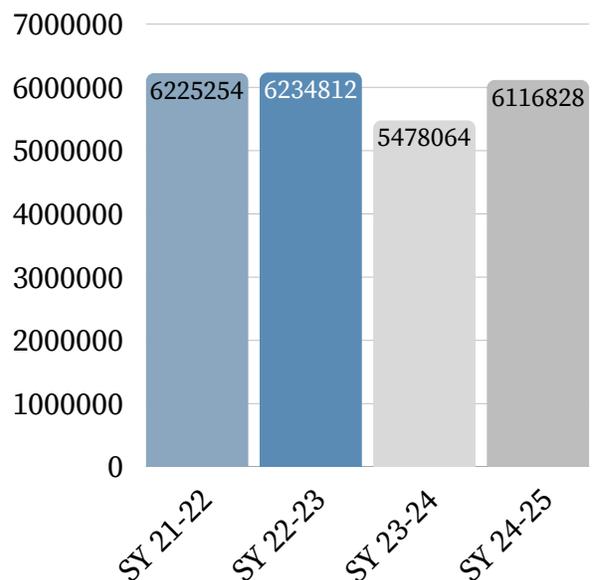
\$813,082

Diverted to DoD Fresh

Types of Food Purchased



Amount of Entitlement Over the Years



Erin Benson
Food Distribution Manager
with Montana Marinara



SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals to children in low-income areas through eligible organizations, primarily in the summer months when most schools are closed for instruction. USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers SFSP sites. SFSP sites include schools, camps, parks, playgrounds, housing projects, community centers, churches, and other public sites where children gather in the summer.

Typically, sites are eligible to offer free USDA-funded meals and snacks if:

- The sites operate in areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal poverty level; or
- School data must indicate that the proposed meal site is located in the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. *

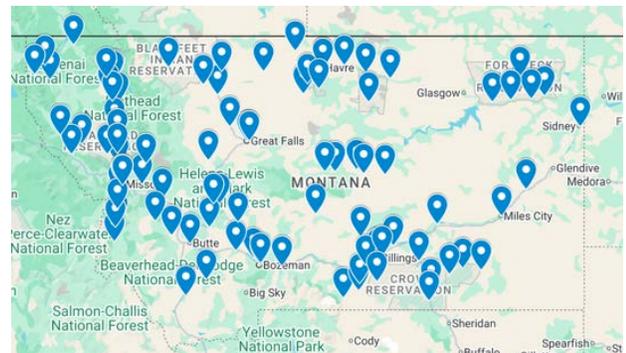
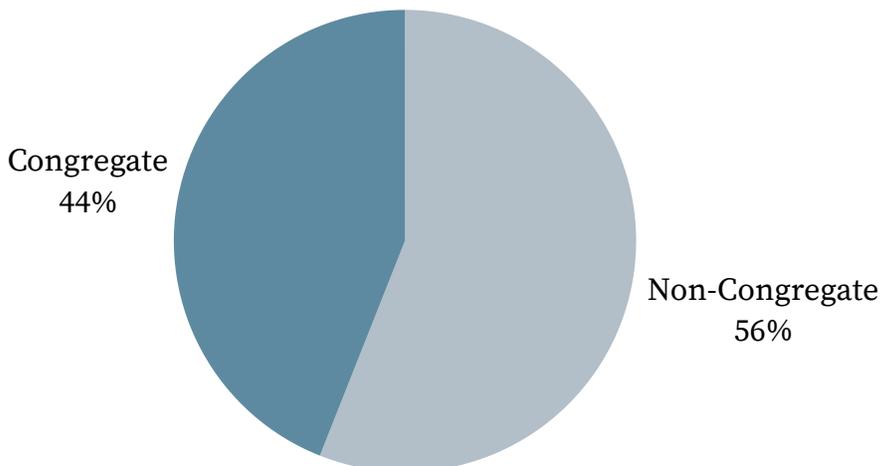


More summer food options for more summer smiles

98 total sponsors across Montana

Congregate vs Non-Congregate Meals Served

Montana has seen a 10% increase in SFSP meals served since the introduction of the Rural Non-Congregate meal service option.



Visual of sponsors around Montana

287 total sites across Montana



Total Meals Served

1,051,604



+2.00%

Increase from Summer 2024



SUN BUCKS PROGRAM



The SUN Bucks program (previously known as Summer EBT) is a federal nutrition program that provides families with \$120 per eligible school-age child to purchase groceries during the summer months. It is designed to supplement other services, like Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) meals, when school is out.

This new USDA program began in Montana in 2024. The Montana OPI and DPHHS administered the program together in the summer of 2025.

\$8,139,720

dollars issued to
eligible children

67,856

children issued
benefits





THE MONTANA TEAM NUTRITION PROGRAM

Montana Team Nutrition provided engaging trainings to schools across the state to increase their knowledge and confidence around the new meal pattern. Training was delivered through Wednesday webinars, the Montana School Nutrition Association Conference, and standalone workshops focused on reducing sugar and sodium through scratch cooking, knife skills, food label reading, and innovative salad bar strategies.

Team Nutrition and Farm to School By the Numbers:

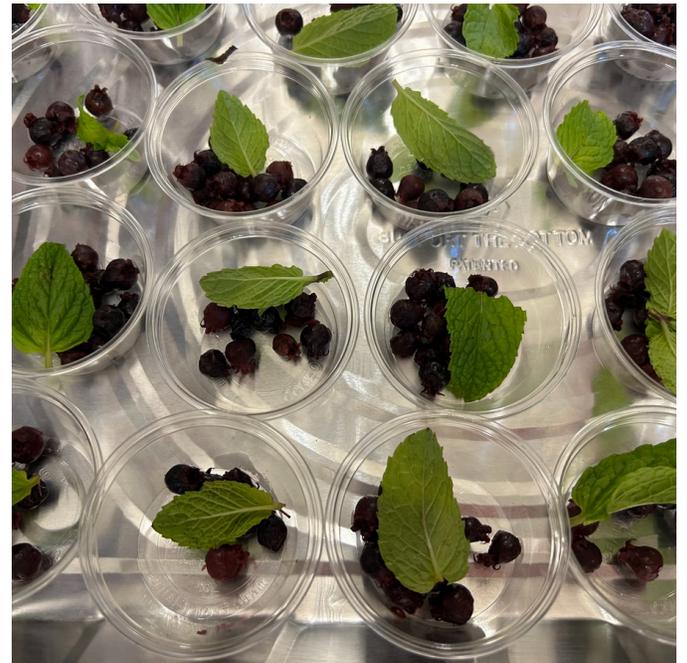
43 Training opportunities offered

85 Hours of training offered

108 School districts reached

42% Of Montana's school districts reached

181 Hours of individual technical assistance offered to schools and partners



Sacred Sips: Indigenous Tea Traditions in School Nutrition at Browning Public Schools



Collaborative work during culinary training



These activities were funded by a 2024 USDA Team Nutrition Training Grant



MONTANA FARM TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

Thanks to a 2024 USDA Farm to School Grant, the Montana Farm to School program expanded opportunities for local food access and education across the state. Highlights include the newest addition to the Montana Harvest of the Month calendar, the 11th annual Crunch Off, the launch of a new wholesale local foods map, and a dedicated Farm to School track at the Montana School Nutrition Association Conference.

Key Highlights



The newest **Montana Harvest of the Month** seasonal item, the potato was released.



23,473 Montanans crunched into local foods to celebrate the annual **MT Crunch Off** event.



Abundant Montana

Partnered with **Abundant Montana** to create a wholesale local food map, allowing schools to purchase larger volumes of local products.



Swanky Roots Tour at the Montana School Nutrition Association Conference

Montana School Nutrition Association Conference Farm to School Track

Participants had the opportunity to get their hands dirty at the following sessions:

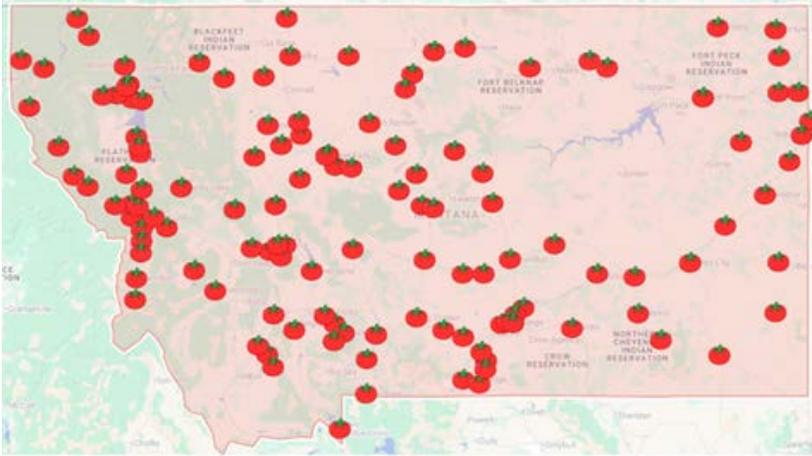
- Native Plant and Community Garden
- Teaching Kids to Grow and Cook Food
- HOM in Your Community
- Taste Tests in the Cafeteria and Classroom
- Flavoring with Fresh Herbs
- Tea Blends and Infused Waters
- Farm to School Lunch with all Local Ingredients



School Nutrition Professionals visited Park County's Farm to School Program



MONTANA MARINARA



Map of 149 Montana Schools that Received Montana Marinara in SY2024-2025

Montana Marinara is the first in a line of locally sourced value-added products designed with schools in mind.

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

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

Updated Packing for Montana Schools
Montana Marinara is now available in shelf-stable jugs, reducing the need for limited freezer space and making it easier for schools to store and utilize local products year-round

\$44,637
dollar value of local ingredients in Marinara from SY22-23 to SY24-25

4,022
Cases distributed to schools from SY22-23 to SY24-25

34,130 lbs
of local ingredients used from SY22-23 to SY24-25

132 average miles traveled from farm to processor



Erin Benson, Foods Distribution Manager with Montana Marinara Samples



NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Nondiscrimination Statement: In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at: [Subheading](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ITEM 4

COMMISSIONER OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REPORT

Dr. Angela McLean



Montana University System Report

Montana Board of Public Education

March 2026

- Future Ready Work in Partnership with the OPI
 - AP/IB Crosswalk
- Grow Your Own Montana Educator Update
- Workforce Listening Tour June 2026
- MUS Miscellaneous

Postsecondary Credits Counted Towards the Future Ready Payment

Updated December 1, 2025

MCA 20-9-306, as amended by HB 252 in the 2025 legislative session, charges the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education to provide “an annually updated list of the criteria of courses of study, including any completion or examination requirements, that a high school student may take that result in eligibility for transcribed credit at any unit of the Montana university system.” These criteria will determine college-level credit opportunities which may contribute towards the “Future Ready payment”.

Under board of regents’ policy, the following categories of college-level training and/or examination result in transcribed credit and may contribute towards the Future Ready payment.

1. College-level courses from certain accredited postsecondary institutions.

College level courses earned from institutions of higher education accredited by one of the following accrediting agencies may count towards the future ready payment:

- Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC)
- Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
- Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (MSCHE)
- New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NECHE)
- Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission

The following Montana postsecondary institutions currently meet the required accreditation standards:

- Montana State University – Bozeman
- Gallatin College MSU
- Montana State University – Billings
- City College MSU-Billings
- Montana State University – Northern
- Great Falls College MSU
- University of Montana – Missoula
- Missoula College UM
- Bitterroot College UM
- Montana Technological University
- Highlands College Montana Tech
- University of Montana – Western
- Helena College
- Dawson Community College
- Miles Community College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Aaniiih Nakoda College
- Blackfeet Community College
- Chief Dullknife College
- Fort Peck Community College
- Little Big Horn College
- Salish Kootenai College
- Stone Child College
- Carroll College
- Rocky Mountain College
- University of Providence

For a course to count towards the Future Ready payment:

- The student must achieve a grade of C- or better or a “pass” if the course is graded on a pass/fail. A grade of C- or better is required for the course to meet general education or program requirements in the Montana University System.
- The course may not be remedial or developmental in nature. For Montana University System institutions, remedial courses are listed below the 100-level (e.g. M 095).

Montana University System Institutions offer semester credits. Should a student earn college credit in quarter-hour increments, the credit value should be divided by 1.5 to yield the semester credit equivalent for calculation of the Future Ready payment.

A student need not go on to matriculate to a college following high school graduation for coursework to count towards the Future Ready payment.

2. AP or IB courses with appropriate examination results

Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) courses may count towards Future Ready payments if students earn certain AP or IB examination results. AP and IB scores are equated to Future Ready credit levels by subject area and exam score in appendix A (AP) and appendix B (IB).

These matrices report college credits commonly awarded by Montana University System institutions to students with these examination results. *Individual institutions may award more or less college credit.* The Montana University System is currently working to further align credit award for AP and IB courses.

APPENDIX A: AP EXAMINATION TO FUTURE READY CREDIT EQUIVALENCY

Updated December 1st, 2025

	AP EXAM SCORE & EQUIVALENT FUTURE READY CREDIT		
	Score of 3	Score of 4	Score of 5
2D art	3	3	3
3D Art and Design	3	3	3
African American Studies	3	3	3
Art History	3	3	3
Biology	4	4	4
Calculus AB	4	4	4
Calculus BC	4	4	8
Chemistry	3	3	3
Chinese Language & Culture	6	12	15
Comparative Politics	3	3	3
Computer Science	3	3	3
Computer Science Principles	3	3	3
Drawing	3	3	3
English Language Comp	3	3	3
English Literature & Comp	3	3	3
Environmental Science	3	3	3
European History	3	3	3
French Language	6	9	12
German Language	6	9	12
Human Geography	3	3	3
Italian Language	6	9	12
Japanese	6	9	12
Latin	3	3	3
Macroeconomics	3	3	3
Microeconomics	3	3	3
Physics C: Electricity & Magnetism	3	3	3
Physics C: Mechanics	3	3	3
Physics 1	4	4	4
Physics 2	3	3	3
Precalculus	3	3	3
Psychology	3	3	3
Spanish Language	6	9	12
Statistics	3	3	3
US Government and Politics	3	3	3
US History	6	6	6
World History	3	3	3

This table reports college credits commonly awarded by Montana University System institutions to students with these examination results. *Individual institutions may award more or less college credit.* The Montana University System is currently working to further align credit award for AP and IB courses.

APPENDIC B: IB EXAMINATION TO FUTURE-READY CREDIT EQUIVALENCY

Updated December 1st, 2025

	IB EXAM SCORE & EQUIVALENT FUTURE READY CREDIT			
	Score of 4	Score of 5	Score of 6	Score of 7
Biology HL	4	4	4	4
Biology SL	3	3	3	3
Business & Management HL	3	3	3	3
Business & Management SL	0	3	3	3
Chemistry HL	3	3	3	3
Chemistry SL	0	3	3	3
Computer Science HL	3	3	3	3
Dance HL	3	3	3	3
Design Technology HL	3	3	3	3
Economics HL	6	6	6	6
Economics SL	0	0	0	0
Environmental Systems & Societies SL	3	3	3	3
Extended Essay EE	3 credits for either an A or B			
Film HL	2	2	2	2
Further Mathematics HL	3	3	3	3
Geography HL	3	3	3	3
Geography SL	0	0	0	0
Global Politics HL	3	3	3	3
Global Politics SL	3	3	3	3
History: Africa and Middle East HL	3	3	3	3
History: Americas HL	3	3	3	3
History: Asia & Oceania HL	3	3	3	3
History: Europe HL	3	3	3	3
History: Islamic HL	3	3	3	3
History: World HL	3	3	3	3
Language A: English Language & Literature HL	6	6	6	6
Language A: English Literature HL	6	6	6	6
Language A: French Language & Literature HL	12	12	12	12
Language A: German Language & Literature HL	12	12	12	12
Language A: Japanese Language & Literature HL	12	12	12	12
Language A: Spanish Language & Literature HL	12	12	12	12
Language B: French HL	9	9	12	12

Language B: French SL	3	3	6	6
Language B: German HL	9	9	12	12
Language B: German SL	3	3	6	6
Language B: Japanese HL	9	9	12	12
Language B: Japanese SL	3	3	6	6
Language B: Latin HL	9	9	12	12
Language B: Latin SL	3	3	6	6
Language B: Spanish HL	9	9	12	12
Language B: Spanish SL	3	3	6	6
Mathematical Studies SL	0	3	3	3
Mathematics SL	4	4	4	4
Mathematics HL	4	4	4	4
Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches SL	0	0	0	0
Mathematics: Analysis & Approaches HL	3	3	3	3
Mathematics: Applications & Interpretation SL	0	0	0	0
Mathematics: Applications & Interpretation HL	6	6	6	6
Music HL	3	3	3	3
Music SL	0	0	0	0
Philosophy HL	6	6	6	6
Philosophy SL	3	3	3	3
Physics HL	8	8	8	8
Psychology HL	3	3	3	3
Psychology SL	0	0	0	0
Social & Cultural Anthropology HL	3	3	3	3
Sports, Exercise & Health Science SL	3	3	3	3
Theatre Arts HL	3	3	3	3
Theory of Knowledge	0	0	0	0
Visual Arts HL	3	3	3	3

This table reports college credits commonly awarded by Montana University System institutions to students with these examination results. *Individual institutions may award more or less college credit.* The Montana University System is currently working to further align credit award for AP and IB courses.

ITEM 5

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Lydia Comstock

❖ **CHARTER SCHOOL COMMITTEE – (Items 6-7)**

Lisa Schmidt

ITEM 6

**UPDATE ON COMMUNITY CHOICE
SCHOOLS COMMISSION**

Cathy Kincheloe

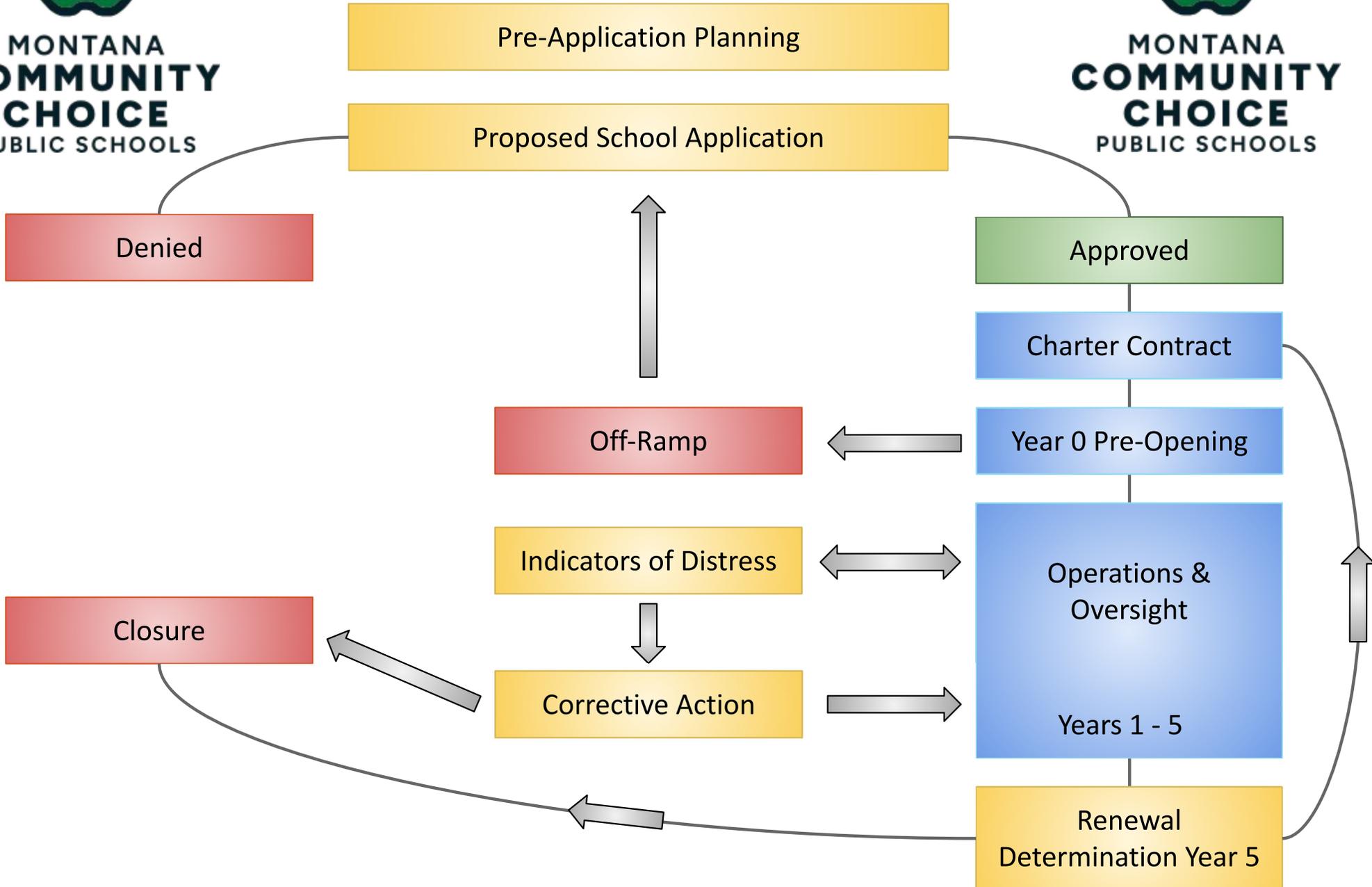


**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Community Choice Schools Cycle



**MONTANA
COMMUNITY
CHOICE**
PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ITEM 7

**ACTION ON THE EXECUTION OF NEW AND
REVISED PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL
CONTRACTS**

Lisa Schmidt

**BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
TOURS & ACTIVITIES**

**10:45AM TRAVEL TO CSKT TRIBAL
COMPLEX**

**11:00AM MEET WITH CONFEDERATED
SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
TRIBAL COUNCIL 42487 COMPLEX
BLVD, PABLO, MT**

**11:45AM TRAVEL TO RONAN MIDDLE
SCHOOL**

*****Lunch will be provided for Board Members *****

**BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
STRATEGIC PLANNING**

Dr. Tim Tharp

**12:15PM DISCUSSION OF MISSION AND
VISION CONT.**

**12:45PM DISCUSS COMMITMENTS AND
INITIAL STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES**

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.



❖ **LICENSURE COMMITTEE – (Items 8-14)**

Dr. Ron Slinger

ITEM 8

**ACTION AND INFORMATION ON INITIAL
REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2026-01, DAVIS**

Action Items

- **Action on Initial Review**
- **Action on Summary Suspension**

Brenton Craggs

ITEM 9

ACTION AND INFORMATION ON INITIAL REVIEW OF BPE CASE #2026-02, LARSON

Action Items

- **Action on Initial Review**
- **Action on Summary Suspension**

Brenton Craggs

ITEM 10

**ACTION ON THE NOTICE OF ADOPTION
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



BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

NOTICE OF ADOPTION

MAR NOTICE NO. 2026-4.2

Summary

Adoption of NEW RULE 1 (10.57.439) pertaining to Class 9 Special Education Technician License in the Educator Licensure Standards

Previous Notice(s) and Hearing Information

On February 6, 2026, the board published MAR Notice No. 2026-4.1 pertaining to the public hearing on the proposed adoption of the above-stated rules in Issue Number 3 of the 2026 Montana Administrative Register. On March 3, 2026, the board held a public hearing to consider the proposed rulemaking.

Final Rulemaking Action – Effective May 1, 2026

ADOPT AS PROPOSED

The agency has adopted the following rules as proposed:

10.57.439 Class 9 Special Education Technician License

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

ITEM 11

**ACTION ON THE SITE VISIT AND
ACCREDITATION STATE EXIT REPORT OF
ABCTE FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL FOR
ALTERNATIVE CREDENTIALING**

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 19-20, 2026

Presentation	Recommend Approval of the State Exit Report for American Board and Full Accreditation status.
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Senior Manager, School and Educator Effectiveness Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>The State Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends approval of the 2026 Final State Accreditation Report for the American Board and Full Accreditation status.</p> <p>The Final State and Narrative Reports are included in the BPE Agenda Packet.</p> <p>Isabelle Welch, from the American Board, will be available virtually to provide final comments and respond to questions from the BPE.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approve the State Exit Report and Full Accreditation Status for the American Board, as recommended by State Superintendent Hedalen.





February 27, 2026

TO: Isabelle Welch
Director of Government Affairs
American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.

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

SUBJECT: **Final** State Accreditation Program Report 2026

In March of 2024, the American Board Center for Teaching Excellence (American Board) received preliminary accreditation based on a review conducted by the Montana Office of the Public Instruction (OPI) in alignment to ARM 10.58 and 20-4-120, MCA. The purpose of the review was to verify that the alternative teacher credentialing program meets the requirements of the Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program Standards (PEPPS) for the initial program and endorsement standards. Based on the initial review, American Board was awarded preliminary accreditation for two years until American Board demonstrated compliance with 10.58.802(2). To be recommended for full program approval by the State Superintendent of Instruction and approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) in January 2026, American Board was required to demonstrate evidence for the following items:

- (a) ensure that the program of study is based on current research, proven practice, and emerging trends in this field of P-12 school curriculum;
- (b) work cooperatively with accredited school districts, education organizations, agencies, and P-20 stakeholders to design the program;
- (c) implement, assess, and evaluate the program's impact on the identified P-12 needs;
- (d) submit in January 2025 and 2026 systematic reports of the program's impact on P-12 education to the state superintendent and the Board of Public Education; and
- (e) update and maintain program information on its Web page.

This final report summarizes the preliminary accreditation results of the standards as outlined in [ARM 10.58](#) and the additional evidence requested for ARM 10.58.802(2). The purpose of the report is to determine full accreditation for the American Board through 2031. Upon the recommendation of the State Superintendent, the Final State Accreditation Program Report will be presented to the BPE. The BPE will take action on the Final State Accreditation Program Report and the Full Accreditation/Approval status at the March 2026 BPE meeting.

The Final State Accreditation Program Report 2026 is attached.

Cc: Jamie Corley, Accreditation Specialist, Julie Murgel, Chief Program Officer

DEFINITIONS WHICH PERTAIN TO THIS REPORT

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

Standard is met with notation (Met with Notation): Regular accreditation with minor deviations with most of the components of a standard met. This could involve incomplete items on 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	TITLE	STATUS
10.58.311	Initial Content and Pedagogical Knowledge	Met
10.58.312	Initial Clinical Partnerships and Practice	Met with Notation
10.58.313	Initial Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity	Met with Notation
10.58.314	Initial Program Impact	Met with Notation
10.58.315	Initial Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement	Met with Notation

Teaching Program Standards

ARM	TITLE	STATUS
10.58.501	Teaching Standards	Met with Notation
10.58.509	English/Language Arts	Met with Notation
10.58.510	Special Education P-12	Met with Notation
10.58.518	Mathematics	Met with Notation
10.58.521	Reading Specialist K-12	Not Approved <i>Due to misalignment to ARM, which requires the candidate to be prepared to be a specialist or instructional coach.</i>
10.58.522	Science (Broadfield Science)	Met with Notation
10.58.522	Physics	Met with Notation
10.58.522	Chemistry	Met
10.58.522	Biology	Met
10.58.523	Social Studies (History)	Met with Notation
10.58.532	Elementary	Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Initial Standards Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.311 Initial Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Summary of findings: The American Board offers a teacher certification program that requires candidates to pass both a subject area exam and a Professional Teaching Knowledge (PTK) exam, with pedagogy making up 50% of the program. The PTK exam standards cover instructional design, delivery, classroom management, assessment, and leadership, aligning with national benchmarks like InTASC and PRAXIS® PLT. The American Board offers certification in nine content areas in Montana: Biology, Chemistry, English, Elementary Education, History, Mathematics, Physics, General Science, and Special Education.

Evidence consistent with meeting the standard: According to a 2016 Drexel University study and other reports, teachers certified through the American Board are often seen as effective and comparable or superior to traditionally prepared teachers in key areas. American Board teachers were notably rated higher in community ties, job appreciation, and applying real-world experience, with principals expressing high confidence in retaining them.

Completer surveys across 20 teacher performance indicators, which included content knowledge, classroom management, and pedagogy, the following results were found:

- American Board teachers performed equivalently to traditional, college-prepared teachers across most (75%) evaluated aspects of teacher quality.
- American Board prepared teachers were rated higher on four aspects (20%) of teacher quality, relative to bringing real-world experiences into the classroom, community connection, and job appreciation.
- American Board prepared teachers are equally as strong or stronger than college prepared teachers across 95% of the evaluated teacher qualities.

In a 2018 Content Alignment Study, standards were triangulated between standards to establish the content validity of any set of standards. It was found that all PTK standards were determined to be substantively or completely aligned with InTASC standards. Using criteria established for typical reliability studies, American Board content was very strongly aligned at 100% on the domain level (macro content) with Praxis® content and was very strongly aligned at 98% on the sub-domain specific objective content levels.

American Board's program consists of coursework and exams covering subject area content and pedagogy, the art and science of teaching. Of particular note, 50% of American Board's program is pedagogy, and candidates must prove their competency by passing a pedagogy exam in addition to a content area exam before they can complete the program. American

Board has a proven record of its commitment to rigorous pedagogy and content area exams, ensuring that graduates are ready for the classroom.

The standards covered in American Board's PTK exam are divided into the following domains:

- Instructional Design,
- Effective Instructional Delivery,
- Classroom Management and Organization,
- Assessment, and
- Professional Learning and Leadership.

Importantly, these standards have been shown to align with the nationally recognized InTASC standards which ensure that candidates demonstrate an understanding within four categories: "the learner and learning," "content," "instructional practice," and "professional responsibility." American Board's PTK standards have also been found to be aligned with the PRAXIS® PLT content standards. American Board's content area exams are a rigorous assessment of a candidate's knowledge and application of the chosen subject area.

Evidence inconsistent with meeting the standard: None

Recommendation: Met

**American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026**

Initial Standards Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.312 Initial Clinical Partnerships and Practice

Summary of findings: The American Board encourages candidates to gain classroom experience through various opportunities and incorporates virtual studies into required coursework. In alignment to 20-4-120, MCA, the American Board alternative teacher certification and endorsement program does not require a supervised teaching experience.

Evidence consistent with meeting the standard: Candidates are encouraged to explore volunteer or substitute teaching opportunities to gain experience in classrooms or with students. Video case studies are also embedded in coursework requirements.

After the first 2 years of implementation of the alternative teaching certification program in Montana, 99 (63%) candidates have received a Class 5 Provisional License to gain clinical experience while holding a teaching position. As teachers, the candidates are participating in a district mentorship and induction program.

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.

Within two years of implementation, American Board Teachers are teaching in 74 Districts across Montana.

Evidence inconsistent with meeting the standard: While 63% of the candidates are getting experience, it is experience on the job rather than a clinical experience during the preparation period.

Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Initial Standards Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.313 Initial Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity

Summary of findings: American Board provides a comprehensive suite of study materials to develop candidate quality and prepare candidates for their Professional Teaching Knowledge (PTK) and subject area exams. The program culminates in two final exams—one for Professional Teaching Knowledge and one for the chosen content area—to evaluate mastery. The admission process to enroll in the program requires candidates to hold a Bachelor’s degree in any field, which does not need to match the teaching endorsement, provide official transcripts from a college or university to determine capacity for success and academic achievement, and complete a background check. American Board targets career changers and professionals with expertise in high-demand fields. American Board has certified thousands of teachers, with 32% in STEM fields and 23% from minority backgrounds..

Evidence consistent with meeting the standard: Evidence for teacher candidate quality is grounded in a variety of measures. To ensure that candidates are well-prepared for their PTK and content area exams, American Board provides a comprehensive array of study materials. These resources were developed by university professors and field experts through a \$45 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The study materials include the study plans, a standards workbook, workshops, and practice quizzes and exams. These materials were designed to facilitate candidates' understanding of the exam's content and structure. These materials are continuously reviewed and updated by field experts on a rolling basis.

As candidates progress through the curriculum, they are introduced to content through a provided list of standards and engaging workshops accompanying each course. To track their progress and identify areas that may require further review, candidates utilize the study plan, which encourages analysis, definition, paraphrasing, reflection, and application of each standard. To strengthen content retention, practice questions are strategically embedded within each workshop, while practice quizzes for each domain and two practice final exams further reinforce the material. Ultimately, content mastery is evaluated during the final exams.

By providing structured curriculum and robust study materials, American Board ensures that its candidates receive comprehensive and effective preparation for their exams. In order to complete American Board’s program, candidates must demonstrate mastery in pedagogy and their chosen content area by passing American Board’s Professional Teaching

Knowledge exam and the respective content area exam. These exams assess candidates on their knowledge of critical concepts and best practices in both pedagogy and their chosen content area.

The American Board Candidate Handbook is a guide to successfully move through American Board's online teacher certification program. Additionally, all American Board enrollees have access to the American Board Candidate Services team. This team is available to assist candidates as they complete their certification.

The American Board program within the first two years of implementation is filling shortages across the state of Montana, while providing a pathway for educators on Emergency Authorization to become certified.

Evidence inconsistent with meeting the standard: The program has a system in place to provide support to candidates throughout the program to inform them of their development, however, the Candidate Services team does not offer subject-specific tutoring support. Additionally, minimal evidence shows that the American Board program monitors dispositions beyond academic ability during the program.

Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Initial Standards Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.314 Initial Program Impact

Summary of findings: American Board assesses completers effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction through completer and employer surveys. Initially, the review identified that the American Board used an independent study done by Drexel University in 2016, that demonstrated strong effectiveness and retention. Self-reported data from American Board completers across multiple states, indicate strong outcomes, with an 85% three-year teacher retention rate compared to the national average of 67%, and 95% of surveyed principals rating American Board-certified teachers as effective or more effective than peers from conventional programs.

Recently in January 2026, evidence was provided from Montana candidates and employers surveys, which indicated that candidates are prepared for the responsibilities working with P-12 students and their families.

Evidence consistent with meeting the standard: Initial evidence through completer surveys indicated that completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they encounter on the job and that the preparation was effective. Employer surveys also indicate that employers are satisfied with the program completers' preparation for their responsibilities working with P-12 students and their families, including that program completers effectively apply the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed.

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. Survey findings conducted in 2025-2026 are below.

Employer survey results indicated that:

- 100% of Montana employers confirmed that American Board teachers meet the academic, cultural, social, and emotional needs of P-12 students.
- 100% of Montana employers said that they would recommend American Board's program to others.
- 100% of Montana employers said their American Board trained teacher met their expectations.

Completer survey results indicated that:

- 93% of completers said that American Board's program met their expectations.
- 93% of candidates said they would recommend the program to others.

Evidence inconsistent with meeting the standard: Due to the minimal years of program implementation, data beyond the completer and employer surveys is not yet available to determine the effectiveness of its completers' instruction on P-12 student learning and development.

Recommendation: Met with Notation

**American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026**

Initial Standards Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.315 Initial Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement

Summary of findings: Evidence provided shows that American Board participates in a continuous improvement process for coursework and assessments and works closely with MetriKs Amerique to review and enhance the validity and effectiveness of the program. American Board currently participates in an annual review with MetriKs Amérique, through which American Board’s standards, study material, and certification exams are continuously reviewed to ensure they are current and in alignment with the latest educational standards and best practices. Materials are continuously reviewed and updated by field experts on a continual basis. Examples of updating the program include the alignment of literacy content and pedagogy to the Science of Reading. Recent curriculum reviews and updates ensure every candidate learns to leverage technology and AI as creative instructional aids, while modeling ethical digital citizenship for students.

Evidence does not show that internal and external stakeholders, including, but not limited to, faculty, staff, candidates, completers, employers, practitioners, and school and community partners are engaged in program design, evaluation, and continuous innovative improvement processes.

Evidence consistent with meeting the standard: Evidence shows that the program utilizes MetriKs Amerique to collect data on American Board’s standards, study material, and certification exams. The data is used to establish priorities, enhance program elements, and highlight innovation. To track candidate progress and identify areas that may require further review, candidates utilize the study plan, which encourages analysis, definition, paraphrasing, reflection, and application of each standard. Embedded within each workshop are practice quizzes for each domain and two practice final exams. Ultimately, content mastery is evaluated during two final exams for each course.

Evidence inconsistent with meeting the standard: Additional evidence is needed to show that internal and external stakeholders, including, but not limited to, faculty, staff, candidates, completers, employers, practitioners, and school and community partners are engaged in program design, evaluation, and continuous innovative improvement processes,, resource allocation, and future direction.

Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.501 Teaching Standards

Validating Statement: American Board has provided evidence demonstrating that candidates receive opportunities to engage with and acquire the skills and competencies outlined in Standard 10.58.501. Through learning opportunities integrated across program study materials and web links to resources, candidates are given opportunities to acquire the 12 teaching standards encompassing: learner development, learning differences and diversity, learning environment, content knowledge personalization and accessibility, content application, assessment, planning and implementation, instructional strategies, professional learning and ethical practices, family and community engagement. Candidates cultivate these teaching competencies through a sequence of study materials. Candidates are not provided explicit learning opportunities within the program to demonstrate the ability to integrate history, cultural heritage, language, and contemporary status of American Indians and tribes in Montana as required in substandard 10.58.501(1)(L). However, as MCA § 20-4-120 dictates candidates in an alternative preparation program are required to complete coursework related to Indian Education for All at the point of licensure.

Sources of Evidence: Documentation supporting Standard 10.58.501 included the 2018 Content Alignment Study, the American Board Professional Teaching Knowledge learning domains, and the American Board examination information, including the study plan for elementary education.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: The 2018 Content Alignment Study addresses how the American Board teaching standards were determined to be aligned to the inTASC standards. The study indicates that no areas of misalignment or missing content were discovered.

Evaluation: The American Board program provides study materials that support candidates' development into content knowledgeable educators. The program exhibits an overall sequence of study material, study guides, and links to web resources that address the teaching standards outlined in ARM 10.58.501 through a Professional Teaching Knowledge exam. The program relies solely on the Indian Education for All coursework required for licensure.

Commendations: American Board addresses the teaching standards within its program, as evidenced by its study plan materials and links to web resources. This alignment is demonstrated through the Professional Teaching Knowledge exam taken by candidates at the completion of American Board's program. All candidates are required to complete the Professional Teaching Knowledge program components in addition to the Elementary Endorsement studies.

Improvements: Evidence shows that the American Board program is preparing candidates

through study materials with the 12 teaching standards outlined in ARM 10.58.501. However, two key areas to strengthen elementary educators' ability to effectively personalize and deliver instruction include:

- While candidates demonstrate an understanding of Indian Education for All (IEFA) essential concepts through licensure, increased practice in embedding IEFA principles into lesson plans specific to the content area of expertise is recommended.
- While candidates demonstrate Professional Teaching Knowledge through American Board's PTK exam, more opportunities are recommended that allow candidates to utilize a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections and build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Narrative Report

Number and Name of Standard: 10.58.509 English/Language Arts

Validating Statement: A variety of resources and study plans with embedded links to lessons are used throughout the program to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to enhance pedagogical knowledge in English Language Arts.

Sources of Evidence: Documentation to support 10.58.509 English Language Arts included the Institutional Self Study Report and links to web resources and the American Board study plan for English Language Arts.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: The Institutional Self-Study Report (ISSR) provides evidence of links to the American Board Study Plan for ELA studies, Professional Teaching Knowledge program components and the American Board Examination.

Evaluation: The American Board program is organized to prepare teacher candidates for the American Board Professional Teaching Knowledge examination. The program provides a combination of study plans and recommended web resources to enhance candidates' understanding of English pedagogy and theory. The program review identified full alignment with 10.58.509(1)(a), (b), (c), (f), (g), (h), (l), (j), and (m) aligned and addressed; limited alignment for 10.58.509(1)(d), (e), and (l); and the 10.58.109(k) Indian Education for All meet through the course work required for licensure.

Commendations: The American Board facilitates deep content knowledge and understanding in English Language Arts through a guided study plan and content knowledge test preparation in the English Language arts.

Improvements: The evidence shows that while the American Board is preparing candidates well for content knowledge proficiency in ELA there are areas that are minimally aligned to standards outlined in ARM 10.58.509: The three areas that need to be strengthened are:

- Learning opportunities for understanding legal and ethical issues in ELA such as freedom of expression, censorship, and bias,
- Opportunities to learn how to engage students with the role of the arts, humanities, and other content areas in English Language Arts.
- Opportunities to plan, implement, assess, and reflect on how to integrate technologies and/or digital media to compose multimodal discourse.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Narrative Report

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

Validating Statement: Candidates in the Special Education program are given a study plan that covers the foundations of special education, language development, assessment, and instructional delivery. To complete American Board's Special Education program, candidates must also demonstrate their competency in elementary education by completing American Board's Elementary Education course, which is another complete endorsement program.

Sources of Evidence: Sources of evidence include the American Board examination, vignettes of American Board SPED candidates, and the study plans.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: The study plan and the American Board examination are aligned to ARM 10.58.510 competencies, including instructional planning, assessment and data analysis, collaboration, legal compliance, and least restrictive environment decision-making.

The four domains embedded in the special education program are aligned to the standards outlined in 10.58.510:

- Domain 1: Professional Skills and Background Knowledge (Philosophical, Historical, and Legal Foundations, Professional and Ethical Practice, and Professional Communication and Collaboration) are aligned to 10.58.510(1)(d) (g), (h), (j), and (k).
- Domain 2: Understanding the Special Needs Student (Characteristics of Learners with Disabilities, Cultural Competence, Family Participation, and Learning Environments and Social Interactions) are aligned to 10.58.510(1)(a), (b), (i), (l) and (m).
- Domain 3: General Special Education Practices (Assessment, Effective Instructional Delivery, Instructional Planning, and Student Self-Determination and Transition) are aligned to 10.58.510(1)(c), (d), and (e).
- Domain 4: Language Development Strategies (Language Acquisition and Development, Reading Acquisition, Spelling, and Writing Strategies) are aligned to 10.58.510(1)(i).

Evaluation: American Board's Special Education program is designed to ensure candidates engage in continuous analysis, evaluation, and reflection on the fundamental knowledge and concepts of special education. The program's structure is designed to guide candidates systematically through each domain and topic, fostering a learning environment that encourages the practical application of acquired knowledge. The approach enables candidates to not only absorb information but also to utilize and apply it..

Candidates in the Special Education program engage in coursework that covers the principles and foundations of special education, language development, assessment, and instructional delivery.

Additionally, in order to complete American Board's Special Education program, candidates must demonstrate their competency in elementary education by completing American Board's Elementary Education course. This enables candidates to gain the necessary foundational knowledge to teach special education students across subject areas. The comprehensive knowledge also equips candidates with the tools to address the unique needs of special education students and promote overall student achievement.

Commendations:

- The program demonstrates alignment between program components (study guide, study plan, web resources) and ARM 10.58.510 standards.
- The American Board examination is used as the assessment method to evaluate candidate competencies across the standard.

Improvements:

- To strengthen the program, provide candidates more course work and learning opportunities to create and implement IEPs. It is essential for special education teachers to be knowledgeable regarding all of its components (present levels of performance, accommodations and modifications, annual goals, special education and related services, etc.).
- Ensure the programming provides Montana-specific requirements, practice with applying accommodations versus modifications, opportunities to develop competency with behavioral interventions, social-emotional learning, progress monitoring tools, trauma-informed practices and de-escalation techniques, assistive technology, inclusivity practices, and co-teaching practices.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
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Narrative Report

Name and Number of Standard: 10.58.518 Mathematics

Validating Statement: All candidates are required to complete the Professional Teaching Knowledge program components in addition to the Math studies and content exam.

Sources of Evidence: Study plans and links to web resources.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assessment decisions were made using the study plan.

Evaluation: The program satisfies the requirement through the exam that covers all Domain-level content and pedagogy. All math content within the program (numbers and operations, algebra, geometry and trigonometry, calculus, discrete mathematics, data analysis, statistics, and probability, and historical development) is aligned to substandard 10.58.518(1) (j), except for the inclusion of IEFA.. As outlined in 10.58.518(1)(i). The program content for the math endorsement includes opportunities for candidates to demonstrate how students learn mathematics and the pedagogical knowledge specific to mathematics teaching and learning including assessment, instruction, and curriculum.

There was limited alignment to the math practices outlined in ARM 10.58.518(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) that require candidates to obtain knowledge and understanding of how to apply the process of problem solving; reasoning, rigor, mathematical modeling, inquiry, connecting mathematical ideas and representations,, and use of technology.

Commendation: Candidates are assessed on content knowledge through a competency examination. They are prepared through program components, pertaining to mathematical concepts and pedagogy.

Improvements: To strengthen the alignment to ARM 10.518(1)(a) to (h), the following two areas are recommended:

- While candidates demonstrate an understanding of Indian Education for All (IEFA) essential concepts through licensure, increase practice in embedding IEFA principles into lesson plans specific to math.
- Provide more opportunities that allow candidates to practice how to apply the process of problem solving; reasoning, rigor, mathematical modeling, inquiry, connecting mathematical ideas and representations, and appropriate use of technology.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Narrative Report

Name and Number of Standard: 10.58.522 Science

Validating Statement: The American Board science examinations cover all Domain-level content presented on the Praxis® examination. All candidates are required to complete the Professional Teaching Knowledge program components in addition to the Science studies.

Sources of Evidence: Study plans and resources.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assessment of each component of the full standard was evaluated using the study plan.

Evaluation: The program satisfies the requirement through the American Board examination which covers all Domain-level content and pedagogy presented on the Praxis examination. Through the evaluation, it was determined that overall the science endorsement programs were aligned with ARM 10.58.522, with some areas having limited alignment.

Biology: The program components were aligned to 10.58.522(4) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (m), (n), (o), (p), and (q). There was limited alignment to substandard (r), which is the conceptual understanding of applications of biology and biotechnology in society, business, industry, and health fields.

Chemistry: The program components were aligned to 10.58.522(5) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (k), (l), (n), (o), (p), (q), (r), (s), and (t). Limited alignment was found between the program components and substandard (m), which is (m) conceptual understanding of the applications of chemistry in personal and community health and environmental quality;

Physics: The program for physics is aligned to 10.58.522(6) (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (l), (m), (n), (o), (p), (q), and (r). Limited alignment was found for substandards (k), (s), (t), and (u). These areas included conceptual understanding of the applications of physics in environmental quality; conceptual understanding of issues related to physics such as disposal of nuclear waste, light pollution, shielding communication systems, and weapons development; understanding of historical development and cosmological perspectives; and conceptual understanding of the applications of physics and engineering in society, business, industry, and health fields.

Science Broadfield: The science broadfield standards outlined in 10.58.522(7)(a), (f), (h), and (j) are evident in the program of study, whereas substandards (b), (c), (d), (e), and (g) have minimal alignment. These minimal aligned standards include the ability to collect and interpret empirical data using technology, interdisciplinary study of the fundamental

science topics and cross-cutting content, in particular math, and designing, developing, and evaluating field experiences, demonstrations, and lab activities.

Commendation: Candidates are assessed on content knowledge through a competency examination. They are prepared through program components for content for biology, chemistry, physics, and general science concepts. Candidates are also prepared to demonstrate understanding of the nature of science and essential science engineering practices, knowledge and skills to communicate claims, methods, and designs, and use of a variety of instructional strategies specific to science.

Improvements: General improvements across the science endorsement areas include: the conceptual understanding of the applications of areas in the community, society, and industry, the knowledge and skills on how to instructionally provide interdisciplinary study of the fundamental science topics and cross-cutting content.

Accreditation Recommendation

- Science (Broadfield): Met with Notation
- Biology: Met
- Chemistry: Met
- Physics: Met with Notation

**American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026**

Narrative Report

Name and Number of Standard: 10.58.523 Social Studies (History)

Validating Statement: The American Board examination covers all Domain-level content presented on the Praxis® examination. All candidates are required to complete the Professional Teaching Knowledge program components in addition to History. There was minimal evidence to support candidate development of the overarching social studies standards in ARM 10.58.523(2).

Sources of Evidence: Study plans and resources.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assessment of each component of the full standard was evaluated using the study plan.

Evaluation: The program satisfies the requirement through the American Board examination which covers all Domain-level content presented on the Praxis examination.

The evaluation determined that the program standards for history ARM 10.58.623(6) were aligned for substandard (a), (b), and c). There was limited evidence to support the alignment to substandards (e) and (f), which require candidates to demonstrate the ability to use a variety of instructional practices. Substandard (d) which addresses IEFA is met through the completion of the IEFA course for licensure (MCA § 20-4-120).

Commendation: Candidates are assessed on content knowledge through a competency examination. They are prepared through program components on how to select content,

Improvements: To strengthen the history program, additional opportunities for candidates to connect theory and subject-specific pedagogy, including practicing a variety of instructional strategies. Additionally, improving opportunities for candidates to demonstrate how to select content and integrate contents and methods of investigation of history would be beneficial.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

**American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026**

Narrative Report

Name and Number of Standard: 10.58.532 Elementary Education

Validating Statement: American Board provided the Professional Teaching Knowledge program components in addition to the Elementary Education Study Plan requirements. The standards covered in American Board's PTK exam address Instructional Design, Effective Instructional Delivery, Classroom Management and Organization, Assessment, and Professional Learning and Leadership. Candidates are required to demonstrate their understanding within four categories: "the learner and learning," "content," "instructional practice," and "professional responsibility." Additionally, In order to complete American Board's program, candidates must demonstrate mastery pedagogy. Components for music, art, and PE of 10.58.532 for K-8 Elementary Education standards are not included within the program.

Sources of Evidence: Professional Teaching Knowledge Study Plan and resources.

Assessment Aligned to Standard: Assessment of each component of the full standard was evaluated using the study guide.

Evaluation: The K-8 Elementary Education program through the American Board meets the standards outlined in 10.58.532 1(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (f). There is a strong emphasis on reading and writing aligned to substandard (c). Teacher candidates are offered opportunities to meet each sub standard, except 1(g)(h)(i) which relate to the ability to teach music, art, and PE/health. The IEFA component for substandard (l), is met through the licensure coursework as outlined in MCA § 20-4-120.

Commendation: There is a strong emphasis in the program on reading and literacy in the elementary program. Candidates are exposed to current research across study materials and resources and are given an opportunity to demonstrate content knowledge on the PTK exam.

Improvements: To strengthen the alignment with ARM 10.55.532, the inclusion of comprehensive curriculum content covering Indian Education for All, and music, visual arts, health, and physical education is recommended.

Accreditation Recommendation: Met with Notation

American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, Inc.
Educator Preparation Provider Accreditation Review
Spring 2026

Narrative Report

Name and Number of Standard: 10.58.802(2) Approval of New Curricular Programs

Introduction:

Since 2001, American Board has been providing flexible and affordable teacher certification nationwide. The American Board was granted initial approval in Montana on March 18, 2024. American Board currently operates in 15 States nationwide and has certified nearly 25,000 teachers. 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. The average candidate age is 39 years old.

In January 2026, American Board provided evidence to support ARM 10.58.802(2)(a) to (e). Below is a summary of the evidence for each substandard.

(a) Ensure that the program of study is based on current research, proven practice, and emerging trends in this field of P-12 school curriculum.

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. American Board's literacy focus is based on the Science of Reading. Recent curriculum reviews and updates ensure every candidate is proficient in foundational literacy and the Science of Reading. Within the American Board program candidates learn to leverage technology and AI as creative instructional aids, while modeling ethical digital citizenship for students.

(b) Work cooperatively with accredited school districts, education organizations, agencies, and P-20 stakeholders to design the program.

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.

American Board Teachers are in 74 Districts across Montana.

WHERE ARE AMERICAN BOARD TEACHERS IN MONTANA?

74 DISTRICTS

Alberton			Seeley Lake
Anaconda			Shelby
Ashland			Shields Valley
Bainville			Sidney
Baker			Somers
Belgrade			St. Regis
Billings			Stanford
Box Elder			Swan Valley
Bozeman			Sweet Grass County
Bridger			Target Range
Broadview			Thompson Falls
Brockton			Three Forks
Centerville			Townsend
Choteau			Trout Creek
Clinton			Troy
Colstrip			West Valley
Columbia Falls			West Yellowstone
Corvallis			Whitehall
Darby			Wolf Point
	Dawson	Kalispell	
	Elder Grove	Lame Deer	
	Elliston	Laurel	
	Evergreen	Livingston	
	Fair-Mont-Egan	Lockwood	
	Florence-Carlton	Lolo	
	Fromberg	Loyola-Sacred Heart	
	Gallatin	McCormick	
	Glasgow	Miles City	
	Glendive	Missoula	
	Great Falls	Monforton	
	Hamilton	Nashua	
	Harlowton	Noxon	
	Helena	Opheim	
	Hellgate	Ovando	
	Hinsdale	Park City	
	Independent	Poplar	
	Jordan	Roy	

(c) Implement, assess, and evaluate the program's impact on the identified P-12 needs.

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.

Employer survey results indicated that:

- 100% of Montana employers confirmed that American Board teachers meet the academic, cultural, social, and emotional needs of P-12 students.
- 100% of Montana employers said that they would recommend American Board's program to others.
- 100% of Montana employers said their American Board trained teacher met their expectations.

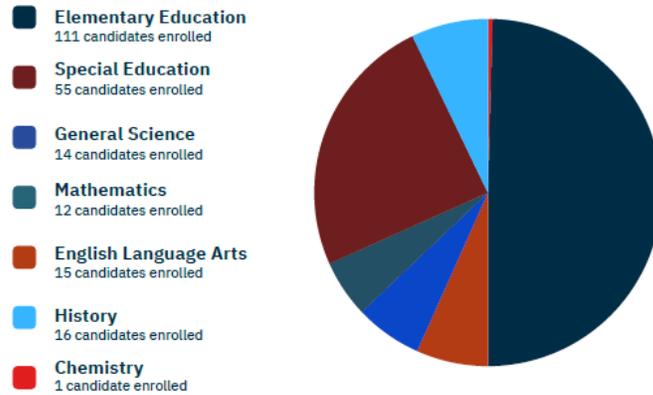
Completer survey results indicated that:

- 93% of completers said that American Board's program met their expectations.
- 93% of candidates said they would recommend the program to others.

(d) Submit in January 2025 and 2026 systematic reports of the program's impact on P-12 education to the state superintendent and the Board of Public Education.

American Board has had significant year over year growth in the enrollment of candidates in Montana. In 2024, the enrollment was 116 and grew to 158 candidates in 2025. In 2025 the American Montana Enrollments by endorsement area were:

American Board Montana Enrollments 2025

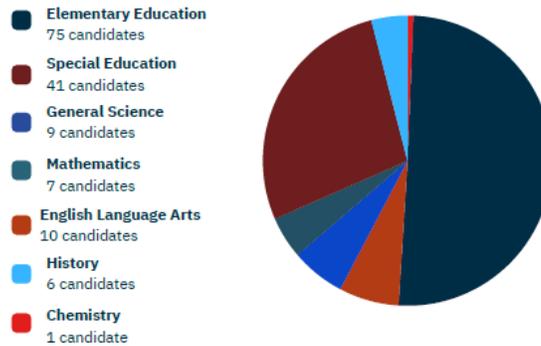


Of the 158 American Board Candidates, 99 candidates currently teach on a Class 5 teaching license. The Class 5 licenses are in the following endorsement areas;



CLASS 5 LICENSURE

99
Candidates currently
teaching on a
Class 5 Teaching License

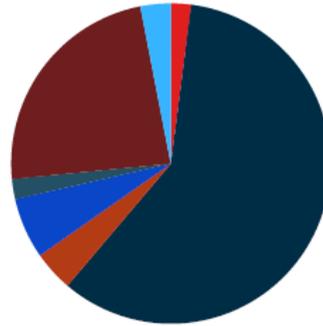


As of January 2026, there were 98 program completers, of which 71 completers have obtained a Class 2 license and are employed in a Montana school district.

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



(e) Update and maintain program information on its Web page.

The American Board Webpage is updated and maintained. The webpage can be found at this link. <https://www.americanboard.org/>

AMERICAN BOARD'S WEBSITE

AMERICAN BOARD
Reviews a Teacher in... Teach Your Subjects... Resources... Blog... How to Work... Login... Contact

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-6)	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.

ITEM 12

**ACTION 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: March 19-20, 2026

Presentation	Recommend Approval of the State Exit Report for Montana Stata University- Billings Educator Preparation Programs in the Department of Education.
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Senior Manager, School and Educator Effectiveness Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>The State Superintendent of Public Instruction recommends approval of the 2025 State Exit Report for Montana State University- Billings EPP programs in the Department of Education and Regular Accreditation status.</p> <p>The State Exit and Narrative Reports are included in the BPE Agenda Packet. Along with rejoinders that were submitted by MSU-B.</p> <p>Dr. Melanie Reaves, Interim Dean of Education, will be available virtually to provide final comments and respond to questions from the BPE.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approve the State Exit Report and Regular Accreditation Status for Montana Stata University- Billings Educator Preparation Programs in the Department of Education, as recommended by State Superintendent Hedalen.





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.

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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.
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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.

AFI - R4.2 - The EPP provided limited evidence that employers were satisfied with completers' preparation.

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.

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
<p>AFI - R4.3 - The EPP provided limited evidence that completers were satisfied with program preparation.</p>	<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
<p>AFI - R5.1 - The EPP provided limited evidence of a functioning Quality Assurance System.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The EPP provided inconsistent evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed its performance.</p>

ADVANCED LEVEL AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND STIPULATIONS

RA.1 Content and Pedagogical Knowledge

Areas for Improvement	Rationale
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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.

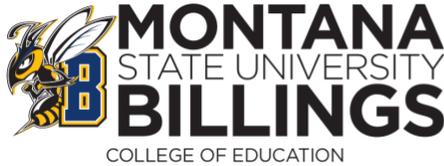
Depending on an EPP's submission, accreditation may be awarded at one or both of the following levels: Initial-Licensure Level and/or Advanced Level.

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



State Report Findings Rejoinder

Montana State University Billings,

Department of Education Theory and Practice

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the report findings for the programs' accreditation report. Below the COE include a table for each program that indicates the relevant feedback and the program's responses. This rejoinder was constructed with input from program leaders by:

- Dr. Rachael Waller, Chair of the Department of Educational Theory and Practice (all programs are located in this department): rachael.waller@msubillings.edu
- Dr. Melanie Reaves, Interim Dean of the College of Education: melanie.reaves@msubillings.edu

Teaching Standards-Elementary: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
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.	No request to change the outcome. The COE will work on improving the reporting of critical program elements and details.

Teaching Standards-Secondary: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
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.	No request to change the outcome. The COE will work on improving the reporting of critical program elements and details.

Art: K-12 Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
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.	No request to change the outcome.

English Language Arts: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
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	No request to change the outcome.

English Language Arts: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
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.	

Special Education: Graduate/Undergraduate: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
No improvements	No request to change the outcome.

Health: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
Continued effort is needed in the area of 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 the area of 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.	No request to change the outcome.

Physical Education: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
Enhanced opportunities for candidates must be facilitated in the understanding of state and national content standards, specific 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.	No request to change the outcome.

Mathematics: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
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	No request to change outcome. The COE will work on improving how the PEPPS are explicitly addressed.

Mathematics: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>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. Several aspects of the program could be strengthened to ensure comprehensive alignment with PEPP standards and provide more explicit evidence of meeting expressed expectations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Strengthen 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. 	

Music K-12: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>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.</p>	<p>No request to change the outcome.</p>

Reading Specialists K-12 – UG: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>The COE is requesting a change of the outcome from “Area for Improvement” to “Met with Notation” based on errors found in the report and that there are a few pieces of feedback that the COE agrees to make some improvements, similar to other programs that received “Met with Notation” designation.</p>	
<p>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.</p>	<p>Foundational skills are being taught to be applied within approaches other than Guided Reading and Writer’s Workshop. Candidates are taught to use Direct Instruction through the structured language approach (i.e., systematic, explicit, sequential phonics and spelling instruction). Please see the following evidence that was provided in the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 430: Explicit, systematic, phonics and phonemic awareness is covered in EDU 430 (see the PowerPoint that was linked in the syllabus provided as evidence for the report from this course for Module 3—linked here for convenience as well). Also see the Placement and Diagnostic Assessment linked pdf provided in the same syllabus—linked here for convenience as well. • EDU 435: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students read Moats (2020), <i>Speech to print: Language essentials for teachers</i>. Moats’ work focuses strongly on explicit, systematic phonics, phonemic awareness, orthography, and morphology instructional strategies. • The following Course Objectives address foundational skill instruction in ways other than workshop/guided reading through the modules associated with them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the Simple View of Reading, the Active View of Reading, Scarborough’s Reading Rope, and the stages of reading to understand how reading disabilities vary (taught in Modules 2 and 3). • Develop an understanding of English orthography to inform spelling instruction for single and multisyllabic words (taught in Modules 6-9, 12). • Explain how phonemic awareness impacts reading and writing development, including differences in language variation when learning English sounds (taught in Modules 6-9, 12). • Throughout this course, candidates are not taught to use the workshop model or guided reading to teach foundational skills, which demonstrates the feedback is in error in saying that foundation skills are “only taught through” these two approaches. • EDU 438: Candidates are required to administer a phonics survey and design foundational skills instruction according to the findings of that assessment. If the P-12 tutee requires foundational skill work, they are required to use Direct Instruction as one of the methods for student to learn (see Weeks 5 & 6 Lectures: Targeted Interventions for Phonics and Phonological Awareness from Textbooks).

Reading Specialists K-12 – UG: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
The program as a whole would be strengthened greatly by providing varied instructional approaches so candidates have a variety of instructional approaches in their toolboxes.	<p>The evidence provided does demonstrate candidates are being provided a variety of instructional approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 430, 438, 435: Across the courses in this program, students learn to use Direct Instruction via explicit, systematic instruction, as well as other approaches, such as guided and small group reading, writer’s workshop, interactive read alouds, and inquiry-based projects. • EDU 438: There is a focus on accurate and data-driven assessment that helps candidates know when to use supplemental intervention instruction that may include explicit, systematic approaches given the general need of students who participate in the Reading Clinic.
Documentation provided around 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.	<p>There are several ways the evidence demonstrated the program does address the needs of diverse learners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates in this minor program also have to be in the Elementary and Secondary major program (see response about specific coursework for working with students with disabilities). • Although English Learners are not a specific category of students with needs listed in ARM 10.58.521, evidence was provided that candidates are trained to work with all learners and their needs. • EDSP 204 Introduction to Teaching Exceptional Learners is a requirement in the Elementary or Secondary program. Since the Reading Specialist is not a stand-alone degree, this means every candidate in the Reading Specialist program is taking specific coursework that prepares them to work with diverse learners, including students with exceptionalities.
Candidates receiving a minor in reading should be prepared to support colleagues and provide professional development related to selecting, administering, analyzing and interpreting assessments.	<p>Evidence was included that candidates are being prepared to support colleagues in this manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 413: There is some peer teaching, which helps prepare them to teach their future teaching peers (professional development), such as candidates are required to peer teach through sharing their “mini” and “maxi” lessons. • EDU 438: Candidates are required to post and respond to each other’s assessment data and professional reflections, which prepares them to engage in meaningful data-driven Professional Learning Communities.
Ensure candidates are provided learning opportunities regarding student choice and engagement to engage and motivate all learners.	<p>Evidence was included that candidates are learning how to support student choice and engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 438: Candidates administer the Garfield Reading Attitude Survey, the Burke Reading Inventory (includes an assessment of self-efficacy and strategies for engagement), and an Interest Inventory with P-12 students. The candidates then design an inquiry-based reading/writing project for the P-12 students, which centralizes student choice (see Week 4 course topics). • EDU 435: Candidates learn about the Active View of Reading, which includes explicit inclusion of “motivation and engagement” under the component of “Active Self Regulation.”

Reading Specialists K-12 – UG: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 430: Candidates learn about Cambourne’s Conditions for Learning, which include explicit inclusion of “Engagement”, which requires students to have the opportunity to make their own decisions (choice). • EDU 432: Candidates learn about the use of DEAR (drop everything and read), which is focused on book choice for the P-12 students. The instructor for course explicitly models foregrounding student choice by giving the candidates a choice on what YA books they read for the course. The candidates also a) write a paper focused on student engagement, and b) are given the choice of modality to present their final project. This type of modeling by the instructor is essential for the candidates to learn because they do so by immersion and experiential learning. • EDU 413: Candidates read five books that are fundamentally focused on teaching writing through P-12 student choice. Also, the course is taught through a writer’s workshop model, that centralizes writer choice. These are included in topics such as creating and using a personal writer’s notebook, developing an attitude that foster’s writing and exploration through choice, creating a personal narrative portfolio, writing an opinion piece, and opportunities to draw from their life experiences for poetry and other genres.
The ability for candidates to integrate digital technologies into literacy instruction.	The COE sees room for improvement in this area.
Provide authentic practice for candidates to support a colleague in a coaching model and have experience with establishing relationships between a mentor and mentee.	The COE sees room for improvement in this area.
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.	<p>The COE included evidence for supporting adolescent readers and sharing data from assessment with the key stakeholders mentioned in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDU 438 encompasses assessment and instruction K-12. Specifically, candidates learn to use the Rhody Attitude Survey (designed for 6-12 grade students) and the Basic Reading Inventory that also covers skills up through 12th grade. Candidates are also required to write a clinical report that is shared directly with the parents of their tutees in a parent/teacher conference at the end of the semester. Finally, they share data with their course colleagues through online discussion forums.

Reading Specialists K-12 Graduate: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>The COE are requesting a change of the outcome from “Area for Improvement” to “Met with Notation” based on errors found in the report and that the program agrees with the feedback where some improvement could be made similar to other programs that received the “Met with Notation” designation.</p>	

Reading Specialists K-12 Graduate: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>Including additional methods and models of instruction, such as Science of Reading, outside of guided reading and writer’s workshop would greatly strengthen the coursework and ability of candidates to teach all K-12 students how to read and write.</p>	<p>Since the term, <i>Science of Reading</i>, is not a method or model of instruction, the program assumes the reviewers are saying the COE lacks structured language and explicit phonological direct instruction methods included in the program. The COE provided quite a bit of evidence that these methods are included in coursework throughout the program. Faculty are teaching the candidates to use Direct Instruction through the structured language approach (i.e., systematic, explicit, sequential phonics and spelling instruction). Here is a list of courses and evidences from those syllabi that were presented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD 505: Candidates study in depth the following structured language components (no Guided Reading or Workshop models are included). The readings are structured so that they are reading from the book, <i>The psychology of reading: Theory and applications</i>. Also, readings are assigned that from Reading Research Quarterly’s two Science of Reading Volumes. Content in relation to these readings that candidates encounter structured language approaches include: phonology (module 2); Orthography (module 4); Morphology (Module 5); Syntax (Module 6); Semantics (Module 7); Early Foundations of Language Development (Module 8); Learning to Read Words/Skilled Word Reading (Module 9); Vocabulary (Module 11); Linguistic Variation (Module 14). • RD 517: Candidates read and apply <i>Improving reading: Strategies, resources and common core connections</i>, which includes structured language and direct instruction models of instruction. They also read and apply methods of assessment supported by the Science of Reading, <i>Assessing reading multiple measures</i>. Application of these approaches take place when they are choosing which assessment to use to match student need, including: CORE phonics. • RD 514, candidates learn about structured phonics and the importance of using such approaches in the reading and application activities. They read, <i>Making sense of phonics: The hows and whys</i>. They also conduct a phonics intervention assignment. • RD 532: Candidates read and learn about structured language approaches to decoding when they read chapter 8 (Executive Skills, Word Recognition, and Dyslexia: Cracking the Code is Complicated Too) of the book, <i>Executive Skills and Reading Comprehension</i>.
<p>Provide authentic opportunities for candidates to communicate with external stakeholders regarding assessment data about student reading skills.</p>	<p>The COE submitted evidence that candidates are being taught to communicate with external stakeholders in the following courses that were included as evidence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD 506, candidates fully engage with preparing to report to external stakeholders through the coaching cycle with the following tasks/assignments: professional presentation • RD 517: candidates write a culminating clinic report designed for external stakeholders (e.g., parents, district-level personnel).

Reading Specialists K-12 Graduate: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>Foundational writing appears to be included in the coursework, however, only one course is focused 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.</p>	<p>The COE submitted evidence that candidates are being taught about syntax and sentence construction in the following syllabi:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD 513, emergent literacy module, action research on a grade level, assessment includes developmental assessment tool • RD 505, looking at writing foundations (orthography, history of writing), syntax and semantics for writing, assessment, and intervention <p>The COE also point out that this statement: <i>“Current research indicates that writer's workshop is only beneficial for K-12 students who are already proficient with the foundational skills of writing,”</i> is not directly tied to the PEPPS; instead, it is an opinion of the reviewer(s) with no citations provided to support its claim. The COE are happy to provide reviewers with a summary of the current research that does indicate that writer’s workshop is beneficial for all students.</p>
<p>Include coursework that addresses specific components of language acquisition, structure of language, and conventions of standard English.</p>	<p>The COE submitted several pieces of evidence that indicate candidates are learning about these linguistic elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD 505 (see above) • RD 532: Specific components of language acquisition are addressed in module 8 as it gets into word recognition and dyslexia • RD 514: In this course, candidates read the book supported by NCTQ (focus on Science of Reading) by Beck and Beck, titled, <i>Making sense of phonics: The Hows and whys.</i>
<p>Provide explicit, intentional instruction for candidates to obtain a comprehensive background in literacy concepts and theory. The courses provided to 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.</p>	<p>The COE submitted several pieces of evidence that indicate candidates are learning about these aspects of literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RD 505 (see above) • RD 518: candidates spend three weeks (two modules) studying “Science of Reading and Rural and Multicultural Considerations.” In this module, they read articles from the special volumes on the Science of Reading from Reading Research Quarterly—the premier research journal in the literacy field. • In addition to the responses provided above that demonstrate candidates are taught how to use structured language and explicit, systematic, direct instruction approaches, the COE points out that candidates are only taught about the use of Guided Reading and Writing Workshop in three courses: RD 514, RD 513, RD 517. All other courses (9 courses) in the program do not focus on the use of these two approaches. Therefore, 75% of the coursework in this program do not address these two approaches. • The COE view the following statement as an opinion statement, rather than a factual statement tied to the program curricula: <i>“The courses provided to 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.”</i> No citations of empirical evidence were provided for this opinion. The program would be happy to provide a summary of the empirical evidence that demonstrates these approaches are effective for many domains of literacy. The COE did not claim

Reading Specialists K-12 Graduate: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
	these approaches are used to teach candidates foundational skills; instead, they are part of the variety of evidence-based practices taught throughout the program that align with other domains of literacy.
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.	The COE submitted several pieces of evidence that indicate candidates are learning about these aspects of literacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 517: candidates read and apply practices from, <i>Assessing Reading and Multiple Measures</i>. This book is frequently noted as an exemplary text for the Science of Reading and is a foundation text in many school districts in Montana. The COE view the statement that miscue analysis and matching students with leveled text is not evidence-based as an opinion of the reviewer(s) and not directly indicated in the PEPPS. The COE point reviewers to a summary of the research supporting these approaches written by Flurkey, A. D., Goodman, D., & Murphy, K. (2021). <i>Miscue Analysis and a Reading Revolution. Talking Points, 32(2), 2-14</i>. The COE would be happy to provide a summary of the current research that support the use of both approaches.
Include coursework around how data teams or PLCs should collaborate around student data to determine instruction and intervention would strengthen the program.	The COE submitted evidence that shows candidates are learning to engage in data-driven decision making in preparation for working in PLCs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 506: In this course, candidates engage in the coaching cycle, which is centered on analyzing student data to determine next steps instruction. Because they are being taught this in the context of being a literacy coach, it is reasonable to expect they would do this in PLCs or data teams. RD 517: Candidates discuss with peers their diagnostic reports and collaborate on interventions on the discussion boards (see course alignment chart for the fourth course objective)
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.	The COE submitted evidence that shows candidates are learning to share their knowledge with key stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 506, candidates fully engage with preparing to report to external stakeholders through the coaching cycle with the following tasks/assignments: professional presentation RD 517: candidates write a culminating clinic report designed for external stakeholders (e.g., parents, district-level personnel).
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.	The COE submitted evidence that candidates are being prepared to consult with families and colleagues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 517: Candidates prepare a diagnostic report for parents as specified in final course objective: “Compile data into a detailed clinical report for parents.” It goes to reason that the parents would read the report.
Candidates must engage critically with research in order to acquire the skills necessary to be literacy leaders.	The COE submitted evidence that candidates are being prepared to be critical consumers of education research:

Reading Specialists K-12 Graduate: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 514: Candidates read research and write a literature review on a literacy topic based on International Literacy Association topics. RD 502: This entire course is dedicated to reading, interpreting, and synthesizing literacy research. Several research articles are assigned as reading throughout the program. EDF 501: Candidates are required to take this course, which also prepares them to read, interpret, and synthesize literacy research. EDCI 697: Candidates do an extensive literature review as their capstone requirement in this class.
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, problem solve together, and coteach as needed.	<p>The COE submitted evidence that candidates are working with adult learning theory:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 506: Candidates read and respond to an article about andragogy (adult learning theory). The coaching model candidates are taught in this course engages them in the coaching cycle, which includes goal setting, coaching actions (modeling and practice), and reflection.
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.	<p>The COE submitted evidence that candidates are being prepared to work with students at all levels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 517: Candidates take this course designed to work with all levels of readers (K-12). Therefore, the clinic report for parents is applicable to adolescent readers and their families.

Science: Met	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>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.</p> <p>At the Post Bacc 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.</p>	<p>No request to change the outcome. The COE will work on improving collaborations with disciplinary partners for the lab connections. The COE will also address the needs discussed at the Post-Bacc level.</p>

Social Studies: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>The COE are requesting a change of the outcome from “Area for Improvement” to “Met with Notation” based on errors found in the report. Also, the feedback is attached to a single course in the program, which seems like it fits better with a “Met with Notation” designation in that the remaining courses appear to be meeting the expectations. The COE agree to make some improvements, similar to other programs that received “Met with Notation” designation.</p>	
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).	

Social Studies: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the additional evidence sent on March 10th, there is a rubric for a lesson plan that includes the following criteria specific to candidates' design and implementation of assessment: Designs assessment(s) that collect evidence of students' progress toward all instructional outcomes (proficient level); • Candidates are assessed with reflection, planning ideas, written and verbal assessment for the course objectives: "Creating a philosophy of teaching social studies based on the discipline, national and state standards, and personal beliefs about teaching and learning" and "Using national and state standards in creating a classroom social studies curriculum" • The Toolkit assignment is not focused on the standards, assessments, or inquiry/primary sources. The COE see room for improvement in how t report what takes place in this course more explicitly since there are activities that involve this. • Although EDU 497A syllabus and associated evidence demonstrate candidates are being taught to differentiate instruction for individuals with exceptionalities, all candidates in this program take EDSP 204 that focuses on differentiation altogether. • The COE agree to improve on how to report what is done in the class regarding this last bullet point, there are several activities that are done in the class that are not included in the syllabus

Early Childhood Minor: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>The COE are requesting a change of the outcome from “Area for Improvement” to “Met with Notation” based on errors found in the report and agree with the feedback where some improvement could be made similar to other programs that received the “Met with Notation” designation.</p>	
<p>Provide explicit opportunities for candidates to establish reciprocal relationships between teachers and parents/families.</p>	<p>The COE provided evidence that candidates are being prepared to build relationships with parents/families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDEC 310: Candidates engage in practice assignments that prepare them to communicate with parents/families (Home Activities, Discussion with Family, All About Me Home Activity, Bag of Activities Home Visit). EDU 438: All candidates are also in the Elementary major, which requires this class in which they tutor a student and design a clinical report that they then share in a parent/teacher conference.
<p>Outline within the program coursework where candidates are required to demonstrate understanding in each Montana Content Standards.</p>	<p>The COE provided evidence that candidates are being asked to align teaching with Montana Content Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDEC 381: Language from the syllabus: “EDEC 381 is a standards-based course. The standards addressed include the COE-INTASC Standards, PEPPS Standards, the NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Development, (listed below) and the Montana Early Care and EducaFon Knowledge Base (children 0-8 years of age).” EDEC 430: Candidates are required to design a lesson plan using the COE template, which includes requirements for listing standards being addressed and aligned with the lesson objectives and assessment. EDEC 385: See Course Objective #3: Demonstrates competency/application of integrating national, state, and local learning standards into developmentally appropriate, play based learning experiences for young learners. They also create a lesson plan using the COE template. Finally, they also develop a curriculum plan that includes all content areas. EDEC 352: see course object #1, 3, 4, & 5. Candidates also have an assignment called “MT Early Childhood Early Learning Standards Reflection.” They also create a lesson plan using the COE template that has a place for standards.
<p>The program would be strengthened by providing 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; 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; to demonstrate knowledge, understanding, and use of the major concepts, and procedures, and reasoning processes of mathematics.</p>	<p>The COE provided evidence that candidats are given opportunities to show their knowledge and understanding regarding the content described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDU 336: Candidates learn about and apply methods related to literacy (language, speaking and listening, reading and writing processes). EDEC 352: Candidates learn about and apply methods related to math and science. They create a math lesson plan and a science lesson. Finally, they create a “Digital Pictures Science Activity/Centers” assignment in which they integrate all 5 science standards.

Early Childhood Minor: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
Provide explicit opportunities for candidates to learn how to collaborate with multiple stakeholders.	The COE provided evidence that candidates do get opportunities to meet with community stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDEC 352: Candidates spend time at a local science and discovery museum during which they engage with community 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.	The COE provided evidence that candidates have many opportunities to reflect on their professional mindsets and dispositions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDEC 310: Candidates reflect on their identities and experiences in relation to Bronfenbrenner’s Bioecological model EDEC 430: Course objective #5: “Reflect upon ethical issues in relation to one’s own approach to working with young children and their families.” They also complete the assignment titled, “Develop your own “Village” paper in which they are considering the stakeholders important in their lives and ones that would be important to their future students. EDEC 296: Candidates engage in a practicum experience in an early childhood setting during which they reflect on their own professional dispositions and they are evaluated on those dispositions by their university supervisor.
Ensure that the program ensures completion of clinical and student teaching experiences that are well-planned and sequenced in a variety of settings.	The COE provided evidence that candidates experience a variety of well-planned field experiences: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EDEC 296 Early Childhood Practicum requires 65 hours of supervised field experience and EDEC 495 requires a minimum of 2 weeks student teaching in an early childhood setting. The Director of Field Experiences ensures they have variety in these two placements so they have experience at multiple levels.

Elementary Education Undergraduate: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	No request to change the outcome. The COE will work on being more explicit in the alignment between the PEPPS and assignments. Also, the COE notes that PEPPS 10.58.532.1c does not explicitly dictate the theories or specific practices that are mentioned in the feedback. The program is aligned with the PEPPS and current research-based theories and practices.

Elementary Education Undergraduate: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
the objectives could be more explicitly linked.	

Elementary Education Graduate: Met with Notation	
Specific Feedback	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, 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. 	No request to change the outcome. The COE will work on being more explicit in the alignment between the PEPPS and assignments. Also, the COE notes that PEPPS 10.58.532.1c does not explicitly dictate the theories or specific practices that are mentioned in the feedback. The program is aligned with the PEPPS and current research-based theories and practices.

School Counseling: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	No request to change the outcome: The COE see room for improvement to demonstrate better alignment as described and evidence that demonstrates the specific assignments, assessments, and activities in courses that address all items in the feedback.

School Counseling: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>transitions, promotion and graduation rates, college and career readiness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	

SPED Supervisory Endorsement: Area for Improvement	
Specific Feedback	Response
<p>The COE is requesting a change of the outcome from “Area for Improvement” to “Met with Notation” based on errors found in the report and that the program agrees with the feedback where some improvement could be made similar to other programs that received the “Met with Notation” designation.</p>	
<p>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 school law knowledge 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.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School and special education law (1c) is addressed in the syllabus in SPED 611: week 2 SPED law and Section 504 and is addressed in SPED 690 Unit 1 SPED leadership (SPED Laws, organizations, programs and culture). • Working with families (1d) addressed in SPED 611: Unit on working with families and is addressed in SPED 690: Unit 3 on Parent, family, community partnerships. • Special education learning opportunities (1g). All applicants to the program must have a minimum of three years teaching experience in special education or five years as a related service provider. Ample opportunities exist in the internship of 216 hours for authentic learning opportunity in special education.

**Montana State University Billings
College of Education
Rejoinder to the
CAEP Site Visit Report (SVR) for the EPP’s Virtual Site Visit—April 9-11, 2025**

The College of Education of Montana State University Billings received the Final State Exit Program Report 2025 on December 12, 2025. In this rejoinder, The EPP expresses appreciation to the CAEP and State Review Team members for their time and thoroughness in reviewing submissions for accreditation and providing valuable feedback for program improvement.

Standard 1: Initial Content and Pedagogical Knowledge (ARM 10.58.311)	
Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has already taken steps to improve the Assessment of Content Knowledge (ACK) that Cooperating Teaching use to evaluate Junior Field and Student Teachers’ application of content knowledge during field placements. Improvements to this assessment have been made by the Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) associated with the Montana Council of the Deans (representatives across all Montana Educator Preparation Programs). Implementation of this new assessment began in Fall 2025 and The EPP will continue to collect, analyze, and act upon the assessment data per the revised Quality Assurance System (QAS) (see a more detailed description of efforts under Standard 5 response). Regarding candidate monitoring before Junior Field and Student Teaching, The EPP does monitor their content knowledge upon entrance into the EPP by requiring a 2.65 GPA. After entrance, their content knowledge is applied within methods courses—they must pass methods courses with a C or higher.</p>
Standard 2: Initial Clinical Partnerships and Practice (ARM 10.58.312)	
Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement

<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. Specifically, the EPP sees the need to improve practices around evaluation and training of clinical educators. The EPP has already taken steps to restructure the Field Experience Office from a single Director to two separate positions—one focused on field experience placements: selections of clinical educators, training of clinical educators and university supervisors, and evaluation of their performance as cooperating teachers and university supervisors. The EPP is amid designing new trainings that will be implemented in Fall 2026 and the EPP is undertaking the task of designing an evaluation protocol.</p>
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Standard 3: Initial Candidate Quality, Recruitment, and Selectivity (ARM 10.58.313)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. Like many programs, theirs has experienced decreased enrollment during this review period. The good news is that the EPP has the highest retention rates on campus that continually sits within the 90% range. Based on this data, The EPP knows they are great at keeping teacher candidates once they have them!</p> <p>The EPP currently has 220 students. When the Interim Dean stepped in, the EPP’s enrollment was experiencing -50% from the previous few years. It is now experiencing -1%, so they are glad to see the enrollment decline slow. The EPP identified two key actions to address this decline. 1. Need for a formal Recruitment Plan and 2., a need for marketing. In Fall of 2024 during the Interim Dean’s first year, the EPP created a 5-Year Recruitment Plan. When their accreditation report was submitted, the EPP was amid the first year of this plan, so there were no results to report. The EPP is happy to report the following results for that first year in relation to the initial licensure programs:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program inquiries have increased by 20%. This has required hours of collaboration with the Admissions office on how the EPP is tracking and responding to prospective student inquiries. Every student who makes an inquiry received direct contact with a caring faculty member within 24 hours during regular business days. ○ The EPP held three high school recruitment events in local and surrounding areas. ○ The EPP established three new community partnerships to increase a presence in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wise Wonders Children’s Museum ▪ Yellowstone Audubon Society ▪ Young Families Early Head Start <p>Although the EPP is amid the second year of this plan, they are excited to report the implementation of additional marketing strategies. They are creating short social media reels that will run for 6-week intervals. The first program for this approach was the School Counseling Program which has already seen an increase in enrollment from last year by 21%. They will be taking similar measures for the initial licensure programs as well.</p>
Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
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	Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP experienced disruptions to staff positions that hindered their ability to disaggregate data across the cycle of this review. However, two years ago, the EPP adopted Lumivero’s Experiential Learning Cloud in which teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and site mentors use to create, submit, and evaluate candidate performance on all key assessments. Housing data within this system allows us to disaggregate the

<p>components of proficiency at completion indicated in Question R.3.3 (B), particularly for content knowledge sufficiently to meet the state standards.</p>	<p>data on a continual basis. This has helped move from anecdotal noticings to data-based analyses and interpretations. One other issue that the EPP is addressing is how to disaggregate program data in which there are small numbers of teacher candidates to be sure their identities are protected. This is a problem in the K-12 and secondary programs. The EPP will continue to work on a system that allows them to keep confidentiality while also reviewing the data for improvement.</p>
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Standard 4: Initial Program Impact (ARM 10.58.314)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>There were only two cycles of data provided. Although each data set represents multiple years, it was only one cycle each. 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>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. There were changes to the CIC protocol regarding when the completer and employer surveys were distributed and in what manner. A full timeline of data collection cycles has been created to ensure there will be three full cycles by the next accreditation review.</p>

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<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>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP will be working directly with OPI and the CIC on developing a reliable and valid tool that will allow for disaggregation.</p>

Standard 5: Initial Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement (ARM 10.58.315)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has already started engaging in an iterative process of working with faculty and stakeholders to review valid/reliable data to ensure the EPP's goals are set, met, and assessed. There will be a clear presentation of this revised QAS in the next review.</p>
Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP is revising the QAS to include Standard R1 in all data cycles.</p>
Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>The EPP provided inconsistent evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed its performance.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The revisions that the EPP are undertaking to the QAS will address this issue. The EPP intends to have a working draft of the new QAS in place by Fall 2026.</p>

RA1: Advanced Content and Pedagogical Knowledge (ARM 10.58.605)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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 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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has begun revisions to our approach to the selection of the three competencies by reviewing data, engaging in analyses, and making interpretations toward need for improvement. Once these are selected, we will then align and identify key assessments for candidate monitoring/progress that will be part of the overall Advanced QAS (see description below on this revision).</p>

RA2: Advanced Clinical Partnerships and Practice (ARM 10.58.606)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>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.</p>	<p>Response: The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has already implemented revisions to the early clinical experience by increasing the number of hours required at this point in the program that will support candidates' growth and development prior to the two required final internships. The EPP realizes the need to include more evidence for these earlier experiences.</p>

RA3: Advanced Candidate Quality, Recruitment and Selectivity (ARM 10.58.607)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
<p>The provider presented a five-year plan for recruitment but did not provide baseline admissions data or evidence to reach goals.</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. Like many programs, has experienced decreased enrollment during this review period. The good news is that the EPP has the highest retention rates on campus that continually sits within the 90% range. Based on this data, The EPP knows they are great at keeping school counseling candidates once they have them! The EPP identified two key actions to address this decline. 1. Need for a formal Recruitment Plan and 2., a need for marketing. In Fall of 2024 during the Interim Dean’s first year, the EPP created a 5-Year Recruitment Plan. When their accreditation report was submitted, the EPP was amid the first year of this plan, so there were no results to report. The EPP is happy to report the following results for that first year specific to the School Counseling program: They are creating short social media reels that will run for 6-week intervals. The first program for this approach was the School Counseling Program which has already seen an increase in enrollment from last year by 21%.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The elements that the EPP had in place are being made more robust through a revised Advanced QAS that will ensure goals are being set, met, and reflected upon consistently (see more on the revised QAS below).</p>

RA4: Advanced Program Impact (ARM 10.58.608)

Area(s) for Improvement	Rejoinder Statement
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<p>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).</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. There were changes by the state to the candidate preparation standards, which caused a delay in the creation of the completer/employer survey tools. The tools have now been fully developed in cooperation with the CIC and there will be a consistent protocol for when and how they will be distributed.</p>
<p>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 employers (provided two cycles of data).</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. There were changes by the state to the candidate preparation standards, which caused a delay in the creation of the completer/employer survey tools. The tools have now been fully developed in cooperation with the CIC and there will be a consistent protocol for when and how they will be distributed.</p>
<p>RA5: Advanced Provider Quality Assurance and Continuous Improvement (ARM 10.58.609)</p>	
<p>Area(s) for Improvement</p>	<p>Rejoinder Statement</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has already started engaging in an iterative process of working with faculty and stakeholders to review valid/reliable data to ensure the EPP's goals are set, met, and assessed. There will be a clear presentation of this revised QAS in the next review.</p>
<p>The EPP provided inconsistent evidence that it regularly, systematically, and continuously assessed its performance.</p>	<p>The EPP agrees with this rationale for improvement. The EPP has already started engaging in an iterative process of working with faculty and stakeholders to review valid/reliable data to ensure the EPP's goals are set, met, and assessed.</p>

	There will be a clear presentation of this revised QAS in the next review.
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ITEM 13

ACTION ON MONTANA STATE
UNIVERSITY NORTHERN GOOD CAUSE
EXTENSION REQUEST

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 19-20, 2026

Presentation	Montana State- Northern Good Cause Extension
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Senior Manager, School and Educator Effectiveness Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>Montana State University-Northern has requested a one semester Good Cause Extension for the review of their Stipulation from the 2024 Accreditation Review. This means the review will be Fall 2026 instead of Spring 2026.</p> <p>The rationale for the extension request is included in the letter provided by Beth Durodoye, Dean of MSU-N.</p> <p>State Superintendent Hedalen recommends the approval of the Montana State University-Northern request for a one semester extension of the schedule site visit and review of areas of stipulation which include 10.58.314, 10.58.315, and 10.58.608.</p> <p>Dean Durodoye, will be available virtually to answer questions BPE members may have.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	
Recommendation(s)	Approve the Montana State University- Northern's request for a one-semester good cause extension, as recommended by State Superintendent Hedalen.



Montana
Office Of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov



Date Received by MT OPI:
 Form GCERF (2-2026)

Good Cause Extension Request Form

Complete form along with: EPP Rationale: A formal letter from EPP leadership explaining the basis for the request.	
Submit documents via email to: crystal.andrews@mt.gov	
Educator Preparation Program: Montana State University-Northern	
Requested By (Name and Title): Beth Durodoye	Contact Information (email): beth.durodoye@msun.edu
Scheduled Visit Semester: Spring 2026	Scheduled Visit Type (e.g. Continued, First): Stipulation- 2 year review
Requested New Visit Semester: Fall 2026	Requested Length of Extension: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> one semester <input type="checkbox"/> one-year <input type="checkbox"/> two years

Basis for Requesting a Good Cause Extension*:

State or federal standards or legislation requiring significant programmatic change.

Substantive changes—[CAEP Accreditation Policy V.4.01: Substantive Change](#) (pg. 55).

Other extenuating circumstances such as, Act of God, natural disaster, or civil unrest.

The Montana Board of Public Education and State Superintendent of Public Instruction maintain a 7-year accreditation cycle. The semester of the visit following a rescheduled visit will be based on the original scheduled visit, e.g., fall of 2025 may be the rescheduled visit request; rescheduled visit will occur during the fall of 2026. The next site accreditation visit would occur seven years from the original fall of 2025 schedule, which would be fall of 2030.

**The State Superintendent of Public Instruction reserves the right to approve or deny requests for Good Cause Extension and reserves the right to adjust the length of the extension based on the nature of the request. The EPP must provide sufficient justification to demonstrate need for an extension.*

FOR INTERNAL USE:	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Superintendent Approval	<input type="checkbox"/> Superintendent Denial
State Superintendent of Public Instruction Signature 	Date 2/20/26

ITEM 14

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ON
CLASS 8 DUAL CREDIT POSTSECONDARY
FACULTY LICENSE

Dr. Julie Murgel
Crystal Andrews



Class 8 Implementation Update

Challenge/Opportunity	Relevant ARM/MCA	Considerations
Accreditation		
<p>Dual Credit teachers not licensed or misassigned by endorsement area result in schools receiving a deviation as outlined on accreditation Rubric E in the reference guide.</p> <p>School administrators may face a difficult choice: either offer students dual credit opportunities from an unlicensed or misassigned post-secondary educator or risk a deviation in their school's accreditation status.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2024-2025 Criteria Reference Guide (See pg. 10) ▪ ARM 10.55.605(7) Categories of Accreditation ▪ ARM 10.55.707 Teacher Licensure Requirements ▪ ARM 10.55.708 Teaching Assignments ▪ ARM 10.57.437 Class 8 License ▪ ARM 10.57.438 Class 8 Endorsements 	<p>Extend the timeframe for schools to certify that dual enrollment course teachers possess the appropriate licensing and assignments. This extension will prevent the use of 2025-2026 data that contains deviations for dual credit teachers to be used in the 2026-2027, 2027-2028, and 2028-2029 accreditation cycles.</p>
<p>Only the local school district has the authority, within state law, policy, and administrative rules, to determine whether college course will also qualify for high school credit.</p> <p>The local high school has responsibility to determine if a college course meets</p>	<p>20-3-324, MCA (28) may enter into an interlocal agreement with a postsecondary institution, as defined in 20-9-706, that authorizes 11th and 12th grade students to obtain credits through classes available only at a postsecondary institution</p>	<p>Analyze the spectrum of Montana High Schools to determine how high school credits are awarded and to understand if the granting of high school credit is unduly restrictive based on the interpretation or implementation of</p>

<p>the content and performance standards set for the local district curriculum.</p> <p>Transfer Credits: Credits earned in any accredited Montana high school must be accepted by all other Montana high schools.</p> <p>Non-Accredited/Home Schools: Credits from non-accredited or home schools are usually subject to examination and approval by a district's credit evaluation committee before being accepted.</p>	<p>20-1-101, MCA (18) "Pupil instruction" means the conduct of organized learning opportunities for pupils enrolled in public schools while under the supervision of a teacher. The term includes any directed, distributive, collaborative, or work-based or other experiential learning activity provided, supervised, guided, facilitated, or coordinated under the supervision of a teacher that is conducted purposely to achieve content proficiency and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities by pupils enrolled in public schools, and to otherwise fulfill their full educational potential.</p> <p>ARM 10.55.905 Graduation Requirements</p> <p>ARM 10.55.906 High School Credit</p>	<p>state statute and administrative rules.</p>
<p>Licensure:</p>		
<p>The increased demand for dual credit opportunities, driven by the STARS Act (HB 252) Future Ready Funding, has created a corresponding need for more licensed post-secondary educators who can teach dual credit courses.</p> <p>Montana is the only state that requires post-secondary educators to obtain a K–12 teaching license to teach dual enrollment courses.</p> <p>Class 8 faculty obtain licensure with limited endorsement areas that minimize the dual credit</p>	<p>MUS Dual Enrollment Guidelines</p> <p>College faculty must possess a Class 1, 2, or 4 license (with appropriate endorsement) or a Class 8 Montana educator license.</p> <p>A Class 8 Montana educator license is exclusively for faculty teaching dual enrollment.</p> <p>MUS faculty qualifications require a master’s degree in the teaching field (or closely related discipline) with 9+ graduate-level semester credits for transfer/general education courses.</p> <p>20-4-101, MCA</p>	<p>Streamline Licensure: Optimize the Class 8 licensure application process to ensure a maximum number of dual credit courses that can be offered, aligning with faculty qualifications.</p> <p>Strengthen Communication & Process: Enhance the collaboration and communication between colleges and K-12 schools to ensure all faculty teaching dual credit courses obtain the necessary licensure.</p>

<p>course offerings they can provide.</p> <p>Facing teacher shortages, particularly in rural and tribal areas, school administrators have sought to partner with colleges to appropriately fill these staffing gaps.</p>	<p>..no person shall be permitted to teach in the public schools of the state until he has obtained a teacher certificate or specialist certificate.</p> <p>20-4-106, MCA The superintendent shall issue specialist certificates, and the BPE shall adopt specialist certification policies.</p> <p>20-1-101, MCA (19) "Qualified and effective teacher or administrator" means an educator who is licensed and endorsed in the areas in which the educator teaches, specializes, or serves in an administrative capacity as established by the board of public education.</p> <p>(32) "Teacher" means a person, except a district superintendent, who holds a valid Montana teacher certificate that has been issued by the superintendent under the provisions of this title and the policies adopted by the BPE and who is employed by a district.</p>	<p>Provide Technical Guidance: Offer technical assistance for accurately cross-referencing dual credit course codes with the appropriate Class 8 endorsement codes.</p> <p>Technical Guidance on Specialization: Develop technical guidance on how to utilize the eligibility for an area of specialization designation for a Class 8 endorsement area, as provided under ARM 10.57.438(2).</p> <p>ARM 10.57.437 Revision: Revise ARM 10.57.437, which governs Class 8 licensure, with the goal of eliminating barriers.</p>
<p>The increased demand for dual credit options for K-12 students also necessitates an increase in the number of high school teachers qualified to offer dual credit courses.</p>	<p>High school instructors must possess a Class 1, 2, 4, or 5 license (with appropriate endorsement) and meet or exceed the qualifications established by BOR Policy 730 to teach Concurrent Enrollment courses.</p> <p>Concurrent Enrollment high school instructors may also teach on a temporary waiver per BOR Policy 730.1.</p> <p>Dual Enrollment courses must have an assigned Teacher of</p>	<p>Advocate for the MUS to increase the flexibility of graduate-level offerings for currently licensed 5-12 teachers. This includes developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual, content-specific master's degree programs. • Education Master's degree programs (Ex. Curriculum and Instruction Master's Degree) that include at least nine credits of

	<p>Record, even if the instructor is not a district employee.</p>	<p>concentration in an endorsement area.</p> <p>Utilize the temporary waiver for Concurrent Enrollment high school teachers, as permitted by Board of Regents (BOR) Policy 730.1.</p> <p>Simultaneously, focus on building capacity for more high school teachers to meet the necessary faculty qualifications in the near future.</p>
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❖ **ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE – (Items 15-17)**

Dr. Hannah Nieskens

ITEM 15

**ACTION ON PROVISIONAL
ACCREDITATION STATUS FOR PUBLIC
CHARTER SCHOOLS**

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 19-20, 2026

Presentation	Provisional Accreditation for Charter Schools
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Senior Manager, School and Educator Effectiveness Office of Public Instruction
Overview	Review the provisional accreditation timeline for charter schools that were approved on January 24, 2025.
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	None
Recommendation(s)	The State Superintendent recommends one- year approval of provisional accreditation for: Big Horn Academy, Butte Pathway Academy, Libby Central Charter School, and Ronan Charter Academy. The State Superintendent recommends three-year approval of provisional accreditation for: Central Montana Career and Technical Education Academy.



Montana
Office Of Public Instruction
Susie Hedalen, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov



Provisional Accreditation Extension Timeline Update

2024-25 Charter Schools

Charter School	Accreditation Step	Completed By	School Year	Anticipated Date
Billings Early College School (HS) Billings Multilingual Academy (HS) Billings Multilingual Academy (MS) Billings Opportunity School (HS) Rise Charter and Distance Learning Academy (HS) Rise Charter and Distance Learning Academy (MS) Rise Charter and Distance Learning Academy (ES) Rise Charter and Pathways (HS) Rise Charter and Pathways (MS) Rise Charter and Pathways (ES)	After successful completion of annual provisional accreditation status the Board of Public Education takes final action as to the accreditation status of the school based on the recommendation of the state superintendent of public education.	BPE	2024-2025 2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028	May 2025 May 2026 May 2027 May 2028
	Provisional charter school submits all the accreditation documentation for consideration of full accreditation status.	District Charter	2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028	May 2026 May 2027 May 2028 May 2029
	After successful completion of the provisional accreditation status, the Board of Public Education takes final action as to the full accreditation status of the charter school based on the recommendation of the State Superintendent.	BPE	2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028	May 2026 May 2027 May 2028



Provisional Accreditation Extension Timeline for Charter Schools

Central Montana CTE Academy, Lewistown Public Schools

Accreditation Step	Completed By	School Year	Anticipated Date
<p>Formally apply for provisional accreditation extension.</p> <p>Charter extension applicant submits letter of intent to the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) School and Educator Effectiveness Senior Manager. Within the letter they will state how long they are seeking the extension. Submit letter to OPIAccred@mt.gov.</p> <p>Central Montana CTE Academy (High School) – 3 years (2028-2029)</p>	District Charter	2025-2026	February 13, 2026
<p>Charter extension applicant submits the following documentation:</p> <p>Submit the below rubrics for progress review; they will be scored to receive first year provisional status for the 2025-2026 school year. The charters will still be considered in provisional accreditation.</p> <p>Rubrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E, F, K • SP-A, SP-B, SP-C • CH-1, CH-2, CH-3, CH-4, CH-5, CH-7, CH-9, CH-10, CH-12, CH-13 	District Charter	2025-2026	February 27, 2026
<p>The OPI Accreditation Unit presents a progress report of the initial charter extension applicant for discussion with the BPE. Provisional accreditation will be brought before the BPE. The extensions timeline will depend on the application and school type.</p>	OPI Accreditation Unit	2025-2026	March 2026
<p>The OPI review team provides the school district and school personnel a report. The report may include areas for improvement, when applicable as related to the expectations outlined in the ARMs related to rubric(s) E, F, K.</p>	District Charter	2025-2026	March-April 2026

<p>If approved by the State Superintendent, it will be recommended to the BPE to maintain provisional accreditation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The charter must maintain regular or regular with minor deviations on rubrics E, F, and K individually in order to have a successful completion. • Accreditation deviations resulting in advice or deficiency status during this period will result in the loss of provisional approval of accreditation status. 	<p>OPI Accreditation Unit</p>	<p>2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028 2028-2029</p>	<p>May 2026 May 2027 May 2028 May 2029</p>
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Accreditation Step	Completed By	School Year	Anticipated Date
<p>After successful completion of annual provisional accreditation status the Board of Public Education takes final action as to the accreditation status of the school based on the recommendation of the state superintendent of public education.</p>	<p>BPE</p>	<p>2025-2026 2026-2027 2027-2028 2028-2029</p>	<p>May 2026 May 2027 May 2028 May 2029</p>
<p>Provisional charter school submits all the accreditation documentation for consideration of full accreditation status.</p>	<p>District Charter</p>	<p>2026-2027 2027-2028 2028-2029</p>	<p>May 2027 May 2028 May 2029</p>
<p>After successful completion of the provisional accreditation status, the Board of Public Education takes final action as to the full accreditation status of the charter school based on the recommendation of the State Superintendent.</p>	<p>BPE</p>	<p>2026-2027 2027-2028 2028-2029</p>	<p>May 2027 May 2028 May 2029</p>



Provisional Accreditation Extension Timeline for Charter Schools

Big Horn Academy, Hardin Public Schools
 Butte Pathway Academy, Butte School District
 Libby Central Charter School, Libby Public Schools
 Ronan Charter Academy, Ronan School District

Accreditation Step	Completed By	School Year	Anticipated Date
Request for provisional accreditation for one-year. <i>This will bridge the current year and align with the upcoming cycle schedule for Fiscal Year(s) (FY) 2027–2029.</i>	OPI/BPE	2025-2026	March 2026
Provisional charter school submits all the accreditation documentation for consideration of full accreditation status. <i>Charter Schools will also be required to follow the cycle schedule for FY28 and 29.</i>	District Charter	2026-2027	May 2027

ITEM 16

**ACTION ON THE SUPERINTENDENT'S
RECOMMENDATION ON THE INTENSIVE
ASSISTANCE PROCESS FOR
ACCREDITATION**

**Dr. Julie Murgel
Christy Mock-Stutz**

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 19-20, 2026

Presentation	Superintendent's Recommendation on the Intensive Assistance Process for Accreditation
Presenter	Julie Murgel Christy Mock-Stutz
Position Title	Chief Program Officer Assistant Chief Program Officer Office of Public Instruction
Overview	Presentation on recommendation for the Intensive Assistance (IA) Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of IA Process• IA Recommended Timeline• Description of the 5 Phases of the Process
Requested Decision(s)	Action Item
Related Issue(s)	10.55.602(21), 10.55.605(8)(9)
Recommendation(s)	Approve the Intensive Assistance Process to be implemented in May f2026 or any schools identified as moving from Deficiency status to requiring Intensive Assistance.





The Montana K-12 School Accreditation Intensive Assistance Process

***The Montana Board of Public Education Required Path
to School Improvement***

March 2026

Intensive Assistance Overview

“Intensive Assistance” as defined by ARM 10.55.602 and outlined in ARM 10.55.605, is a required process for schools that remain in deficiency status and have failed to develop or implement an approved corrective plan to remedy accreditation deviations within the designated timeline. Deficiency means a school continues to have serious and/or numerous deviations or has substantially increased the seriousness of deviations over the previous year. Intensive Assistance centered on school redesign is a form of school turnaround that is an intensive three-year intervention directed by the Board of Public Education (BPE) and administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) with the goal of dramatically improving the way a school operates.

Intensive Assistance Vision Statement

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 school redesign 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.

Intensive Assistance Process

The Intensive Assistance process is a highly structured, mandatory intervention designed to support and guide schools requiring significant, systemic, and sustained improvement. This framework is characterized by five sequential and critical phases, each demanding specific actions, stakeholder involvement, and measurable outcomes. The process is designed not merely to address immediate deficiencies but to establish the foundational conditions for long-term excellence and self-sufficiency. Schools in intensive assistance receive support throughout the three-year process through the support network, an OPI implementation coach, and additional approved third-party entities contracted by the district.

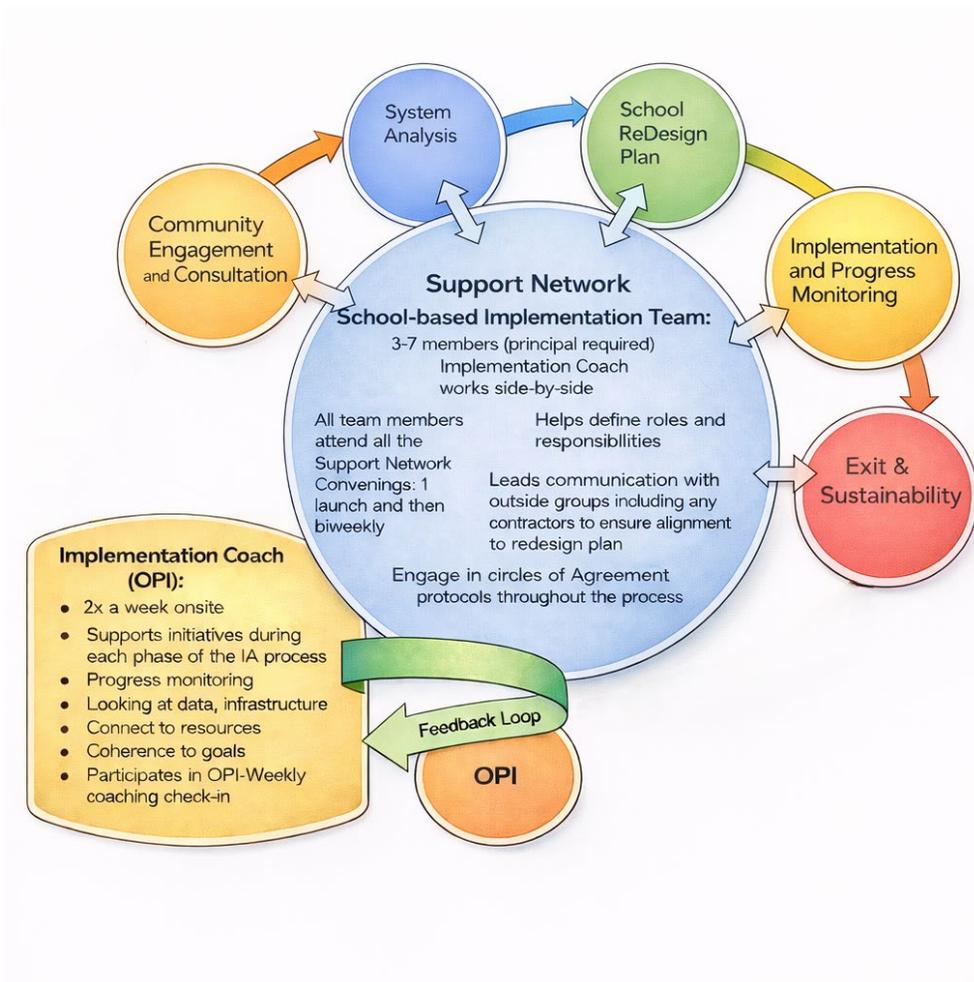
The initial phase, community engagement and consultation, sets the collaborative foundation for the entire improvement effort. It recognizes that sustainable change is impossible without the full buy-in and active participation of the entire school community. Following the community alignment, the focus shifts to a rigorous, data-driven diagnostic of the underlying

causes of poor performance called the system analysis phase. This phase is owned and driven primarily by district-level leadership to ensure an objective and systemic perspective.

The third phase, school redesign planning, is the planning phase where the insights from Phase 2 are translated into a concrete, executable strategy for transformation. The responsibility for this plan rests primarily with the school-based implementation team.

Implementation and Progress Monitoring is phase 4 of the process. Execution is the core of this phase, coupled with rigorous, ongoing oversight and support from the implementation coach and support network. The final phase, exit and sustainability, determines the school's success and transitions it into a long-term monitoring status.

Graphic Representation of the Intensive Assistance Process



Framework for Intensive Assistance

<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement and Consultation</p>	<p>This phase promotes community engagement and understanding of the intensive assistance designation and process.</p> <p>Key Deliverables: "Circles of Agreement": This structured process necessitates the direct involvement of all stakeholders. The outcome is the formalization of a "community agreement" that codifies shared values, commitment to the system analysis and school redesign plan, and a unified vision for the school's future.</p> <p>Focus Areas: The engagement process must clearly define critical, specific, high leverage focus areas where intervention will have the greatest impact on student performance and school climate.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">System Analysis</p>	<p>This process guide supports district leaders in conducting a comprehensive system analysis of a school identified as needing intensive assistance.</p> <p>Objective: The primary goal is to move beyond superficial symptoms to identify the root, persistent systemic challenges that have prevented past improvement efforts from succeeding. This includes scrutinizing fiscal practices, curriculum alignment, instructional delivery models, human capital management, and organizational culture.</p> <p>Key Output: The analysis must ascertain the current functionality and effectiveness of the existing system and, critically, define the prerequisite conditions—resources, policies, staffing, professional development—that must be established for sustainable and enduring school improvement to take root.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">School Redesign Planning</p>	<p>During phase 3, the school-based implementation team will develop a full redesign plan that rethinks core elements of the school model to accelerate student outcomes.</p> <p>Plan Requirements: The plan is held to stringent standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coherence: All components (curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning) must be mutually supportive and aligned. ● Pragmatic: The strategies must be realistic given the school's resources and capacity. ● Measurable: Every critical action must be tied to specific, quantifiable metrics. ● Evidence-Based: All interventions must be demonstrably aligned with established, evidence-based practices. ● Design Intent: The plan must be explicitly crafted for both rapid improvement (quick wins to build momentum) and enduring improvement (systemic changes for sustainability).
<p style="text-align: center;">Phase 4</p>	<p>The school-based implementation team will work side-by-side with an Implementation Coach to transition the detailed plan into active practice.</p>

Implementation and Progress Monitoring

Support and Accountability: The team is required to collaborate closely with an assigned **Implementation Coach**. This coach serves as an external accountability partner and expert resource, ensuring strict fidelity to the developed plan.

Key Processes:

- **Fidelity and Timeliness:** Ensuring adherence to the planned interventions and the timely achievement of established milestones.
- **Transparent Communication:** Maintaining open and consistent communication channels with the community and the OPI..
- **Comprehensive Progress Monitoring:** Continuously collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to assess the plan's effectiveness, making necessary course corrections based on evidence, not intuition.

Phase 5 Exit and Sustainability

To promote sustainability, schools that successfully exit the intensive assistance process will continue to participate in the Intensive Support Network for at least one year.

Exit Criteria: For a school to successfully exit the Intensive Assistance process, it must provide verifiable, concrete evidence of sufficient and sustained progress.

Verification Metrics: This evidence is rigorously verified through:

- **Student Performance Metrics:** Demonstrating significant and sustained improvement in key student academic outcomes (e.g., proficiency rates, graduation rates, post-secondary readiness).
- **Adherence to Assurance Standards:** Proving that the new systemic conditions and processes defined in the Redesign Plan (e.g., instructional quality, leadership stability, resource allocation) have been fully institutionalized.

Post-Exit Monitoring: Successfully exiting schools are not immediately left to their own but are integrated into the **Intensive Support Network** for a duration of one to three years, ensuring continued fidelity and support.

Accountability: Schools are required to present detailed progress reports biannually to the BPE. Failure to participate in any phase, demonstrate the requisite level of progress, or achieve a verified exit status within the maximum three-year period will result in **non-accredited status**.

Intensive Assistance Timeline

February 2026 - Accreditation due

May 2026- July 2026 - Schools identified for Intensive Assistance

May 21-22, 2026 BPE meeting (where Accreditation status of schools are approved by the BPE)

Phase 1 | Community Engagement and Consultation launches

- School district special school board meetings (tentative)
- OPI hires Implementation Coach(es)
- Launch RFI to identify 3rd party entities that schools may contract for specified services aligned to the process
- School Intensive Assistance Implementation identified
- Circles of Agreement, with facilitation, meet, prepare, and finalize community agreements

July 2026 - January 2027

Phase 2 | System Analysis launches

- August 2026 -(first week): Support Network Summer launch workshop week
- August 2026: Biweekly virtual Support Network meetings and OPI Implementation Coach weekly site visits begin
- 3rd party entities may be contracted by the school and begin scope of work for specific services to support components of the intensive assistance process.
- School presents system analysis results to stakeholders, local board of trustees, and BPE at January 2027 meeting.

February 2027- May 2027

Phase 3 | Redesign Planning launches

- Support Network meetings, OPI Implementation Coach weekly meetings, and contracted work continue.
- Redesign plan is presented to stakeholders, local board of trustees, and BPE at May 2027 meeting

May 2027- August 2027:

Phase 4 | Implementation of redesign plan launches

- Circles of Agreement reconvene to review community agreements and redesign plan
- Support Network convening year 2
- August 2027: Biweekly virtual Support Network meetings, OPI Implementation Coach weekly site visits, and contract work restart for the school year.

September 2027 - May 2028

Phase 4 | Implementation continues and Progress Monitoring launches

- Implementing the Redesign Plan
- Progress Monitoring Commences
- Support Network meetings, OPI Implementation Coach weekly meetings, and contracted work continue.
- Progress reports are presented to stakeholders, local board of trustees, and BPE at November 2027 & May2028 BPE Meetings

May 2028-August 2028

Phase 4 | Implementation and Progress Monitoring continue

Phase 5 | Exit & Sustainability launches

- Circles of Agreement reconvene to review community agreements and progress reports
- Implementation Team prepares Sustainability plan
- Support Network Convening Year 3

September 2028-May 2029

Implementation, progress monitoring, and preparation for Exit and Sustainability continue

- Progress reports and sustainability plan are presented to stakeholders, local board of trustees, and BPE at November 2028 and March 2029 BPE Meetings
- February 2029 Accreditation assurances and student performance components submitted to the OPI.
- May, 2029 BPE meeting (where Accreditation status of schools will be approved by the Board). Schools either exit the school intensive assistance process or are designated as non-accredited.

Support Network

PURPOSE:

The Intensive Support Network coordinated by the OPI is a program designed to support School-based Implementation Teams from schools identified as Intensive Assistance through Montana Accreditation system. School Implementation Teams are required to participate in the network. This network will build community amongst schools in the Intensive Assistance process and connect them to resources as they move through the five phases: Community Engagement and Consultation, System Analysis, School Redesign Planning, Implementation and Progress Monitoring, and Exit and Sustainability.

The network will foster vital connections to partners, educational experts, and streamline access to support. By leveraging partnerships, peer networks, the initiative delivers operational and leadership guidance that drives systemic change at the local level. This collaborative approach ensures that every school has the tools and community support needed to achieve long-term stability and drive education excellence. The network effectiveness is maximized within a supportive environment that clearly outlines the path to achievement, fosters teamwork, and offers continuous feedback. The core mission of this initiative is to establish a robust and dynamic network that serves as a central hub for vital connections. This network is designed to foster meaningful partnerships with key stakeholders, provide immediate and streamlined access to essential supports, and link local schools with leading educational experts.

By strategically leveraging these powerful partnerships and the creation of effective peer learning networks, the initiative is equipped to deliver comprehensive operational and leadership guidance. This guidance will be specifically tailored to drive deep, systemic, and sustainable change at the local school level and provide targeted support for each phase of the intensive assistance process.

This foundational commitment to a collaborative approach is what ensures long-term impact. It guarantees that every participating school receives not only the necessary practical tools but also the comprehensive community support required to achieve lasting stability, overcome complex challenges, and ultimately drive educational excellence throughout the network.

The effectiveness of this entire network structure is maximized within a consciously supportive and high-accountability environment. This environment is characterized by several critical elements:

1. **A Clear Path to Achievement:** The network clearly articulates a transparent, measurable roadmap, outlining the exact steps and milestones needed for each phase of the process.
2. **Fostering Teamwork and Collaboration:** A culture of shared responsibility and collective problem-solving is actively promoted, encouraging all participants to learn

from and support one another.

3. **Continuous Feedback and Iteration:** An established process for frequent, constructive feedback and data-driven analysis ensures that strategies are continuously refined and that schools are always progressing toward their maximum potential.

KEY DETAILS:

School Implementation Teams: These teams are the collective change agents and key decision-makers responsible for implementation at the school level. The team must include:

- District Superintendent/Principal
- Local School Board Chair
- Teacher Leader(s)
- High School Student
- Caregivers/Parents
- Community/Tribal Representative(s)

The school leader must be present for all meetings and cannot delegate this responsibility. The team will attend a launch meeting at the beginning of the intensive assistance process, as well as support network convenings every other week. The OPI Implementation Coach will attend all meetings with the implementation team and visit the school twice weekly. Implementation Coach will ensure feedback loops are used between the network and the school implementation team.

Facilitators: Potential combination of OPI leadership, SAM representative, and/or School Improvement Expert

Budget: A combination of state level federal improvement funds and dedicated local school state and federal funding.



Phase 1: Community Engagement and Consultation Overview

PURPOSE

This process of community engagement and consultation is to establish a shared approach and collective accountability for redesigning the school within the larger school community. This redesign will tackle the persistent challenges in the school, that if not corrected, will lead to loss of school accreditation. In a collaborative approach, stakeholders from across the community will identify the root causes of the issue and support the necessary plan to improve the school. For schools that serve tribal communities, this process will provide a framework for school and community leaders to enter meaningful consultation with their local tribal leaders and establish reciprocity between the school district and tribal community. The engagement and consultation process will identify why and how it is essential for school officials to gather the needs and desires of local Indigenous nations that inform programmatic and instructional components. **While this is Phase 1, and starts the Intensive Assistance process, it will continue throughout the IA process to support communication and engagement for all stakeholders.**

KEY DETAILS

The process will use Circles of Agreement to promote community engagement and understanding. These circles, guided by a facilitator, will use a braided process of practice in a consensus workshop model. Additional support, if needed, will be Circles of Reflection, based on a process developed at the National Comprehensive Center's Native Education Collaborative, to create an Indigenous-based and culturally appropriate model for the intensive assistance work. An Indigenous grounded Consensus Workshop utilizes structured approaches for respectful, sovereign-led collaboration with Indigenous nations, emphasizing early, consistent communication, building trust through cultural understanding, respecting sovereignty, and ensuring reciprocity, often involving formal consultation, community listening, and integrating tribal knowledge into projects from planning to implementation. Building respect and trust is fundamentally critical and paramount as a foundation for the work of school redesign. It will include reciprocity, open and transparent communication, and deep listening. It must also include transparency, authenticity, and valued stakeholders as the experts in the room.



The circles graphic is from the National Comprehensive Center's Native Education Collaborative 2023. The Circles of Agreement, Reflection, and other improvement ideas are from the Indigenous School Improvement Research Findings, Comprehensive Center Network, Shannon Davidson, Mandy Smoker Broaddus, Zoe Velie, and Kellie Harry, September 2022, as well as the U.S. Department of Education (2023) and a Circles of Reflection Overview for TEDs 2023 update. Rockville, MD: National Comprehensive Center at Westat.

STEP 1: First Circle

During the First Circle workshop time will include 20 participants from these stakeholder groups:

- School board members
- Implementation team members
- Tribal Community member
- Tribal education member
- Community members
- Student representatives

The work during the first circle, taking a full day with half-day follow-ups, will be to:

- Describe their efforts relative to specific, topical question prompts;
- Organize discussions into categories of support, shared values, commitment to the school redesign plan, and a unified vision for the school's future;
- Suggest high leverage focus areas (Examples: communication patterns, decision-making, staff roles, and the alignment between school, staff, and community values)

where intervention will have the greatest impact on student performance and school climate; and

- Compile results to share with the First and Second Circle participants.

STEP 2: Second Circle

In the Second Circle, the participant group (may be the same as above or maybe a representation of the grouping of participants from first circle) will:

- Review of the results of the First Circle;
- Add to, clarify, and discuss the categories of support, shared values, commitment to the school redesign plan, and a unified vision for the school's future;
- Discuss the First Circle's items of suggested high leverage focus areas; and
- Combine results into a document that will inform the Third Circle's work to refine focus areas and unified vision for the school.

Step 3: Third Circle

The Third Circle reconvenes the First Circle and Second Circle whose knowledge will be critical for creating a shared community agreement, which outlines community commitment to the process. In this circle, participants will identify focus areas and describe a unified school vision to inform the system analysis (Phase 2) and school redesign planning (Phase 3).

- Formalize the "community agreement" that codifies shared values, commitment to the system analysis and school redesign plan, and a unified vision for the school's future.
- Clearly define critical, specific, high leverage focus areas where intervention will have the greatest impact on student performance and school climate.

As needed Step: Circles of Reflection

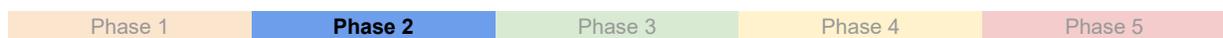
At any time, if the participants in the circles need additional time or support to work toward understanding, the facilitator will incorporate the Circles of Reflection, as described above.

Key steps to circles of reflection with tribal communities include:

- Researching tribal protocols;
- Contacting leadership through formal channels;
- Participating in community events; and
- Designing initiatives collaboratively to address tribal needs and priorities.

STEP 4: Re-convening Circles of Agreement Annually

- Annual reconvening of the stakeholders in Circle 1, 2, 3 to review every stage of the intensive assistance process including: the system analysis report, the school redesign plan, progress reports, and sustainability plan.
- Provide feedback to the Implementation Team and reconfirm the community agreement.



Phase 2: System Analysis Overview

PURPOSE:

Phase 2 supports the district leadership and school intensive assistance implementation team in conducting a comprehensive system analysis of a school. The goals are to discover persistent challenges, align resources, and develop pathways for improvement. In addition, implementation team members will gain an understanding how systems are functioning, where they are breaking down, and what conditions are necessary for sustainable school improvement. The analysis process is an opportunity for district leadership and the implementation team to evaluate their systems to determine strengths and root causes of barriers to student learning to prioritize, plan, and work on to improve their school. It is essential for successful change management to not be doomed by existing, unaddressed systemic barriers.

Prior to this process, Circles of Agreement occur, providing opportunities for community collaboration, communication, and identified focus areas. Following phase 2, the implementation team will utilize the system analysis to begin School Redesign Planning.

Objective: The primary goal is to move beyond superficial symptoms to identify the root, persistent systemic challenges that have prevented past improvement efforts from succeeding. This includes scrutinizing fiscal practices, curriculum alignment, instructional delivery models, human capital management, and organizational culture.

Key Output: The analysis must ascertain the current functionality and effectiveness of the existing system and, critically, define the prerequisite conditions—resources, policies, staffing, professional development—that must be established for sustainable and enduring school improvement to take root.

Step 1: Develop an Analysis Plan:

This foundational step is to craft a detailed Analysis Plan. This plan must be strategically designed to leverage the initial focus areas identified during Phase 1, transforming those preliminary insights into a robust, multi-faceted diagnostic process. This is not merely about confirming surface-level problems; it is a deep dive intended to diagnose the systemic, root causes of underperformance and organizational stagnation.

The Analysis Plan will serve as the master blueprint, providing clear direction and concrete steps for the District Leadership, the School Implementation Team, and any retained Third-Party Entity (if deemed necessary) to complete. The ultimate goal is to conduct a thorough and objective assessment of the school's current organizational health, school culture, and overall performance metrics.

Core Components of the Analysis Plan: The plan must explicitly define the following three critical components to ensure a rigorous diagnostic process:

- **What Will Be Assessed (Scope and Domains):**

- Clearly delineate the specific domains that will be subjected to assessment. This must extend beyond readily available performance data (e.g., student achievement scores, teacher turnover rates) to include less tangible but equally vital areas such as:
 - Student Performance (e.g., achievement and growth data, attendance data, behavior data, engagement data, staffing patterns and turnover data, and school climate data).
 - Instructional Quality and Consistency (e.g., curriculum fidelity, high-leverage practices).
 - School Leadership Effectiveness (e.g., clarity of vision, resource allocation, prior improvement plans, monitoring reports, and support for staff).
 - Organizational Culture and Climate (e.g., trust, collaboration, psychological safety, and equity of experience).
 - Operational Efficiency and Systems (e.g., data use practices, professional development design, and communication flow).

- **How the Assessment Will Be Conducted (Methodology and Data Gathering):**

- Outline the specific methods that will be utilized to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The methodology must be designed to understand both the visible, surface-level issues and the deep-seated, often hidden, structural or historical problems. The methodology also must enable the school strengths to be identified to ensure they are sustained and leveraged to address areas of concern.
- This section will detail the instruments and protocols to be used, including:
 - **Surveys:** Identification of validated, relevant surveys (e.g., school climate, teacher efficacy, student engagement) and a clear plan for administration and analysis.
 - **Interviews:** A protocol for conducting interviews with key stakeholder groups (e.g., district leadership, principal, teachers across departments, support staff, parents, and students).
 - **Classroom and School Observations:** A plan for conducting systematic observations for instructional rigor and coherence. Observation of student engagement, use of curriculum and assessments, and behavioral expectations and routines.
 - **Artifact Review:** Protocols for reviewing key internal documents. This could include the Integrated Strategic Action Plan (ISAP), safety plans, budget allocations, student tasks, lesson plans, instructional materials,

curriculum, assessment tools, data protocols, professional learning agendas, intervention schedules, student disciplinary data, health and wellness (e.g. YRBS data), and family communication/engagement materials.

- **Who Will Conduct the Assessment (Roles and Responsibilities):**

- Clearly assign ownership and specific tasks for data collection, analysis, and synthesis to the appropriate parties—the District Leadership Team, the School Implementation Team, and the Third-Party Entity. This prevents duplication of effort and ensures accountability for the integrity of the diagnostic process.
- Define the expertise required for each data collection method (e.g., who is trained to conduct non-biased interviews, who will lead the statistical analysis of survey data).

The foundational purpose of this rigorous Analysis Plan is to move beyond mere identification of symptoms (e.g., "low test scores" or "high teacher turnover") and achieve a precise **diagnosis** of the underlying, contributing root causes. This diagnosis will then serve as the base for developing the school redesign plan and identification of school improvement strategies to implement.

Step 2: Execute the analysis plan-Data Collection

Implement the pre-determined analysis plan to gather both quantitative (objective) and qualitative (subjective) data. This involves activities such as distributing surveys, leading focus groups, examining work processes, observing operational settings (like classrooms or staff meetings), and/or reviewing relevant documentation (e.g., financial reports).

Step 3: Analysis and Root Cause Identification

Once the data reports and evidence collection steps are completed, the team will review the findings. They will identify causes and system misalignments.

Analysis Process

A. Identify patterns

Ask where outcomes are consistently weak or uneven and which issues show up across classrooms or grade levels?

B. Distinguish symptoms from root causes

Example: A symptom is low reading proficiency. Possible system causes are inconsistent curriculum use, lack of cultural congruency, limited instructional coaching, weak progress monitoring, and unmet student or family needs.

C. Examine alignment

Check alignment between district expectations and school practice, curriculum, instruction, and assessment, professional learning and instructional needs, holistic student supports and resources and stated priorities.

D. Validate findings

Share emerging themes with the school leadership team, and community stakeholders (including tribal leaders) to confirm accuracy, build ownership, and foster collective efficacy.

Step 4: System Analysis and Prioritization for School Redesign

The implementation team will create a system analysis report that details validated findings, key insights, identified strengths, persistent systematic challenges, critical gaps, and root causes. This report will be accompanied by presentation materials for sharing the analysis with stakeholders, the local board of trustees, and the BPE.

Following the identification of themes and root causes, the team will translate their analysis into high leverage focus areas. These focus areas must address root causes and establish the prerequisite conditions—such as resources, policies, staffing, and professional development—that are essential for embedding sustainable and enduring school improvement within the redesign plan.

Key Actions:

- Finalize and prioritize focus areas.
- Establish clear school improvement goals.
- Utilize these focus areas and goals to guide the redesign planning process (Phase 3).

Phase 3: School Redesign Planning

PURPOSE

The third phase of the Intensive Assistance process is school redesign planning, which requires school implementation teams to develop a **full redesign plan**. This plan is a critical component of the highest level of intervention and serves to accelerate student outcomes by fundamentally rethinking core elements of the school's operational model. The goal of the redesign plan is to move a school from "Deficiency" or "Intensive Assistance" status back to "Accredited" or compliant status by addressing the root causes of underperformance.

Phase 3 is intentionally linked to the previous phases:

- Phase 1 (Community Engagement and Consultation)
- Phase 2 (System Analysis)

The redesign plan must utilize the results of the system analysis and requires ongoing community engagement and consultation throughout the planning process.

Plan Requirements:

- **Coherence:** All components (curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning) must be mutually supportive and aligned.
- **Pragmatic:** The strategies must be realistic given the school's resources and capacity.
- **Measurable:** Every critical action must be tied to specific, quantifiable metrics.
- **Evidence-Based:** All interventions must be demonstrably aligned with established, evidence-based practices.
- **Design Intent:** The plan must be explicitly crafted for both rapid improvement (quick wins to build momentum) and enduring improvement (systemic changes for sustainability).

(See the elements and framework for the redesign plan starting on the next page)

Redesign Plan Requirements	Framework			
	Support Systems	Budget & Operations	Culture & Climate	Instructional Components
<p>Mission & Vision:</p> <p><i>A foundational, actionable declaration of the school's core purpose, defining what it does, for whom, and why it exists on a day-to-day basis. The vision is an aspirational, future-oriented statement outlining the long-term impact or "end game" the school aims to achieve when its mission is fully realized. Together, they serve as the anchor for evaluation, demonstrating to accreditors that the school operates with clear purpose and strategic intent.</i></p>	<p>Teacher Recruitment & Retention:</p> <p><i>Evidence-based, targeted interventions designed to rapidly hire, train, and retain highly qualified, licensed, and effective educators to remedy specific, documented school deficiencies.</i></p>	<p>Budget:</p> <p><i>Strategic, highly scrutinized, and compliant financial plan that directs resources toward correcting specific deficiencies.</i></p>	<p>Stakeholder and Community Engagement:</p> <p><i>A structured, ongoing, and collaborative process aimed at involving families, staff, community members, and students in diagnosing school needs, co-designing improvement strategies, and sharing responsibility for student outcomes.</i></p>	<p>School Calendar:</p> <p><i>A mandated, strategic, and often revised, structural tool used to ensure compliance with minimum instructional hours and to maximize student learning time.</i></p>
<p>Graduate Profile:</p> <p><i>A learner-centered model(s) based on a shared vision of learner attributes that students should have when they graduate that was created with stakeholder input and feedback and has specific steps to achieve it.</i></p>	<p>Mentorship & Induction:</p> <p><i>A structured, multi-year, and high-dosage intervention strategy designed to reverse low performance by directly improving teacher effectiveness and instructional quality.</i></p>	<p>Facilities Operations:</p> <p><i>The urgent, prioritized, and mandated actions taken to correct structural, health, safety, or environmental violations that directly threatened the learning environment.</i></p>	<p>Family Engagement:</p> <p><i>To promote each student's learning, well-being, and development of full educational potential during their entire K-12 experience.</i></p>	<p>Master Schedule:</p> <p><i>Is a foundational, strategic document that provides a comprehensive, "MRI-like" view of a school's efficiency, equity, and commitment to student learning.</i></p>
<p>Goals:</p> <p><i>School goals are strategic, measurable, and data-driven objectives aligned with recognized standards of educational quality. They are formally developed to demonstrate that the institution meets, or is working to exceed, the requirements of an accrediting body, focusing on enhancing student learning, continuous improvement, and accountability.</i></p>	<p>Professional Development Plan:</p> <p><i>A tailored, and mandatory action plan for schools in "deficiency" or "non-accredited" status. It is designed to rapidly improve teacher effectiveness, leadership capacity, and student outcomes through sustained, data-driven, and embedded support.</i></p>	<p>Roles & Responsibilities:</p> <p><i>The process of defining specific roles and responsibilities for state agencies, local districts, and school leadership to create and implement rapid improvement plans.</i></p>	<p>Whole Child Support Systems:</p> <p><i>School discipline structure that is focused on restorative practices, positive behavior interventions and supports, trauma informed care, relationship focused, culturally relevant, preventative focused.</i></p>	<p>High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Curriculum:</p> <p><i>High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) are not one-size-fits-all. It can be helpful to think about the defining characteristics of HQIM as four separate—but equally necessary—lenses through which educational resources are examined in order to make choices that best suit your students, educators, and communities. These characteristics, or lenses, are Student-Centered and Rigorous, Culturally and Contextually Relevant, Flexible and Adaptable, and Supported by Professional Learning.</i></p>

<p>Student Learning Outcomes:</p> <p><i>Specific, measurable, and observable statements of the knowledge, skills, and abilities students are expected to demonstrate by the end of a specific period of intensive intervention.</i></p>	<p>Accountability & Evaluation:</p> <p><i>Interrelated, high-stakes, and data-driven components (data meetings, collaborative planning, observation/feedback) designed to reverse underperformance and ensure immediate, measurable improvement.</i></p>	<p>Communication Plan:</p> <p><i>Foster community engagement, maintain across websites, social media, rapid and crisis response system, student/parent portal</i></p>	<p>Learning Environment:</p> <p><i>The comprehensive, proactive, and safe infrastructure (physical, social, emotional, and instructional) that supports the immediate improvement of student achievement, engagement, and school culture. It moves beyond mere physical space to incorporate school climate, high expectations, and customized support for diverse learners. The learning environment is student centered.</i></p>	<p>Assessment:</p> <p><i>The comprehensive, actional evidence-spanning academic performance, behavioral indicators, and systemic, school-wide metrics-used to identify the root causes of underperformance and drive immediate, targeted instructional interventions.</i></p>
<p>Variance to Standards Requests:</p> <p><i>Formal, approved, and time-bound authorization allowing a school to use an alternative, innovative method to meet educational quality requirements.</i></p>	<p>Safety Plan:</p> <p><i>A formally adopted, actionable, and routinely updated document that outlines procedures, policies, and strategies to ensure the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of students and staff. Accreditation bodies typically require these plans to demonstrate that a school can prevent, mitigate, respond to, and recover from emergencies, ranging from natural disasters to acts of violence.</i></p>	<p>Board Policies:</p> <p><i>Formally adopted, binding rules and guidelines created by a governing board to define the school's mission, goals, and operational standards. They serve as the legal and ethical framework ensuring institutional quality, accountability, and compliance with laws, while guiding administrative action.</i></p>	<p>Learner Access:</p> <p><i>Equal opportunity to learn is a primary consideration of all program areas, at all levels. In order to integrate this concept throughout the education program. Educational opportunities are provided to meet the needs of all students including: students with special needs, gifted and talented, and multilingual learners.</i></p>	<p>Differentiation (MTSS):</p> <p><i>The tailored, data-driven, and customized support strategies provided to school districts or specific school campuses to address identified performance gaps.</i></p>
<p>EdFlex Waivers:</p> <p><i>Federal authorizations, reauthorized under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), that allow the U.S. Secretary of Education to delegate to State educational agencies (SEAs) the authority to waive certain federal statutory or regulatory requirements for school districts and schools.</i></p>			<p>Attendance and Engagement:</p> <p><i>A critical, measurable indicator of student engagement and school quality, often focused on reducing chronic absenteeism.</i></p>	<p>Program Delivery Conditions and Instructional Practices:</p> <p><i>Common conditions and practices that will be evident in all programs within a school system to ensure that all students have educational opportunity to learn, develop, and demonstrate learning in the content standards and content-specific grade-level or grade-band learning progressions.</i></p>

<p>Progress Monitoring and Reporting:</p> <p><i>A systematic, high-frequency, and data-driven process designed to track the effectiveness of turnaround interventions, ensuring immediate adjustments are made to improve student outcomes and meet accreditation standards.</i></p>			<p>Enrichment Opportunities:</p> <p><i>Specialized educational interventions designed to provide extended, in-depth, and hands-on learning experiences that go beyond the standard curriculum. While intensive assistance often focuses on remedial support for struggling students, enrichment serves as a crucial, personalized component for students who have mastered core standards or need deeper engagement to thrive.</i></p>	<p>Career & College Readiness:</p> <p><i>The mastery of critical, evidence-based academic knowledge and employability skills necessary for a student to transition directly into postsecondary education (two- or four-year programs) or a career-track workforce position without requiring training.</i></p>
<p>Stakeholder Approval:</p> <p><i>The formal, documented endorsement by key community members of a required corrective plan designed to address, remedy, and monitor school deficiencies.</i></p>				

Phase 4: Implementation and Progress Monitoring

PURPOSE

The focus of this phase is to execute the redesign plan, quickly achieve initial successes ("quick wins"), and establish the new structures detailed in the plan.. Whereas, the purpose of progress monitoring is to provide schools intensive assistance with formative feedback in support of improvement efforts. The progress monitoring process, with guidance from the implementation coach, is intended to help schools design a process for them to understand the status of the implementation of their school redesign plans. Progress monitoring includes site visits that are designed to obtain information about the school's progress of improvement goals.

Why This Step is Important: The redesign plan marks a change in practice for the school. The implementation team may not be accustomed to monitoring and reporting on a plan in progress and will need to develop the routines and structures that support their effective use of the plan. Some key components are:

- **Fidelity and Timeliness:** Ensuring adherence to the planned interventions and the timely achievement of established milestones.
- **Transparent Communication:** Maintaining open and consistent communication channels with the community, local board of trustees, the OPI and the BPE.
- **Comprehensive Progress Monitoring:** Continuously collecting, analyzing, and reporting data to assess the plan's effectiveness, making necessary course corrections based on evidence, not intuition.

To support progress monitoring outcomes, the implementation team will define the implementation plan team roles and responsibilities; identify the necessary data to collect, develop expectations and a process for who monitors what data collection, and how that data will be shared with the team.

KEY DETAILS

The regular (at least quarterly) progress monitoring site visit process will include gathering baseline and benchmark data collected through in-person observations, interviews, and focus groups to assess implementation fidelity and progress toward schools' goals. The data are analyzed and findings are reported to schools, the district school board trustees, community stakeholders, and the BPE. These reports provide schools and districts with an external review of the school as well as inform decisions about improvement strategies and midcourse corrections in meeting school goals. In addition, the Progress Monitoring findings are part of

the evidence used by the OPI and the BPE to make decisions about support and accountability for schools identified for Intensive Assistance.

As the implementation team prepares for the monitoring and reporting process, it can be helpful to review the big picture of progress monitoring, its purpose, and the ways in which this process will affect the practices and culture of the school or district. A guiding question the team will want to focus on in preparing for the monitoring and reporting process is: *How can this monitoring and reporting best support our school?* As teams address this question, with the support of their implementation coach, they should consider the characteristics of effective routines and determine what a monitoring and reporting process will do to strengthen their redesign plan outcomes:

- Addresses identified practice and culture needs
- Supports their school improvement process
- Supports their community's understanding of and commitment to that process

After each progress monitoring visit the implementation team will review the data to determine progress toward their goal. They will also identify key levers for sustainability. At this time, the team will identify any needed areas of support for their goals in the redesign plan. The compilation of this data leads to Phase 5: Exit and Sustainability.

Phase 5: Exit and Sustainability

Throughout the intensive assistance process, schools will present their system analysis, redesign plan, progress reports, and sustainability plan to the BPE.

EXIT CRITERIA: Schools participate for three years before the BPE decides on their exit/status. For a school to successfully exit the Intensive Assistance process, it must provide verifiable, concrete evidence of sufficient and sustained progress. The evidence will be verified through student performance metrics, such as proficiency rates, graduation rates, and post-secondary readiness. Additionally, the school will need to provide evidence that the new systemic processes, such as instructional quality, leadership stability, and resource allocation, have been fully institutionalized.

Once a school exits intensive assistance, it will continue to participate in the Intensive Support Network for at least one, and up to three, years to ensure sustainability of its systems and support for student achievement.

ACCOUNTABILITY: Schools are required to present detailed progress reports biannually to the Board of Public Education (BPE). Failure to participate in any phase of the intensive assistance process, demonstrate the requisite level of progress, or achieve a verified exit status within the maximum three-year period will result in **non-accredited status**. The full accreditation process will be completed at the end of the three years of intensive assistance, to determine the school's accreditation status.

ITEM 17

**INFORMATION ON THE PROPOSED
PROCEDURES AND SCHEDULES FOR
REVIEWING THE ACCREDITATION
STATUS OF EACH SCHOOL – ASSURANCE
STANDARDS**

Crystal Andrews

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 19-20, 2026

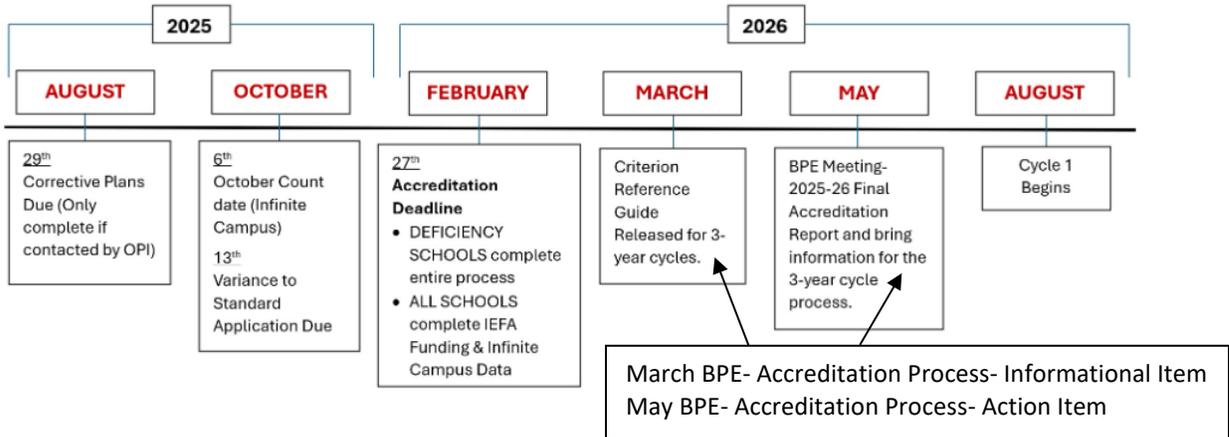
Presentation	Accreditation Update and Proposed Accreditation Process and Schedule for FY27-29.
Presenter	Crystal Andrews
Position Title	Senior Manager, School and Educator Effectiveness Office of Public Instruction
Overview	<p>This presentation outlines the accreditation process for the upcoming cycles along with information regarding the Assurance Standards.</p> <p>Student Performance Standards will be presented to the BPE in May.</p>
Requested Decision(s)	Information Only
Related Issue(s)	None
Recommendation(s)	None





Accreditation Update Board of Public Education- March

Timeline



Accreditation Process Three Year Cycles

Cycle	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
School Year	2026-2027	2027-2028	2028-2029
MASS Regions	GROUP A North Central, Hi-Line, North East, South East	GROUP C North West, Western, Central	GROUP B 4 Rivers, South Central
Platform Opens	Tuesday, September 8, 2026	Tuesday, September 7, 2027	Tuesday, September 5, 2028
Due Date	Friday, February 26, 2027	Friday, February 25, 2028	Friday, February 23, 2029

Corrective Plans

Per ARM 10.55.602(10), “**corrective plan**” means a systematic procedure and timeline for resolving deviations when a school has an accredited with probation status.

ARM 10.55.605(5) states, “deficiency accreditation means the school is in advice status for two years, **has not complied with the required corrective plan**, and continues to have serious and/or numerous deviations, or has substantially increased the seriousness of deviations over the previous year.”

ARM 10.55.605(8) states, “**A school in deficiency status failing to comply with the required corrective plan shall be placed into the intensive assistance process** as defined in the Accreditation Status Criteria Reference Guide, which must be made publicly available by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.”



Navigation menu with buttons: E, F, G, I, K, CP - CHECK (circled), A, B, D, H, J, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, SP-A.

Corrective Plan Check-in

Open Date: Feb 11, 2026 Due Date: Mar 20, 2026 STATUS: OPEN [Reset All](#)

CP - CHECK.

Complete only if the school(s) were designated as having Deficiency Status or Advice Status.

Evidence of Corrective Plan implementation. Refer to Corrective Plan letter for summary of your plan and possible evidence to include here.

[View Summaries Here](#)

Corrective Plan evidence is due to the Office of Public Instruction on **Friday, March 20, 2026**.

Think Tank

From April 2025 through March 2026, the Accreditation Think Tank met 24 times to revise the Accreditation Status Criteria Reference Guide for FY2027-2029.

Some of the key changes from previous years include:

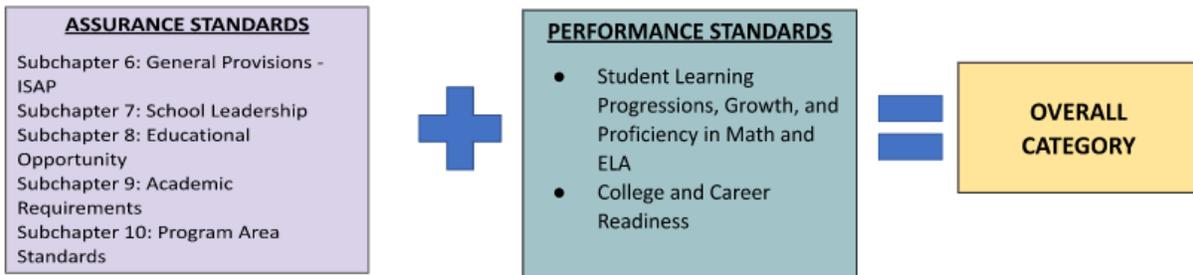
- Scoring is now set from 0- 3 (or more).
- The order of the standards has been updated to align with annual requirements at the beginning followed by the rest.
- The IEFA language has been updated to correspond with the most recent legislation (SB 181).
- Student Performance rubrics include Montana’s state assessments (ACT and MAST) along with other performance indicators.

ACCREDITATION STATUS
CRITERIA REFERENCE GUIDE
FY2027-2029



DRAFT

3 Year Cycle - Accreditation Status Criteria Reference Guide



Final Accreditation Status Determination (ARM 10.55.605)		
<i>if Assurance Standards</i>	<i>and Student Performance Standards</i>	<i>then Final Accreditation Status</i>
Regular	Regular	Regular
Regular	Regular MD	Regular
Regular MD	Regular	Regular
Regular MD	Regular MD	Regular with Minor Deviation
Regular with Minor Deviation for three consecutive years		Advice
Advice in either Assurance or Student Performance Standards		Advice
Advice Status for two consecutive years		Deficiency
Deficiency in either Assurance or Student Performance Standards		Deficiency
Deficiency Status for two consecutive years		Intensive Assistance

If a school has a facility that creates an unhealthy environment with safety and health hazards as reported through DPPHS, DEQ, or County Health Departments the overall accreditation status will be Deficiency.

Overview of Accreditation Process - Assurances

Assurances			
Standard	Value	Due	Platform
I. Accreditation General Assurance	Meets/Does Not Meet	Annually	AccredMT
II. Indian Education For All - Funding (Public Schools)	Meets/Does Not Meet	Annually	AccredMT

Assurance Standards			
Standard	Value	Due	Platform
A. School Leadership - Assignment and Licensure of Staff	3	Annually	Infinite Campus
B. School Leadership - Teacher Load and Class Size	3	Annually	Infinite Campus
C. School Leadership - Professional Development Schedule	3	Annually	Infinite Campus
D. Academic Requirements - Basic Education Program Offerings (MS/HS only)	3	Annually	Infinite Campus
E. District Assurances	6	On Cycle	AccredMT
F. General Provisions - ISAP Process (CNA)	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
G. General Provisions - ISAP Content (Goals)	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
H. General Provisions - ISAP Content (Graduate Profile)	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
I. General Provisions - Curriculum	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
J. General Provisions - Assessment	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
K. School Leadership - Professional Development Plan	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
L. School Leadership - Family and Community Engagement	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
M. School Leadership - Mentorship & Induction	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
N. School Leadership - Evaluation	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
O. Educational Opportunity - School Climate	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
P. Academic Requirements - Indian Education For All	3	On Cycle	AccredMT
TOTAL Possible Points - 51 for Middle and High Schools 48 for Elementary			

Assurance Rubric Scoring			
	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Regular	36-48	39-51	39-51
Regular MD	24-35	25-37	25-37
Advice	12-23	12-24	12-24
Deficiency	0-11	0-11	0-11

DRAFT

Evaluating Assurance Standards - Annual Requirements

Standard: School Leadership - MUST BE COMPLETED ANNUALLY				
<p>A. Assignment and Licensure of Staff</p> <p><i>Guiding Questions:</i></p> <p>Are staff appropriately licensed and assigned?</p> <p>Are the school/district FTE staffing requirements met?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.702 ARM 10.55.703 ARM 10.55.704 ARM 10.55.705 ARM 10.55.707 ARM 10.55.708 ARM 10.55.709 ARM 10.55.710 ARM 10.55.716</p>	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
	<input type="checkbox"/> School has one or more unlicensed teacher or specialist AND/OR <input type="checkbox"/> School has ensured everyone is licensed, but more than 25% are not appropriately assigned AND/OR <input type="checkbox"/> School/district is more than 25% of the student enrollment value or licensed staff value for applicable FTE position expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> School has ensured teachers and specialists are licensed AND <input type="checkbox"/> School has ensured teachers and specialists are licensed, but no more than 25% are not appropriately assigned AND <input type="checkbox"/> School/district is within 25% of the student enrollment value or licensed staff value for applicable FTE position expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> School has ensured teachers and specialists are licensed AND <input type="checkbox"/> School has no more than 10% not appropriately assigned AND <input type="checkbox"/> School/district is within 10% of the student enrollment value or licensed staff value for applicable FTE position expectations	<input type="checkbox"/> School has ensured teachers and specialists are licensed AND <input type="checkbox"/> School has no more than 5% not appropriately assigned AND <input type="checkbox"/> School/district is within 5% of the student enrollment value or licensed staff value for applicable FTE position expectations
<p>The following information will be gathered from TMT and Infinite Campus by OPI; do not submit any data for this indicator.</p>				
<p>Applicable Positions with FTE Requirements: Superintendent, Principal, Curriculum Coordinator, Library, & School Counselor</p>				

Standard: School Leadership - MUST BE COMPLETED ANNUALLY				
<p>B. Teacher Load and Class Size</p> <p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Do all classes meet the requirements for size as outlined in ARM 10.55.712 and ARM 10.55.713?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.712 ARM 10.55.713</p>	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
	<input type="checkbox"/> School has more than 25% of classes that have an overload without assigned qualified human resources that comply with all fingerprint and background check requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> School has no more than 25% of classes that have an overload without assigned qualified human resources that comply with all fingerprint and background check requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> School has no more than 10% of classes that have an overload without assigned qualified human resources that comply with all fingerprint and background check requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> School has no more than 5% of classes that have an overload without assigned qualified human resources that comply with all fingerprint and background check requirements
<p>The following information will be gathered from Infinite Campus by OPI; do not submit any data for this indicator.</p>				

Standard: School Leadership - MUST BE COMPLETED ANNUALLY				
C. Professional Development Schedule <i>Guiding Question:</i> Does the district's Professional Development(PD) plan meet the requirements of 20-1-304 and 20-4-304 , MCA, including a minimum of three pupil instruction related (PIR) days dedicated exclusively to PD? ARM 10.55.714 (2)	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD	Regular (3)
	<input type="checkbox"/> District does not offer any PIR days dedicated to PD	<input type="checkbox"/> District has not met the minimum hours of PD as set forth in 20-1-304 and 20-4-304 MCA	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> District has met all requirements, including a minimum of three pupil instruction related days for the PD plan as set forth in 20-1-304 and 20-4-304 MCA
The following information will be gathered from Infinite Campus by OPI; do not submit any data for this indicator.				

Standard: Academic Requirements - MUST BE COMPLETED ANNUALLY				
D. Basic Education Program Offerings <i>Guiding Question:</i> Is the school offering all the required components for middle and high school as outlined in 10.55.902 & 10.55.904 ? ARM 10.55.902 ARM 10.55.904	Deficiency (0)	Advice	Regular MD	Regular (3)
	<input type="checkbox"/> School is missing 1 or more of the required program area for high school and/or middle school grades as outlined in 10.55.902 & 10.55.904 AND/OR <input type="checkbox"/> School is not meeting the minimum required units in 1 or more program areas as outlined in 10.55.902 & 10.55.904	n/a	n/a	<input type="checkbox"/> School has offered all the required program areas for high school and/or middle school/Junior High School/7th and 8th grade programs and at the minimum required units as outlined in 10.55.902 & 10.55.904
The following information will be gathered from Infinite Campus by OPI; do not submit any data for this indicator.				
<i>Middle School Philosophy does not have unit requirements as outlined in 10.55.902(3)</i>				

Evaluating Assurance Standards - On Cycle Submission

Standard: District Assurances - ON CYCLE				
E. District Assurances	Deficiency (0)	Advice	Regular MD	Regular (6)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Is the district ensuring all required ARM 10.55 district accreditation policies, procedures, and plans are in effect?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> District has not assured that all required ARM 10.55 accreditation policies, procedures, and plans are in effect	N/A	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> District has assured all required ARM 10.55 district accreditation policies, procedures, and plans are in effect

Standard: General Provisions – Integrated Strategic Action Plan - ON CYCLE				
F. Integrated Strategic Action Plan - Process	Deficiency (0)	Advice	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have a comprehensive needs assessment, as defined in ARM 10.55.602(8), and does the district use stakeholder input and feedback?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.601(3) ARM 10.55.602 (8)</p>	<p>The district provided no evidence of:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive needs assessment conducted at least every three years	N/A	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive needs assessment conducted at least every three years	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> A comprehensive needs assessment conducted at least every three years
<p>COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit</p> <p>DEFINITIONS</p> <p>"Comprehensive needs assessment" means a process that is used to identify district and school area(s) of need, the root causes of identified gaps, set priorities, and inform an action plan for improvement.</p> <p>"Stakeholders" means community members who may be involved and invested in districts, schools, programs, and outcomes for students. Stakeholders include students, families, educators, leaders, business and community leaders, taxpayers, and the many partners who support them.</p>				
<p>GUIDANCE</p> <p>OPI has a free CNA tool available for district use, but this specific tool is NOT required for accreditation purposes.</p> <p>Do not only submit blank survey tools.</p> <p>Do not submit individual survey results.</p> <p>A comprehensive needs assessment does not mean only a survey; it could include community meetings, PLC meetings, etc.</p>				

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

A Comprehensive Needs Assessment Sample Evidence May Include: This could include a summary of CNA findings **AND/OR** gap analysis **AND/OR** root cause analysis.

Stakeholder Input and Feedback Evidence May Include: board agendas **AND/OR** schedule of community meetings **AND/OR** screenshot of social media, emails, Infinite Campus, or other communication channels of opportunity for input **AND/OR** summary of stakeholder meetings (dates, stakeholder group attendance) **AND/OR** group survey results.

Standard: General Provisions – Integrated Strategic Action Plan - ON CYCLE

G. Integrated Strategic Action Plan - Product	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district ISAP include two or more educational goals? Are the action steps aligned to those goals?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.601 (3) ARM 10.55.601 (4b)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The district does not have evidence of an Integrated Strategic Action Plan</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an Integrated Strategic Action Plan that Includes:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> One educational goal</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an Integrated Strategic Action Plan that Includes:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Two or more educational goals</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an Integrated Strategic Action Plan that Includes:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Two or more educational goals</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Action steps aligned to goals</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

DEFINITIONS

"Integrated strategic action plan"(ISAP) means a district plan adopted by the board of trustees that:

- (a) is aligned with the peoples' goal in [Article X, Section 1](#) of the Montana Constitution of developing the full educational potential of each person;
- (b) ensures a learner-centered system and continuous improvement that reflects local context and needs;
- (c) is based on school-level comprehensive needs assessment;
- (d) has engaged stakeholders and addresses stakeholder input and feedback; and
- (e) aligns with the requirements of applicable state and federal programs.

GUIDANCE

Integrated Strategic Action Plan: Includes goals and action steps aligned to goals

Educational Goals: Goals may include academic and/or other district priorities ([ARM 10.55.701](#))

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Goals Sample Evidence May Include: Specific Measurable Actionable Relevant Time-bound Goals **AND/OR** Objective Key Results Goals **AND/OR** Purposeful Actionable Continuous Trackable Goals **AND/OR** Clarity Goals

Action Steps Sample Evidence May Include: Specific steps to achieve each goal

Standard: General Provisions – Graduate Profile - ON CYCLE

H. Integrated Strategic Action Plan - Graduate Profile	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have evidence of a completed, publicly available graduate profile and specific steps to achieve it?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.601 (4a) ARM 10.55.602 (17, 23, 27) ARM 10.55.701 (2, 4)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of graduate profile</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A graduate profile</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A graduate profile</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where the graduate profile is publicly available</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A graduate profile</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Where the graduate profile is publicly available</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Specific steps to achieve the graduate profile</p>

DEFINITIONS

"**Graduate profile**" means a learner-centered model(s) based on a shared vision of learner attributes that students should have when they graduate.

GUIDANCE

A district may refer to a graduate profile using another term such as: profile of a learner, learner profile, profile of a graduate.

Steps to Achieve: Steps towards Implementation of the graduate profile

Additional Guidelines for Graduate Profile in ARM: [10.55.701: Board of Trustees \(2a, 4\)](#), [10.55.714: Professional Development \(1a\)](#)

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Graduate Profile Evidence - A copy of the district's approved graduate profile

Publicly Available Sample Evidence May Include - Link to website, picture of graduate profile publicly posted

Steps to Achieve Sample Evidence May Include - Implementation plan for students such as chart, list, schedule, lesson plans, or work plan with action steps, and professional development related to graduate profile.

Standard: General Provisions – Curriculum - ON CYCLE

I. Curriculum	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have evidence of reviewing curriculum standards at least every five years or consistent with the state's standards revision schedule and reviewing curriculum and instructional materials to ensure the inclusion of the distinct and unique cultural heritages and contemporary portrayal of American Indians?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.603(4b, 4d) ARM 10.55.803 (1c)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence reviewing curriculum</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing curriculum standards at least every five years or consistent with the state's standards revision schedule</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing curriculum standards at least every five years or consistent with the state's standards revision schedule</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reviewing curriculum and instructional materials to ensure the inclusion of the distinct and unique cultural heritages and contemporary portrayal of American Indians in the curriculum</p>

DEFINITIONS

"**Content standard**" means what all students should know, understand, and be able to do in a specific content area. See the [Administrative Rules of Montana Title 10 Chapter 55 starting at subchapter 10](#) to see all the specific content standards.

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Reviewing Curriculum Sample Evidence May Include: evidence from consortium of review process **AND/OR** scope and sequence that were recently reviewed that includes what standards are being taught when **AND/OR** an example from most recently reviewed curricular area

Reviewing for Inclusion of American Indian Cultural Heritage Sample Evidence May Include: meeting notes from review session specifically related to the inclusion of American Indian cultural heritage **AND/OR** agenda from review session specifically related to the inclusion of American Indian cultural heritage **AND/OR** narrative of the process specifically related to the inclusion of American Indian cultural heritage **AND/OR** evidence from consortium specifically related to the inclusion of American Indian cultural heritage

Standard: General Provisions – Assessment - ON CYCLE

J. Assessment Plan	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have a developed assessment plan that details progression, growth, and proficiency and uses multiple assessment measures and methods?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.603(5)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of an assessment plan</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an assessment plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is developed</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an assessment plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is developed</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Details progression, growth, and proficiency</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of an assessment plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is developed</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Details progression, growth, and proficiency</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Uses more than 1 measure and method to assess student growth and proficiency in content standards and content-specific grade-level or grade-band learning progressions in all program areas</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

DEFINITIONS

"**Assessment**" means the gathering, organizing, and evaluation of information about student learning progression, growth, and proficiency in order to monitor and measure the effectiveness of the instructional program.

"**Proficiency-based learning**" means systems of instruction, assessment, and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating that they have learned the knowledge and skills as outlined in the state content standards.

"**Student growth**" means changes in student learning as measured from one point in time to another as determined by state or local measures, or both. The federal accountability system uses a growth model to demonstrate student learning across time as measured by statewide assessments.

"**Learning progression**" means the specific performance expectations in each content area and grade level or grade band from kindergarten through grade 12.

"**Proficient**" means that a student demonstrated a level of knowledge and skills that are expected to be learned signaling that a student is well prepared to progress on the learning continuum aligned to the content standards, learning progressions, and necessary readiness skills.

"**Measure**" means a way to assess the level of proficiency on a performance indicator aligned to the district graduate profile.

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Developed Assessment Plan Sample Evidence May Include - plan district has developed

Progression, Growth, and Proficiency Sample Evidence May Include - for each assessment type used the district must describe whether they use the tool for progress, growth, and proficiency. **NOT STUDENT PERFORMANCE DATA** - tools **AND/OR** reports **AND/OR** systems that track if progression, growth and proficiency is taking place

More than 1 Measure of Student Progress Sample Evidence May Include - common assessments **AND/OR** ongoing assessments **AND/OR** teacher-made assessments **AND/OR** district assessments **AND/OR** state assessments **AND/OR** teaching strategies (formative assessments)

Standard: School Leadership - Educator Effectiveness - ON CYCLE

K. Professional Development Plan	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have a publicly available professional development plan that includes ARM 10.55.714(1)(a-n) and was evaluated, developed, and recommended by an advisory committee and approved by the board of trustees?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.714(1&3)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of a professional development plan</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of a professional development plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assures that the professional development includes ARM 10.55.714(1)(a-n)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is available to employees and the public</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of a professional development plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assures that the professional development includes ARM 10.55.714(1)(a-n)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is available to employees and the public</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is evaluated, developed, and recommended by an advisory committee, which shall include, but not be limited to, trustees, administrators, and teachers. The majority of the committee shall be teachers</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of a professional development plan that:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assures that the professional development includes ARM 10.55.714(1)(a-n)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is available to employees and the public</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is evaluated, developed, and recommended by an advisory committee, which shall include, but not be limited to, trustees, administrators, and teachers. The majority of the committee shall be teachers</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Is aligned with the district graduate profile and educational goals</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit
DEFINITIONS
[10.55.714\(1a-n\) Professional Development Plan:](#) Check link for assurances

GUIDANCE
Majority Teachers - More than 50% of the committee must be made up of teachers.
Evaluated - Evaluate the current year’s plan
Developed and Recommended - Develop and recommend the next year’s plan by an advisory committee and approved by the board of trustees
Educational Goals: Goals may include academic and/or other district priorities ([ARM 10.55.701](#))

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE
A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Available to Employees and Public Sample Evidence May Include - Link to website, picture of professional development plan publicly posted

Evaluation, Development, and Recommendation by an Advisory Committee Sample Evidence May Include - List of committee members with position titles **AND** documentation/agendas/meeting minutes of professional development plan being evaluated/developed/recommended.

Aligned with the District Graduate Profile and Educational Goals Sample Evidence May Include - documentation/meeting minutes discussing graduate profile alignment in professional development plan

Standard: School Leadership - Family and Community Engagement - ON CYCLE

L. Family and Community Engagement	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the local board of trustees have a family and community engagement plan that is aligned to the ISAP and meets the family and community engagement goals in 10.55.722(1)(c&d)? 10.55.722 (1 a, c, d)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of a family and community engagement plan</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A family and community engagement plan</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A family and community engagement plan</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assurances that the plan includes the goals in 10.55.722(c&d)</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

DEFINITIONS

"**Community engagement**" means the partnership between members of the community and schools that may share resources and volunteer to support student well-being and learning development.

"**Family engagement**" means a partnership with shared responsibility among families, educational staff, and community groups to promote each student's learning, well-being, and development of full educational potential during their entire K-12 experience.

GUIDANCE

A plan should include multiple opportunities to engage with families over the course of a school year.

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Family and Community Engagement Plan May Include Multiple Activities Such As: parent-teacher conferences **AND/OR** Title I annual meetings/surveys **AND/OR** Back to School night **AND/OR** open house **AND/OR** FAFSA nights **AND/OR** literacy/math/academic nights **AND/OR** college/career days **AND/OR** voc-rehab **AND/OR** cultural activities **AND/OR** family and community engagement agendas **AND/OR** family and community engagement calendar of events

Standard: School Leadership - Educator Effectiveness - ON CYCLE

M. Mentorship and Induction	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have a mentorship and induction program for initial licensed and incoming educators, and does the district assure the program includes all the areas in ARM 10.55.723(1)? ARM 10.55.723</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of a mentorship and induction program</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A mentorship and induction program for initial licensed and incoming educators</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A mentorship and induction program for initial licensed and incoming educators</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assuring the program includes the areas in 10.55.723(1)</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

DEFINITIONS

[10.55.723 \(1a-e\) Mentorship and Induction](#): Check link for assurances

GUIDANCE

The mentorship and induction program may include the following criteria - provide training for mentors through the Montana Teacher Learning Hub, professional organizations, or other professional development opportunities; prioritize mentor-mentee matches that are grade and subject-level aligned; focus on research-based instructional practice; engage with mentoring partners in professional collaboration; and establish effective coaching for learning methods.

[ARM 10.55.723\(2\)](#)

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Mentorship and Induction Program MAY INCLUDE: proof of a mentorship and induction program through evidence from an outside provider, activities from a consortium or district, selection of mentor/mentee matches, coaching for learning methods, research-based practices, professional collaboration between mentor partners.

Standard: School Leadership - Educator Effectiveness - ON CYCLE

N. Evaluation	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i> Does the district have an evaluation instrument and a process for the completion of periodic written evaluations of all regularly employed instructional personnel? ARM 10.55.724(1&2)</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence of an evaluation instrument and process</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> N/A</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of: <input type="checkbox"/> An evaluation instrument OR <input type="checkbox"/> A process for the completion of periodic written evaluations of all regularly employed instructional personnel</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of: <input type="checkbox"/> An evaluation instrument AND <input type="checkbox"/> A process for the completion of periodic written evaluations of all regularly employed instructional personnel</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED DISTRICTS DO NOT SUBMIT - If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

GUIDANCE

“Regularly employed” is considered .5 FTE or higher for certified instructional staff

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Evaluation Instrument: the instrument (tool) being used

Process for Evaluations Sample Evidence May Include: schedule for evaluation for certified instructional staff (teachers) **AND/OR** district policy **AND/OR** portion under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) **AND/OR** portion under the staff handbook **AND/OR** narrative of the process

Standard: Educational Opportunity - ON CYCLE

O. School Climate	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district assure the school policies, procedures, and rules address all areas in ARM 10.55.801(1), have a valid and reliable school climate tool, and use the results to make data-driven decisions about programs and practices that could improve school climate?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.801</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> The district has no evidence of aligning policies with ARM 10.55.801(1), measuring school climate with a valid tool, or using climate data to guide improvement efforts.</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assuring school policies, procedures, and rules address all areas in 10.55.801(1)</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assuring school policies, procedures, and rules address all areas in 10.55.801(1)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Measuring school climate through a valid and reliable tool to understand student, staff, family, and community perceptions</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assuring school policies, procedures, and rules address all areas in 10.55.801(1)</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Measuring school climate through a valid and reliable tool to understand student, staff, family, and community perceptions</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Using the results of school climate tool to make data-driven decisions about programs and practices that could improve school climate</p>

COGNIA ACCREDITED SCHOOLS DO NOT SUBMIT- If only partial district is accredited by Cognia you will need to submit

DEFINITIONS

[10.55.801\(1a-h\) SCHOOL CLIMATE](#): Check link for assurances

GUIDANCE

Climate Tool: The district may utilize its comprehensive needs assessment if it addresses school climate. The tool may be utilized in conjunction with the accreditation cycle and does not need to be completed annually. The tool may be developed by the district and does not have to be a written survey.

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

A single document may include all of the criteria/sample evidence needed to receive a regular (3) score.

Climate Tool Evidence: the tool that was used

Data-Driven Decisions Sample Evidence May Include: narrative **AND/OR** document of how the district used the evidence to set goals **AND/OR** how the district used the evidence to develop its integrated strategic action plan

Standard: Academic Requirements - ON CYCLE

P. Indian Education For All	Deficiency (0)	Advice (1)	Regular MD (2)	Regular (3)
<p><i>Guiding Question:</i></p> <p>Does the district have an Indian Education for All (IEFA) policy, student work samples or evidence of student participation from each grade-band that includes integration of the history, contemporary portrayals, and contributions of American Indians, with an emphasis on Montana Indians, for all students, across all content areas, and in-service training related to IEFA?</p> <p>ARM 10.55.901 (1) ARM 10.55.902 (1) ARM 10.55.904 (1) ARM 10.55.1003 2(a-i) MCA 20-1-501 MCA 20-1-502 MCA 20-1-503</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> District has no evidence that the constitutionally declared policy for Indian Education for All (IEFA) is implemented</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District IEFA policy</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District IEFA policy</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student IEFA work samples or evidence of student participation from each grade-band that includes integration of the history, contemporary portrayals, and contributions of American Indians, with an emphasis on Montana Indians, for all students, across all content areas</p>	<p>The district provided evidence of:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District IEFA policy</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Student IEFA work samples or evidence of student participation from each grade-band that includes integration of the history, contemporary portrayals, and contributions of American Indians, with an emphasis on Montana Indians, for all students, across all content areas</p> <p>AND</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> IEFA-related in-service training that was developed and conducted in cooperation with tribal education departments, tribal community colleges, or other recognized Indian education resource specialists</p>

DEFINITIONS

***MCA 20-1-502 3(c)** - in-service training provided by a local board of trustees of a school district, which is developed and conducted in cooperation with tribal education departments, tribal community colleges, or other recognized Indian education resource specialists

GUIDANCE

Grade-Bands - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12 (If you do not have all these grade-bands please submit one for each grade band that you have)

Student Participation Evidence - one piece of evidence of student work samples reflecting IEFA-integration of evidence from each grade-band

Cooperation with Indian Tribal Groups - OPI curriculum resources for Indian Education for All have been developed in conjunction with the advice and assistance of cultural consultants from Montana Tribal Nations. In addition, members from the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education have provided input and review of tribal-specific materials that are about the Tribal Nations they represent

Other Recognized Indian education resource specialists include the Office of Public Instruction IEFA team, Montana Indian Education Association, Tribal Education Department

SAMPLE EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE

District IEFA Policy Sample Evidence May Include: Recognition of Native American Cultural Heritage or IEFA Policy (2450) **AND/OR** other IEFA-related policies

Student Participation and Integration Across All Content Standards Sample Evidence for Each Grade-Band May Include: examples of student work from grade-band (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12)

IEFA-related Inservice Training Sample Evidence May Include: publication of the professional development plan or calendar **AND/OR** school or consortium agenda or materials from one completed professional development **AND/OR** Hub courses completions (beyond Intro to IEFA for educator licensure) **AND/OR** OPI IEFA trainings **AND/OR** IEFA Best Practices Conference **AND/OR** Tribal Education Department professional development **AND/OR** other nationally recognized professional development

❖ **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – (Item 18)**

ITEM 18

**ACTION ON MONTANA ADVANCED
OPPORTUNITY GRANT APPLICATION FOR
LAME DEER**

Krystal Smith

Montana Board of Public Education Executive Summary

Date: March 2026

Presentation	Qualify Lame Deer's FY27 MT Advanced Opportunities Grant Application
Presenter	Krystal Smith
Position Title	Senior Manager of Opportunities and Innovative Learning - OPI
Overview	The purpose of this action item is to review and qualify the Lame Deer School District's elementary and high school MTAO grant application. The application window closed January 12, 2026; however, citing weather, water, and health issues, the district's application was received on January 20, 2026. The application was school board approved on 1/7/26.
Requested Decision(s)	It is requested that the Board approves the late submission of this grant application.
Related Issue(s)	Attached is the district's received application.
Recommendation(s)	It is recommended that the Board approves the late submission of this grant application.





OPI – Montana Advanced Opportunity Application

Fiscal Year 2027

Application Window: Opens December 1, 2025 at 8am MST and closes January 12, 2026 at 5pm MST

Guidance: The application has the following requirements that you will be required to meet.

1. The application is a fillable form that you can complete and download to your computer.
2. The application checklist must have all the boxes marked to be a complete application.
3. The application must be approved in a board meeting of your trustees and signed by the board chair.
4. The application has two uploaded requirements: (a) the completed application checklist with board chair's signature and (b) your district's strategic plan as it refers to Advanced Opportunities.
5. The application submission will be a digital upload accessed on the OPI Advanced Opportunities webpage using a Qualtrics link. The link becomes live at 8:00am MST on December 1st, 2025.
6. Districts with more than one LEA under a single governing board can submit a single combined application.

Submitter Name:

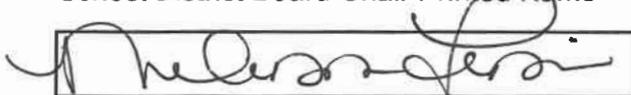
Email:

District Name: LEA Name & Number:
District Name: LEA Name & Number:

- The district's board of trustees shall submit an application that has been approved by motion of the board of trustees and signed by the board chair to the Board of Public Education, on a form provided by the Office of Public Instruction.
- Develop an Advanced Opportunity plan for each participating pupil.
- Include in your strategic plan: appropriate planning horizons for implementation, measurable objectives to ensure accountability, and planned strategies that:
 - Develop a personalized, advanced opportunity plan for each participating pupil grades 6-12 that fosters student interest pathways for career and postsecondary opportunities that honors individual interests, passions, strengths, needs and culture and is supported through relationships among family, teachers, businesses, peers, post-secondary, and the larger community.
 - Embed community-based, experiential, online and work-based learning opportunities and foster a learning environment that incorporates both virtual and face-to-face connections.
 - Ensure equality of educational opportunity for all pupils of the district.

The school district's board chair signature affirms that the application has been completed and approved by the Board of Trustees. It is acknowledged that the full application will be kept at the district site. The checklist and any attached documents are affirmation that the required elements of SB 278 are part of the applicant's supporting documents.

School District Board Chair Printed Name



School District Board Chair Signature

Date

**OPI Montana Advanced Opportunity Grant
Strategic Plan
Lame Deer High School
Superintendent: Victoria Falls Down**

Objectives:

To establish a career or college readiness programs for our high school students, beginning with an assessment of 9th grade students with the assistance of our Curriculum Director.

Vision:

It is the vision of Lame Deer High School to offer real life solutions to our junior and senior students through hands-on experiences before they graduate.

Areas of Concentration:

1. Work-related and Experience-based Opportunities through business Partnerships
2. Earn Dual Credits from the local Tribal College
3. Offer real-life assistance to prepare them for life after High School. Including Counseling and Tutoring Support Services.

School Year 2026-2027 Implementation:

Spring 2026:

1. Develop information packet for School Board
2. Gather Student Resources
3. Research Potential Partnerships
4. Obtain School Board Support and Approval

Summer 2026:

1. Initiate Partnership Meetings
2. Create Partnership Agreements
3. Take Inventory of Resources

Fall 2026:

1. Initiate Collaboration Meetings with Staff and Teachers
2. Finalize Partnerships
3. Implement Program
4. Assess Program Progress and Support

Spring 2027

1. Implement Changes based on Assessments and Observations
2. Reassess the Program
3. Implement Any Necessary Changes
4. Continue to Maintain the Programs

Work Related Opportunities:

The project will start with collaborate from our Superintendent, Curriculum Director and Involved Front-Line Teachers and Staff. The Curriculum Director will be directly involved in all assessment and accountability measures.

A block of students will be selected based on their interest and academic abilities to participate in the work-related opportunities based on Partnership Agreements.

Program Measurements:

1. Preassessment through use of existing student career measures.
2. Identify Viable Measuring Tools

Partnership Assessments and Support:

1. Initiate discussions with students and Outside Partners
2. Work with current CTE/Business Teachers
3. Work with School Guidance Counselor and Principal
4. Use Assessment Tools for Pre and Post Testing

Assessment Tools:

1. Grades
2. Job Search Process
3. Job Shadowing
4. Preparing for the Job
5. Letters of Recommendation

Dull Credit Academic and Financial Support:

1. Create a Partnership Agreement with Chief Dull Knife College
2. Determine Funding Sources at both Locations
3. Assist with Financial and Academic Paperwork
4. Assess Grades and Behavior Needs
5. Assess Age and Grade Requirements
6. Determine Advance Coursework Options

❖ **ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE – (Item 19)**

Renee Rasmussen

ITEM 19

**ACTION ON THE APPROVED LIST OF
SCREENING TOOLS PERTAINING TO
TITLE 10, CHAPTER 54, EARLY NUMERACY
TARGETED INTERVENTION STANDARDS**

Renee Rasmussen



Board of Public Education

Board of Public Education List of Approved Evaluation Methodology Numeracy Screening Tools

According to ARM 10.54.903, the list of approved evaluation methodology screening tools must be reviewed by the Board of Public Education in odd years through a process of review complying with the provisions of Title 2, Chapter 3, MCA, to ensure continuous adherence to developmentally appropriate and research-based screening tool requirements.

Any changes to the list must be published and made publicly available by the Board of Public Education no later than 30 days after adoption of any changes. The removal of an evaluation methodology screening tool shall not be effective until July 1 following such removal.

Approved: March 19, 2026

(1) For four-year-olds and prior to Kindergarten:

- ❖ aimswebPlus
Screens for: Number Naming, Quantity Comparison, Cardinality
- ❖ FastBridge
Screens for: Number Naming, One-to-One Correspondence, Quantity Comparison, Cardinality
- ❖ myIGDIs
Screens for: Oral Counting, Number Naming, One-to-One Correspondence, Quantity Comparison, Cardinality
- ❖ PENS: Preschool Early Numeracy Screener
Screens for: Oral Counting, Number Naming, One-to-One Correspondence, Quantity Comparison, Cardinality

(2) For prior to first grade, second grade, third grade:

- ❖ Acadience Math (formerly DIBELS NEXT)
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Problems in Context, Math Composite
- ❖ aimswebPlus
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Problems in Context, Math Composite

- ❖ easy CBM
Screens for: Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Addition and Subtraction, Problems in Context, Math Composite
- ❖ FastBridge
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Problems in Context, Math Composite
- ❖ Forefront Numeracy Screener (K-5)
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction
- ❖ i-Ready
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Problems in Context, Math Composite
- ❖ IXL Level UP
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Math Composite
- ❖ Map Growth
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Problems in Context, Math Composite
- ❖ Renaissance STAR
Screens for: Quantity Comparison, Cardinality, Number Order, Strategic Counting, Numeral Identification, Subitizing, Number Comparison, Addition and Subtraction, Math Composite

***BOARD OF PUBLIC
EDUCATION MEETING***

**March 20, 2026
Ronan High School, Library
130 3rd Ave NW
Ronan, MT**

CALL TO ORDER

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

❖ **MACIE LIAISON - (Item 20)**

Julia Maxwell

ITEM 20

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
March 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)	February MACIE Meeting March MACIE Meeting
Recommendations	None



MONTANA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON INDIAN EDUCATION
ADVISORY TO THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION AND
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MACIE Position Statement:
On the Display of Montana Tribal Flags in Montana Public Schools

It is the goal of the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education (MACIE) to ensure the education of Boards of Trustees, administrators, teachers, staff, and community members who serve American Indian students and families within the state of Montana regarding the legal responsibilities and educational commitments established under the Montana Constitution and the Indian Education for All (IEFA) mandate.

Article X, Section 1(2) of the Montana Constitution affirms:

“The state recognizes the distinct and unique cultural heritage of the American Indians and is committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.”

This constitutional language is operationalized through Indian Education for All (MCA 20-1-501), which requires that every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive and accurate manner.

The Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education **supports and encourages the display of the Tribal flags of the Twelve Tribal Nations of Montana** in public school spaces is an important and visible demonstration of this constitutional commitment. Representation matters. The presence of Tribal flags affirms the sovereignty of Tribal Nations, honors the first peoples of this land, and provides daily visual acknowledgment of the living cultures, governments, and histories that remain integral to Montana.

MACIE recommends and advises all Montana school buildings to:

- Display the official flags of the Twelve Tribal Nations of Montana in prominent public spaces within school buildings, including but not limited to entrances, board rooms, libraries, and gymnasiums.
- Utilize allocated Indian Education for All (IEFA) funds to purchase Tribal flags and seek accompanying educational materials, as this action directly supports the intent and implementation of IEFA.
- Provide age-appropriate instruction regarding the history, sovereignty, and contemporary presence of each Tribal Nation represented.
- Collaborate with local Tribal representatives, communities, and the Office of Public Instruction to ensure respectful and accurate display and interpretation.

Through awareness, representation, and action, Montana schools can more fully honor both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.

Thank You,

Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education

❖ **MSDB LIAISON – (Item 21)**

Lisa Schmidt

ITEM 21

MSDB REPORT

Action Items:

- **Action on Out of State Travel Requests**
 - **Action on Personnel Items**
- **Action on 2026-2027 MSDB Calendar**

Superintendent Paul Furthmyre

**Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind
Board of Public Education Report
March 2026**

Agenda Action Items:

1. [Personnel Action Report](#)
3 Hires
2 Resignations
2. Out of State Travel Requests
 - a. [International AER Conference 2026 - Louisville, Kentucky](#)
 - b. [Southern and Southwest Orientation Mobility Conference - New Orleans, LA](#)
 - c. [National School Public Relations Association National Seminar - New Orleans, LA](#)
 - d. [Language First Conference - Knoxville, TN](#)
3. [2026 - 2027 MSDB School Year Calendar Final Reading](#)

Attached Documents:

- [26-27 School Calendar Survey Responses](#)
- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda](#)
- [MSDB Committee Bi-Monthly Meeting Minutes](#)
- [OPI Annual Report - 2025 \(Last Fiscal Year\)](#)
- [PPE 2-6-26 Financial Report](#)
- [PPE 2-6-26 Expenditures only](#)
- [PPE2-6-26 Payroll & Benefits only](#)
- [PPE 2-6-26 Payroll Forecast](#)
- [January/February Cottage Newsletter](#)
- [March Current Enrollment](#) + 3 LEAP Students
- [March Inquiry Report](#)
- Journey of a Learner Presentations
 - [February PPT](#)
- [January Walk Through Data for Outreach](#)
- [Consultant Map](#)
- [Monthly Newsletters](#)

**MSDB Personnel Action for BPE Meeting
March Meeting 2026**

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

Hire

Alison Kromarek - Scheduling Admin Assistant
Director of Student Life
Karissa Snow - Educational Audiologist

Resignation

Katie Lynch - Audiologist
Maria Llera - Payroll Technician

Retirement

Probationary Layoff

Nonrenewal of Nontenure Teacher

Positions currently advertised

1 - Residential Advisor I
1 - Payroll Technician

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

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

1) Agency Number/Name MSDB		2) Division	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Education and Outreach Staff Listed in Justification		

5) Justification

Miche Jarvey, Geri Darko, Naomi Witham-Travers, Paul Furthmyre, Heather Hill, Jenn Norlander, Amy Tangen, Kacie Wilmot, Michelle Cross, Miranda Briggs (10)

AER International Conference 2026 brings together rehabilitation professionals, educators, researchers, and leaders from around the world to share evidence-based practices, emerging research, and innovative strategies that improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

Sessions, workshops, and exhibits designed to advance your professional practice and leave inspired and equipped to better serve, advocate, and innovate for those who are blind or visually impaired.

6) Itinerary

Destination: Louisville, Kentucky

Travel Dates: July 28, 2026 to August 2, 2026

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 13,000 Meals \$ 3780 Lodging \$ 8750 Other \$ 7450

Total estimated cost \$ 32,980

Provide details to support estimated costs:

(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

\$378 meals per participant / Lodging 5 Nights - 7 Rooms

\$745 Max Registration fee per participant (presenters and members will be lower)

\$1300 per participant anticipated for airline and ground transportation

** This cost is the maximum cost. (\$20,480 from current fiscal year, \$12,500 from next fiscal year)

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Paul Furthmyre</i>	Superintendent	2/17/26

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.

1) Agency Number/Name MT School for the Deaf and the Blind		2) Division	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Geri Darko, Orientation and Mobility Specialist		

5) Justification

Southern and Southwest Orientation and Mobility Associations are combining for the International O&M Conference in New Orleans. This conference offers a unique opportunity to meet, network, and gain information from specialists in a variety of orientation and mobility topics. This year's schedule includes 50 different presentations within 14 topics including accessibility, working with children and adults, services for people who are deafblind, working with dog guides, and technology for independence.

Geri was chosen as a presenter at this conference. <https://www.somaconference.org/>

6) Itinerary

Destination: New Orleans, LA

Travel Dates: Friday Dec. 4-Wednesday Dec. 9, 2026

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 603.00 Meals \$ 378 Lodging \$ 920.62 Other \$ 230.00

Total estimated cost \$ 2,131.62

Provide details to support estimated costs:

(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

Conference room rates = \$184.13 per night for 5 nights
 Transportation includes airfare and Uber rides to and from the airport
 Conference registration (\$230).
 Meals per diem estimated at \$63.00 per day for state employees (\$63 * 6 = \$378)
 **This cost is the maximum cost. (\$833 from current fiscal year, \$1,298.62 from next fiscal year)

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Geri L. Darko</i>	COMS	2/18/26

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.

1) Agency Number/Name Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind		2) Division	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Furthmyre (Superintendent), Haman (Public Relations), New Cottage Director		

5) Justification

NSPRA National Seminar: The Premier School Communication Learning Conference
Powerful communication builds stronger schools and communities. Each year, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) brings together school communication professionals, superintendents and education leaders from across the United States, Canada and beyond for the largest communications-focused professional development event in the field.

Hear from school communication experts, industry leaders and education colleagues from around the country on school crises and strategic planning, new and innovative practices in messaging, marketing and engagement, and much, much more at the Seminar's 150+ breakout sessions in focus areas.

6) Itinerary

Destination: New Orleans, LA

Travel Dates: July 17 - 23, 2026

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 4500	Meals \$ 1323	Lodging \$ 2394	Other \$ 2735
------------------------	---------------	-----------------	---------------

Total estimated cost \$ 10,952

Provide details to support estimated costs:

(Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)

\$441 meals per participant

\$798 per room for lodging for 6 nights

\$2,735 for registration fees

\$4500 per participant anticipated for airline and ground transportation

** This cost is the maximum cost. (\$7,235 from current fiscal year, \$3,717 from next fiscal year)

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Paul Furthmyre</i>	Superintendent	2/18/26

Approval of Authorized Agency Personnel per Department Policy

Supervisor	Date	Administrator	Date
Dept. Head/Designee	Date		

NOTE: A travel expense voucher form must be filed within three months after incurring the travel expenses, otherwise the right to reimbursement will be waived.

STATE OF MONTANA

REQUEST AND JUSTIFICATION
FOR OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

1) Agency Number/Name Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind		2) Division	
3) Org Number	4) Name of Person(s) Traveling/Employee ID# Paul Furthmyre, Morgan Makar, Cecilia Prefontaine, Jillian Young		

5) Justification
 The Language First Conference is a chance for speech-language pathologists (SLPs), teachers of the deaf (TODs), educational interpreters, educational audiologists, ASL specialists, and any other professionals who utilize an ASL-English bilingual approach to gather and learn best practices for working with Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children.
<https://language1st.org/annual-conference>

6) Itinerary
 Destination: Knoxville, TN
 Travel Dates: April 13, 2026 - April 17, 2027

7) Estimated Costs

Transportation \$ 5200	Meals \$ 1260	Lodging \$ 1689	Other \$ 1480
Total estimated cost \$ 9629			

Provide details to support estimated costs:
 (Example: registration, taxi, etc. Provide Hotel Name and Phone Number if your Agency requires this information)
 \$370 per person for Registration
 \$1300 per person for Transportation (Flight and Ground)
 \$315 meals per person
 \$563 per room (3 rooms)
 ** MT READS Grant

8) Submitted By	Title	Date
<i>Paul Furthmyre</i>	Superintendent	2/24/26

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



Paul Furthmyre <pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us>

Request #14 Complete

1 message

Form Approvals <rachel.gott@opiconnect.org>

Tue, Feb 24, 2026 at 2:25 PM

Reply-To: pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us

To: pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us

REQUEST #14 | FEB 24, 2026

Out-of-State Travel Request

The request is now **complete**.

Approval history

Complete

Approved by rachel.gott@mt.gov

Requestor: pfurthmyre@msdb.k12.mt.us

Please explain the purpose for the out of state trip. This should include the name and location of the training, the number of staff members attending, and the estimated total cost of the trip.: The 2026 Language First conference at the Crowne Plaza Knoxville Downtown, Knoxville, TN. 3 Teachers of the Deaf and 1 Administrator. \$9629

Please provide a link to the training if possible.: <https://language1st.org/annual-conference>

Please explain why travel out of state is required. For instance, there is no similar training in the state, or it is not possible to bring a trainer to Montana to provide the training, etc.: The Language First Conference is a chance for speech-language pathologists (SLPs), teachers of the deaf (TODs), educational interpreters, educational audiologists, ASL specialists, and any other professionals who utilize an ASL-English bilingual approach to gather and learn best practices for working with Deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children.

No similar training with the variety of topics covered.

What grade span budget will pay for this travel? Select all that apply.:

PreK, Elementary, Middle School, High School

What percent of the grade span budget will this request be? (For example, "It will take 3% of our MS budget to pay for this trip."):

3.9% of the PreK Budget will be used, 1.5% of the Elementary Budget will be used, 2.9% of the Middle School Budget will be used, and 2.4% of the High School Budget will be used.

How does this training align to your grant goals?:

This training bridges the gap between the Science of Reading (SoR) and the unique linguistic needs of Deaf students by focusing on signacy as the essential foundation for print-based literacy. Just as the SoR emphasizes phonemic awareness and oral language as precursors to reading for hearing students, these sessions provide our teachers with the Articulation Test (ASL-AT) and the Strategic and Interactive Writing Instruction (SIWI) framework to develop the same high-level metalinguistic skills in a visual-spatial format. By treating ASL as a primary language for cognitive tasks—such as narrative sequencing, perspective-taking, and verbal reasoning—our educators can more effectively target the "Language Comprehension" strand of Scarborough's Reading Rope. This evidence-based, bilingual approach ensures that our students are not merely decoding words, but are building the robust linguistic architecture necessary to transfer visual language concepts into successful English reading and writing outcomes.

Has your district traveled to this training before?:

No

If Yes, to the question prior, how did you pay for the training in the past?:

We have not traveled to this prior.

This is an automated email sent by formapprovals.com; do not reply to or forward this email. You are receiving this email because you are a workflow participant of this request. Your form administrator is

rachel.gott@opiconnect.org

2026-2027 MSDB SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

www.msdbmustangs.org
3911 Central Avenue
Great Falls, MT 59405
Phone: 406-771-6000



Yellow—PIR Orientation
Green—Travel
Blue—MSDB event
Orange—End of Quarter
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

DECEMBER

29 Travel Return
30 Classes Resume
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 No School
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

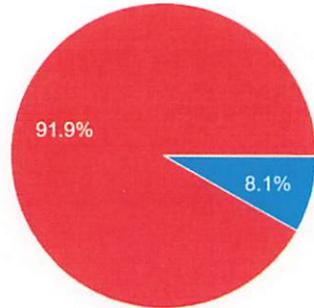
3 Last Day of School/
*End of 4th Quarter
0-0 Deaf FLW
00-00 VI FLW
00-00 Deaf Camp
00-00 VI Camp

Approved by BOPE: Month 00, 2026

Updated: 1/12/2026

Please tell us who you represent:

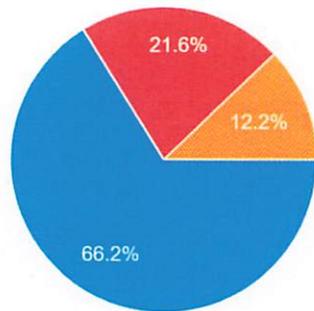
74 responses



- Parent of MSDB Student
- Staff at MSDB
- MSDB High School Student

Select Your Top Choice for Calendar!! Thank You!!

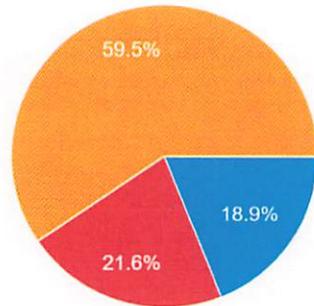
74 responses



- MSDB Calendar Plan A
- MSDB Calendar Plan B
- No Preference on MSDB Calendar Option!

Select Your Top Choice for Last PIR Day!! Thank You!!

74 responses



- March 30, 2026
- April 19, 2026
- No Preference on Final PIR Day Option!

MSDB / BOPE Bi-Monthly Meeting Agenda
1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Date: 3/3/2026

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 ● Out of State Travel Requests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2026 AER International Conference ○ 2026 Orientation and Mobility International Conference ○ 2026 NSPRA Seminar + Julie-Dee ○ 2026 Language First Conference + 2 Outreach ● 26-27 Calendar Final Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Calendar ○ Calendar Responses ● Cottage Restructure Proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel Home Most Weekends ○ 6-8 Weekends No Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Keep Traditions ○ Trying to accomplish? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Staff/Student Morale and Mental Health ■ Increasing Student Numbers ■ Better Staff Communication ■ Keep Family Connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Items Needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Personnel Action ○ Out of State Travel Requests ○ Calendar 2nd Reading

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Human Resources Happenings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working with OBPP to Move Positions to Correct Programs ○ Working with State HR to Design a Temp HR Generalist 3 Position ○ Exploring Position for Bridging Program Administrator Position ○ Possible TVI Outreach Position ○ Possible TVI / SPED Combo School Position ○ Possible Move Residential Life 1 Positions to Para Professionals ● MFPE Grant MOU for Personnel Pay ● MT Reads Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ BCD Approved 3/2/26 ○ Parent Square ● OPI Accreditation Show No Deviations ● Legislative Candidates on Campus ● Summer Camps ● Foundation Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cottage Refresh Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Bed Have Been Ordered ○ MSDB Museum 	
Business Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OPI Annual Report - 2025 (Last Fiscal Year) ● Travel & Expenditure Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travel Expense vouchers ○ USB card charges ● PPE 2-6-26 Financial Report ● PPE 2-6-26 Expenditures only ● PPE2-6-26 Payroll & Benefits only ● PPE 2-6-26 Payroll Forecast ● Retirement Payouts Included in Payroll Forecast 	

Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January/February Cottage Newsletter • Travel in February • Sunday Meals • Formal Dinner March 29 5:00 PM 	
Education: School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March Current Enrollment • March Inquiry Report • Level All Program Training • Distance Classes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 715 Instructional minutes in February (6 students) ○ ASL - 2 students; 1 student starting soon • Journey of Learner Staff Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ February PPT • MT Reads Grant - Stephanie Lester <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jan 19-20 (PIR training on the 19th) ○ Feb 11-12 • Showdown PE Ski Days Feb 12 & Feb 26 • Flying Hooves - Riverside California • Academic Bowl Competition - Feb 2026 • Read Across America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New York Times best-selling author, Jamie Ford presenting March 4th 	
Education: Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • January Walk Through Data • APH Phase 1 submitted for annual report • Consultant Map • Monthly Newsletters 	

Board of Public Ed Meeting

BOPE Meeting - Summary- March 3, 2026

Those in attendance - Paul Furthmyre, Tim Tharp, Lisa Schmidt, Donna Schmidt,,
Jim Kelly, Miranda Briggs

Absent: Julie-Dee Alt, McCall Flynn, Julia 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
 - Calendar 2nd Reading

Administration - Paul Furthmyre

- Paul reported The school recently hired a new scheduling administrative assistant who previously worked in a public school system and will support scheduling and operational coordination. Interviews are currently underway for the Director of Student Life position, with both internal and external candidates being considered, and a hiring decision is expected soon. In addition, the school recently interviewed a candidate for an audiologist position as the current audiologist will be leaving due to family reasons. Asking the board to approve the Personal Action.
- Several out-of-state conference travel requests with funding carefully divided between current and future budgets to maximize available funds. Asking for the board to approve.
- 26-27 Academic Calendar A final reading. Asking the Board's Approval
- The Cottage Restructure proposal was presented to allow most residential students to return home on most weekends to improve student and staff morale and reduce fatigue caused by constant proximity in the residential setting. Historically, weekend travel was too expensive due to contracted transportation, but school-owned vehicles now make it more affordable. The plan would keep some weekends on campus for traditional events and adjust the academic schedule so Fridays become travel days with shorter classes. Board members were generally supportive and suggested implementing the change as a pilot program while gathering feedback from parents and consulting with staff and the union before finalizing logistics.
- MSDB continues to face challenges filling residential staff positions, with some vacancies remaining open for an extended period. Leadership is exploring restructuring options such as converting some unfilled residential roles to paraprofessional positions and creating a temporary HR Generalist role with the goal of making it permanent, along with considering additional administrative support for preschool, online learning, and early intervention programs.
- The Montana Reads grant BCD was approved following clarification, and a new MOU will be required to ensure pay is not duplicated.
- OPI Accreditation was due last week, no deviation
- We welcomed eight legislative candidates who toured facilities and engaged with staff
- Planning for summer camps and additional enrichment opportunities will continue.

- The MSDB Foundation successfully reached its \$250,000 fundraising goal for the cottage refresh project, which includes new beds and improvements to entry and common areas. A new museum initiative is also underway in collaboration with the Montana Association of the Deaf and the Montana Historical Society to create a distributed museum across the campus highlighting the history of deaf education in Montana.

Business Office - Donna Schmidt

- The annual financial report has been completed for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI), and a new statewide online system for travel and expenses is being implemented with staff training underway.
- The Montana Reads grant BCD was approved following clarification, and a new MOU will be required to ensure pay is not duplicated. Staff will need to accelerate spending tied to grant funds after earlier delays.

Residential - Jim Kelly

- Jim went over February's Cottage Newsletter - Student life programming continues to provide a wide range of activities including cooking lessons, Dungeons & Dragons, bowling, 4-H archery, formal dinners, and social events supported by the school foundation. New traditions such as inviting local parents to formal dinners are being explored, and the Student of the Quarter recognition program continues.
- Formal Dinner March 29, we will be inviting parents of the Juniors and Seniors students

Education: School - Julie-Dee -Absent

- Paul reported for Julie-Dee who was absent Enrollment currently stands at 37 students and could increase to over 40 with pending applications and trial placements. The LEAP program currently serves three students, down from five due to recent departures.
- Growth in Braille and ASL distance learning instruction was also noted, highlighting the need for additional administrative support as the program expands.
- The academic bowl team placed fifth in regional competition, narrowly missing qualification for nationals, and other annual activities such as ski trips and Read Across America events with guest authors are ongoing.

Education: Outreach - Miranda Briggs

- Miranda reported A new outreach data tracking system has been implemented to document consultations, trainings, evaluations, referrals, and regional events conducted by outreach staff. A monthly outreach newsletter is now being distributed to school district stakeholders, with plans to expand distribution to families next year.

Upcoming Dates:

- Key upcoming events include graduation on May 29 at 2:00 PM
- Next Board of Public Education meeting scheduled for May, which will take place in Ronan

SCHOOL YEAR 2024-25

PLEASE REPORT THE SOURCES OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES
ASSOCIATED WITH THE EDUCATION PROGRAM.

EDUCATION PROGRAM FY2025 -- REVENUE

MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

1	LOCAL SOURCES	FUNDING
	Tuition from Individuals	0.00
	Tuition from Other Agencies	0.00
	Transportation Fees - Individuals	0.00
	Transportation Fees - Other Agencies	0.00
	Earnings on Investments	0.00
	Student Activities	0.00
	Other Local Sources	0.00
	LOCAL SOURCES SUBTOTAL	0.00
2	COUNTY SOURCES	0.00
3	STATE SOURCES	9,941,287.93
4	FEDERAL SOURCES	
	Grants-in Aid Direct from Federal Gov't	0.00
	Grants-in-Aid from Federal Gov't through the State	
	Grants-in-Aid from other State Agencies	404,431.50
	Other Federal Revenue	0.00
	FEDERAL SOURCES SUBTOTAL	404,431.50
5	OTHER SOURCES OF REVENUE	0.00
	MEDICAID	0.00
	TOTAL - ALL SOURCES	10,345,719.43

EDUCATION PROGRAM FY2025 -- EXPENDITURES
MONTANA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

	State/Local Special Ed	State/Local Non-Special Ed	Federal Special Ed	Federal Non-Special Ed	
1 INSTRUCTION					
Salaries (Teachers, Aides, Substitutes)	3,244,080.66	0.00	91,391.11	0.00	
Benefits	1,402,666.22	0.00	14,665.89	0.00	
Purchased Services	610.98	0.00	6,757.89	0.00	
Supplies	6,260.43	0.00	48,322.06	0.00	
Property	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other	209,841.84	0.00	38,364.48	0.00	
INSTRUCTION SUBTOTAL	4,863,460.13	0.00	199,501.43	0.00	5,062,961.56
2 SUPPORT SERVICES					
Salaries Student Support (Guidance, Speech, etc.)	644,003.60	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Salaries Instruction Support (Library, Curriculum coordinator, Supervisors, etc.)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Salaries General Admin. (Supt. and Supt.'s staff)	246,912.47	0.00	14,662.22	0.00	
Salaries Fiscal Staff (Business Manager, Payroll Clerk, etc.)	256,966.02	0.00	14,959.90	0.00	
Salaries School Admin. (Principal, Department Head, etc.)	108,822.20	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Benefits	456,454.17	0.00	4,983.97	0.00	
Purchased Services	149,353.51	0.00	4,554.13	0.00	
Supplies	73,118.53	0.00	74,233.81	0.00	
Property	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other	143,166.07	0.00	87,765.84	0.00	
Medicaid	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
SUPPORT SERVICES SUBTOTAL	2,078,796.57	0.00	201,159.87	0.00	2,279,956.44
EDUCATION PROGRAM FY2025 -- EXPENDITURES					
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS					
3 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE					
Salaries	244,422.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Benefits	107,808.43	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Purchased Services	1,424.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Supplies	29,897.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Property	28,732.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other	269,172.99	0.00	38,746.73	0.00	
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SUBTOTAL	681,459.33	0.00	38,746.73	0.00	720,206.06
4 TRANSPORTATION					
Salaries	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Benefits	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Purchased Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Property	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other	55,424.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TRANSPORTATION SUBTOTAL	55,424.79	0.00	0.00	0.00	55,424.79
5 RESIDENTIAL SERVICES					
Salaries	1,396,503.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Benefits	681,074.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Purchased Services	29,589.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Supplies	67,407.06	0.00	21,506.20	0.00	
Property	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Other	31,090.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES SUBTOTAL	2,205,664.38	0.00	21,506.20	0.00	2,227,170.58
6 STUDENT EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL - EDUCATION EXPENDITURES	9,884,805.20	0.00	460,914.23	0.00	10,345,719.43
GRAND TOTAL - EDUCATION EXPENDITURES		9,884,805.20		460,914.23	10,345,719.43

Office of Public Instruction
PO Box 202501
Helena, MT 59620-2501

February 9, 2026

Donna Schmidt
Business Manager
Montana School for the Deaf and Blind
3911 Central Ave.
Great Falls, MT 59405

Dear Donna:

Our office is required to annually report certain financial and enrollment statistics for Montana's public schools and other state-funded schools to the Federal government. As part of our effort to prepare the report for FY 2025, will you please help us as you have in past years by completing the attached forms and returning them to me by February 17, 2026.

The forms request financial information. The amounts you provide should be from SABHRS reports for FY 2025 for only the educational component of your program.

Your prompt reply would be appreciated. Please call me at 444-1257 if you need help in completing the forms.

Sincerely,

Paul Taylor
Fiscal Data Management

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind

ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 08 (Feb)/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)

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OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			884,153.46	593,282.60	290,870.86
01100 General Fund			874,435.00	589,888.60	284,546.40
300H1 ADMINISTRATION			616,838.00	394,715.34	222,122.66
		61000 Personal Services	589,857.00	376,313.03	213,543.97
		62000 Operating Expenses	26,981.00	18,402.31	8,578.69
300H5 STATE ITSD (RST)			257,597.00	195,173.26	62,423.74
		62000 Operating Expenses	257,597.00	195,173.26	62,423.74
02050 School Trust Interest/Income			3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
300H1 ADMINISTRATION			3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
		61000 Personal Services	3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
02259 MSDB MISC MOUS			6,324.46	0.00	6,324.46
300A1 DIGITAL ACADEMY			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	446,644.67	280,790.24
01100 General Fund			727,434.91	446,644.67	280,790.24
305F4 FY2024 CARRYFORWARD			1,060.91	1,039.76	21.15
		62000 Operating Expenses	10.41	1,039.76	(1,029.35)
		63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,050.50	0.00	1,050.50
305H1 GENERAL SERVICES			726,374.00	445,604.91	280,769.09
		61000 Personal Services	392,182.00	231,799.83	160,382.17
		62000 Operating Expenses	271,577.00	213,805.08	57,771.92
		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	1,290,791.34	999,257.66
01100 General Fund			2,255,320.00	1,282,684.58	972,635.42
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES			2,255,320.00	1,282,684.58	972,635.42
		61000 Personal Services	2,053,236.00	1,186,088.94	867,147.06
		62000 Operating Expenses	202,084.00	96,595.64	105,488.36
03167 National School Lunch			34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES			34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
		62000 Operating Expenses	34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
04 EDUCATION			7,097,661.00	4,059,894.36	3,037,766.64
01100 General Fund			6,548,740.00	3,907,418.87	2,641,321.13
315H1 EDUCATION			6,485,607.00	3,890,577.92	2,595,029.08
		61000 Personal Services	6,219,317.00	3,658,034.68	2,561,282.32
		62000 Operating Expenses	266,290.00	232,543.24	33,746.76

<u>315H8 INTERPRETER PROF DEV (OTO)</u>		61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
62000 Operating Expenses		61,000.00	16,840.95	44,159.05
<u>315Z1 WORKERS COMP. REDUCTION</u>		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	126,528.49	175,812.51
<u>315H1 EDUCATION</u>		302,341.00	126,528.49	175,812.51
61000 Personal Services		302,341.00	126,528.49	175,812.51
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	2,102.54	26,397.46
<u>315AS PRE-ETS</u>		28,500.00	2,102.54	26,397.46
62000 Operating Expenses		28,500.00	2,102.54	26,397.46
03396 DPHHS Grand - Newborn Hearing		35,000.00	10,299.75	24,700.25
<u>315AT NEWBORN HEARING</u>		35,000.00	10,299.75	24,700.25
61000 Personal Services		22,000.00	6,630.00	15,370.00
62000 Operating Expenses		13,000.00	3,669.75	9,330.25
03590 Federal Literacy Grant		11,000.00	7,854.86	3,145.14
<u>315AU MT READS GRANT 9/30/26</u>		11,000.00	7,854.86	3,145.14
61000 Personal Services		2,720.00	0.00	2,720.00
62000 Operating Expenses		8,280.00	7,854.86	425.14
Grand Total		10,999,298.37	6,390,612.97	4,608,685.40

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind

ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 08 (Feb)/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)

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OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			284,782.02	213,575.57	71,206.45
01100	General Fund		284,578.00	213,575.57	71,002.43
	300H1 ADMINISTRATION		26,981.00	18,402.31	8,578.69
		62000 Operating Expenses	26,981.00	18,402.31	8,578.69
	300H5 STATE ITSD (RST)		257,597.00	195,173.26	62,423.74
		62000 Operating Expenses	257,597.00	195,173.26	62,423.74
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	214,844.84	120,408.07
02100	General Fund		335,252.91	214,844.84	120,408.07
	305F4 FY2024 CARRYFORWARD		1,060.91	1,039.76	21.15
		62000 Operating Expenses	10.41	1,039.76	(1,029.35)
		63000 Equipment & Intangible Assets	1,050.50	0.00	1,050.50
	305H1 GENERAL SERVICES		334,192.00	213,805.08	120,386.92
		62000 Operating Expenses	271,577.00	213,805.08	57,771.92
		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	104,702.40	132,110.60
03100	General Fund		202,084.00	96,595.64	105,488.36
	310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		202,084.00	96,595.64	105,488.36
		62000 Operating Expenses	202,084.00	96,595.64	105,488.36
03167	National School Lunch		34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
	310H1 STUDENT SERVICES		34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
		62000 Operating Expenses	34,729.00	8,106.76	26,622.24
04 EDUCATION			447,070.00	268,701.19	178,368.81
04100	General Fund		327,290.00	249,384.19	77,905.81
	315H1 EDUCATION		266,290.00	232,543.24	33,746.76
		62000 Operating Expenses	266,290.00	232,543.24	33,746.76
	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	2,102.54	26,397.46
315AS PRE-ETS		28,500.00	2,102.54	26,397.46
	:62000 Operating Expenses	28,500.00	2,102.54	26,397.46
03396 DPHHS Grand - Newborn Hearing		13,000.00	3,669.75	9,330.25
315AT NEWBORN HEARING		13,000.00	3,669.75	9,330.25
	:62000 Operating Expenses	13,000.00	3,669.75	9,330.25
03590 Federal Literacy Grant		8,280.00	7,854.86	425.14
315AU MT READS GRANT 9/30/26		8,280.00	7,854.86	425.14
	:62000 Operating Expenses	8,280.00	7,854.86	425.14
Grand Total		1,303,917.93	801,824.00	502,093.93

51130 School for the Deaf & Blind

ORG Budget Summary - No A Accruals

Data Selected for Month/FY: 01 (Jul)/2026 through 08 (Feb)/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)

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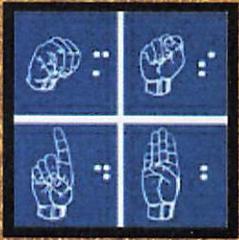
OBPP Program Fund	Subclass	Acct Lvl 1	ORG Budget	Actuals Amt	Balance
01 ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM			599,371.44	379,707.03	219,664.41
01100 General Fund			589,857.00	376,313.03	213,543.97
300H1 ADMINISTRATION			589,857.00	376,313.03	213,543.97
61000 Personal Services			589,857.00	376,313.03	213,543.97
02050 School Trust Interest/Income			3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
300H1 ADMINISTRATION			3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
61000 Personal Services			3,394.00	3,394.00	0.00
02259 MSDB MISC MOUS			6,120.44	0.00	6,120.44
300A1 DIGITAL ACADEMY			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	231,799.83	160,382.17
01100 General Fund			392,182.00	231,799.83	160,382.17
305H1 GENERAL SERVICES			392,182.00	231,799.83	160,382.17
61000 Personal Services			392,182.00	231,799.83	160,382.17
03 STUDENT SERVICES			2,053,236.00	1,186,088.94	867,147.06
01100 General Fund			2,053,236.00	1,186,088.94	867,147.06
310H1 STUDENT SERVICES			2,053,236.00	1,186,088.94	867,147.06
61000 Personal Services			2,053,236.00	1,186,088.94	867,147.06
04 EDUCATION			6,650,591.00	3,791,193.17	2,859,397.83
01100 General Fund			6,221,450.00	3,658,034.68	2,563,415.32
315H1 EDUCATION			6,219,317.00	3,658,034.68	2,561,282.32
61000 Personal Services			6,219,317.00	3,658,034.68	2,561,282.32
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	126,528.49	175,812.51
315H1 EDUCATION			302,341.00	126,528.49	175,812.51
61000 Personal Services			302,341.00	126,528.49	175,812.51
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	6,630.00	15,370.00
315AT NEWBORN HEARING		22,000.00	6,630.00	15,370.00
	:61000 Personal Services	22,000.00	6,630.00	15,370.00
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	5,588,788.97	4,106,591.47

PAYROLL TOTALS

	General Fund PGM 1 01100	School Trust PGM 1 02050	MSDB misc MOU's PGM 1 2259	General Fund PGM 2 01100	General Fund PGM 3 01100	General Fund PGM 4 01100	School Trust PGM 4 02050	IDEA Pre-school & Part B PGM 4 03012	IDEA Outreach PGM 4 03064	Newborn Hearing PGM 4 03396	MT Reads Grant PGM 4 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	(\$23,505.49)	(\$3,394.00)		(\$14,325.63)	(\$75,639.95)	(\$163,034.07)	(\$58,061.02)			(\$6,630.00)		(\$344,590.16)
1/9/2026	(\$23,505.47)			(\$13,252.15)	(\$70,869.30)	(\$231,604.25)						(\$339,231.17)
1/23/2026	(\$25,972.62)			(\$13,795.88)	(\$81,441.78)	(\$237,879.03)						(\$359,089.31)
2/6/2026	(\$22,188.23)			(\$13,851.14)	(\$82,943.01)	(\$163,920.05)	(\$68,467.47)					(\$351,369.90)
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:	(\$376,313.03)	(\$3,394.00)	\$0.00	(\$231,799.83)	(\$1,186,088.94)	(\$3,658,034.68)	(\$126,528.49)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$6,630.00)	\$0.00	(\$5,588,788.97)
BALANCE	\$213,543.97	\$0.00	\$6,120.44	\$160,382.17	\$867,147.06	\$2,563,415.32	\$175,812.51	\$52,861.00	\$49,219.00	\$15,370.00	\$2,720.00	\$4,106,591.47 * TIES TO GL
16 AVERAGE PAYROLL	(\$23,519.56)	(\$212.13)	\$0.00	(\$14,487.49)	(\$74,130.56)	(\$228,627.17)	(\$7,908.03)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$414.38)	\$0.00	(\$349,299.31) Average payroll
10 ESTIMATED PAYROLL	(\$235,195.64)	(\$2,121.25)	\$0.00	(\$144,874.89)	(\$741,305.59)	(\$2,286,271.68)	(\$79,080.31)	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$4,143.75)	\$0.00	(\$3,492,993.11)
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:	(\$21,651.67)	(\$2,121.25)	\$6,120.44	\$15,507.28	\$125,841.47	\$277,143.65	\$96,732.20	\$52,861.00	\$49,219.00	\$11,226.25	\$2,720.00	\$513,030.81 Total with Grants

FOUR PROGRAM TOTAL \$396,840.72 Average payroll total



THE MSDB STUDENT LIFE NEWSLETTER



JANUARY/FEBRUARY
2026

VOLUME 5, NO. 4

A huge thank
you to cottage
staff for
providing all the
visuals for this
edition!



A local quilting group donated quilts for cottage students. They are pictured here with some of the cottage students & Jim Kelly II.

UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF STUDENT LIFE

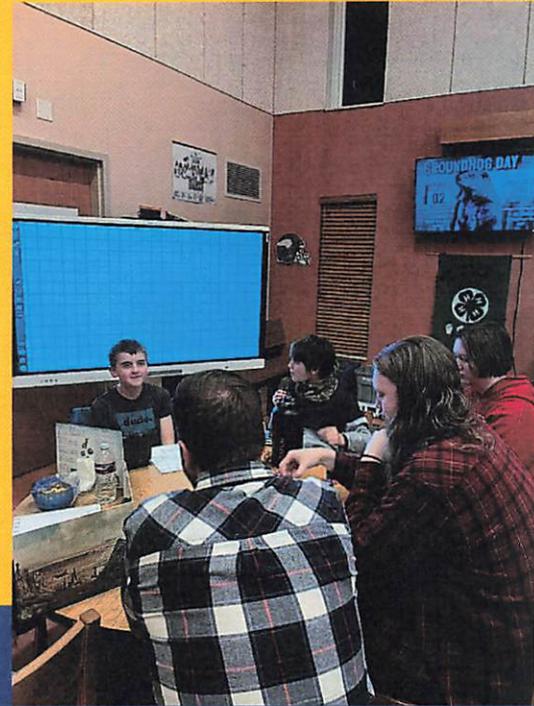
This is our first travel weekend of the New Year – 2026! Things have slowed down a bit since the hustle and bustle during the holidays. Our students continue to be involved in many of the afterschool activities and seem to be enjoying the fun that is being offered. This past weekend, the students and staff had a wonderful Super Bowl Party – with games, food and fun! As always, don't hesitate to contact me if you have questions, suggestions or concerns for your child!
Jim Kelly II

Roleplaying in Dungeons & Dragons

By Ayvia



Hi! My name is Ayvia, and I love Dungeons & Dragons! D&D is an awesome game where you roleplay cool characters, go on exciting adventures, and battle monsters to win epic fights. Every game feels like stepping into a brand-new story. My favorite part is choosing my character. I play a Tabaxi, which is a cat person mixed with a human. Tabaxi are fast, curious, and super fun to play—just like a cat! I really enjoy using my imagination and working with others to see what happens next. D&D is more than just a game to me—it's fun, creative, and something I truly enjoy!



Dungeons & Dragons - Not Only a Game

By Sarah Trimble & Jake Metzenroth

Huzzah and well met fellow adventurers! We have once again started our ventures into the world of Dungeons and Dragons. For those of you who don't know what Dungeons and Dragons or D&D is, it's a table top roll playing game. It incorporates players making their own characters, developing story telling skills, math and cooperative problem solving strategies. This game has been around since the mid 1970's and is beloved by many generations. Now we are bringing it to MSDB! We are running two games, one game is in ASL, the other is spoken English. It is a wonderful opportunity for both our Deaf/HH and VI to experience the of trials and tribulations of the game. We look forward to many more grand adventures and to see where the dice may or may not take us!





All-Cottage Christmas Party

By Morris

I went to the Christmas party in the Yellowstone Activity Room. There was a lot of food, treats and games. I had a good time eating good food and fun games to play with friends.



Bowling at the Cottage

By Morris

Every Sunday night, Obsidian and Shoshone kids go to the gym to use our new bowling alley, and we can play many fun games like Angry Birds, Pixs Bowling and EZ Bowling. I love to go bowling with my friends.



4-H Archery & Records

By Megan DeSilva



Three of our four members are participating in the 4-H Archery Project. We have been attending archery practices nearly every week since the beginning of December, and each member continues to improve their skills. Most of our archery participants are returning members from last year, while one member is brand new to the sport. 4-H has been very accommodating to our students by providing supports such as an interpreter and adjusting the distance of the target for members with visual impairments. We love that MSDB students are able to participate in this challenging and rewarding sport!

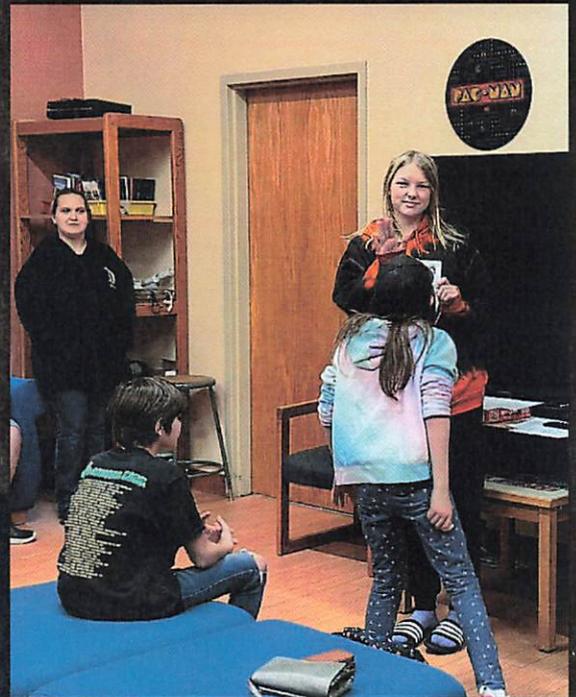
We are also beginning to receive our 4-H Project Books for other projects and are working on completing our record books. Record books are written reports that help members track their activities, learning experiences, and skill development throughout the year. These records can later be used to assist with writing resumes for future job opportunities. Members have already set goals for their projects and will continue to reflect on them throughout the 4-H year.

We are grateful for the opportunities that 4-H provides for our students!

2025-2026 Student of the Quarter - 2nd
Quarter

By Megan DeSilva

This quarter's Student of the Quarter has shown remarkable growth in responsibility, independence, and overall well being. They have made noticeable improvements in personal care and hygiene, taking pride in their appearance and showing increased confidence. Their room has been consistently cleaner, with fewer tripping hazards, and they have taken initiative by making their bed and picking items up from the floor. Socially, they continue to blossom by engaging with peers and staff through card games and conversations, and they have become a positive role model by gently reminding others of rules and helping peers with tasks like doing hair. Mornings have been especially successful this year, with no negative behaviors and a more responsible response to alarms and reminders. They consistently keep staff informed of their daily plans by using the whiteboard, manage a busy schedule of after-school activities, and follow through with expectations when asked—always with a positive attitude. Their cheerfulness, accountability, and willingness to accept responsibility have truly stood out this quarter. We are incredibly proud to recognize Lilly as our Student of the Quarter!

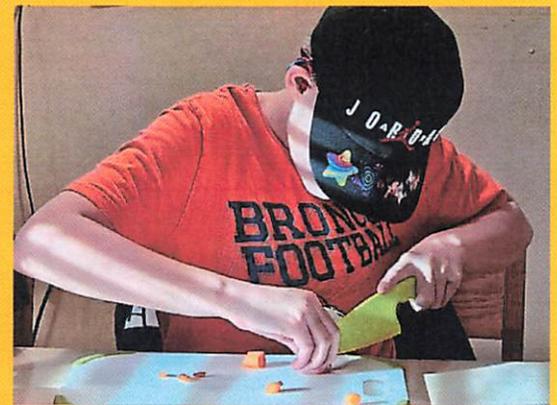
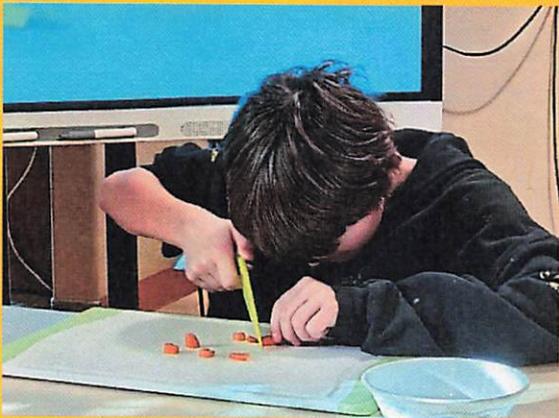
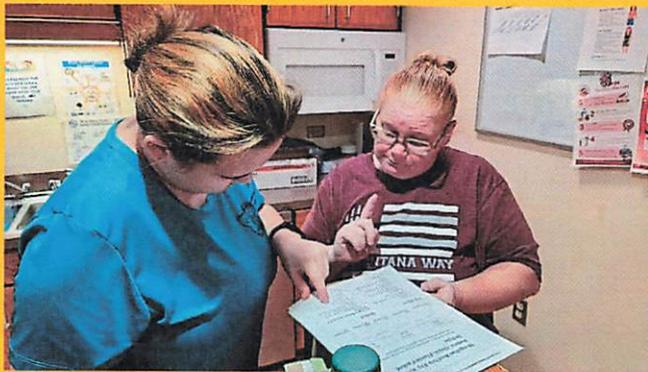


Cooking at the Cottage

By Marissa



Cooking at the cottage was such a great experience. The kids and I cooked together with the staff, and it was a lot of fun. Even though I had to step away for work, it was completely worth it. I really loved cooking and spending time with the kids, especially making our own food together. The kitchen staff usually don't need to prepare much food on the weekends now, and I truly appreciate everything they do—but being part of the cooking ourselves made it extra special.



Cooking

By Alissa Kline

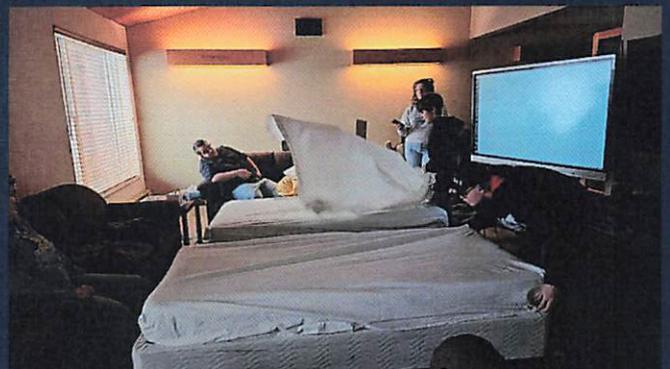
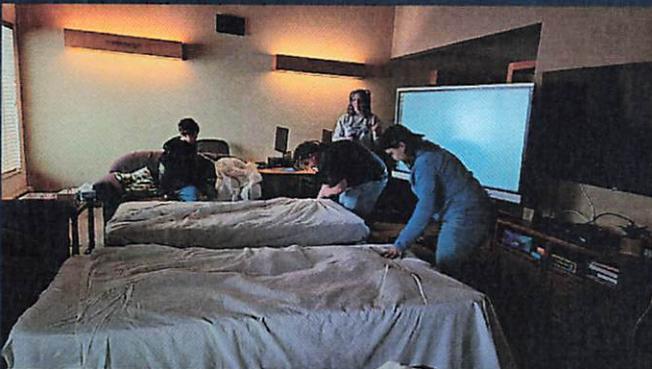
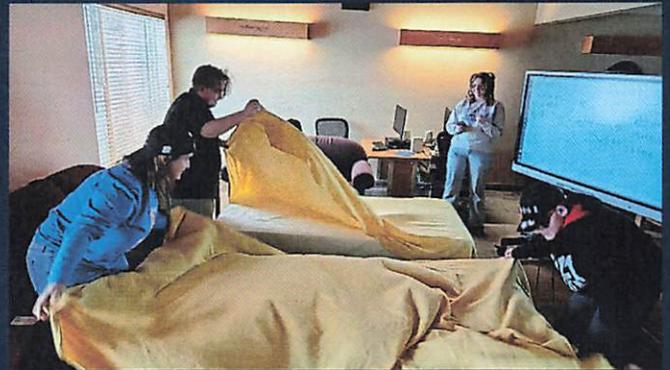
One of the most important things we do in the Cottage is to help students prepare for adulthood. Cooking their own meals is a big part of this. Trevor, Bill, Amanda and Megan have been working with students to cook their own meals on Sundays. Students have learned skills for properly washing fruits/vegetables, chopping or slicing fruits/vegetables, reading and following recipe instructions, and grilling foods in a pan. Staff will continue to work with students to hone their skills each weekend. The best part is sitting down to enjoy the yummy results of their hard work each week!

Bed Making Challenge

By Alissa Kline

Who would ever think that making your bed could be fun and exciting?! Our Cottage students did! One Saturday, we set up two beds and a fun challenge for the students. We stripped the bedding off, showed them how to make their bed, then challenged them to see who could make their bed the neatest and the fastest. Students competed one-on-one as well as in teams. They continued to race against each other again and again for an hour-and-a-half! By the time they were done, they were very skilled at making their beds neatly and quickly.

- Carter won first place for best time.
- Ayvia and Morris won first place for fastest team.
- David won first place for best sport.



Weekly Student Life Activities

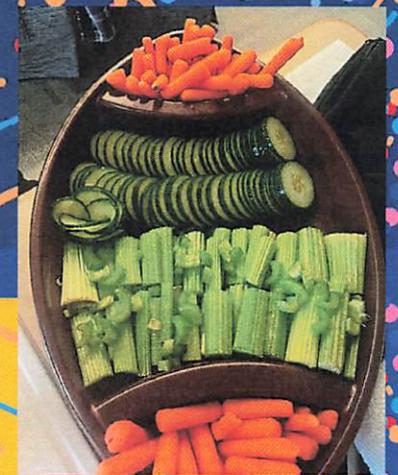
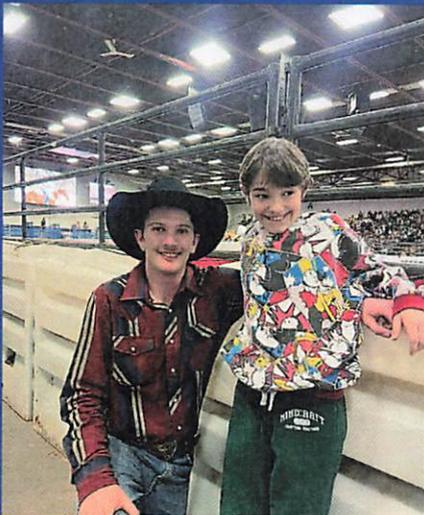
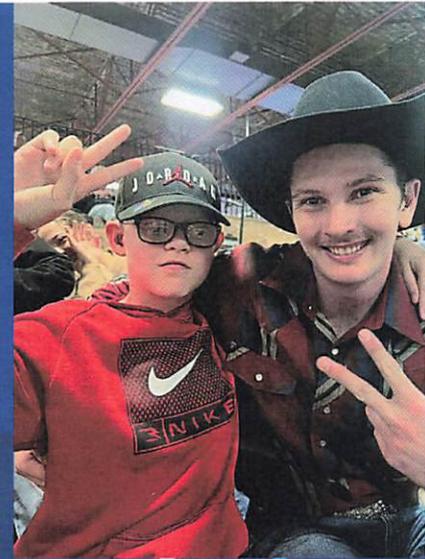
- **EOS (Mon/Wed)**
- **4-H (Tues)**
- **Goal Ball (Tues and Thurs)**
- **Flying Hooves-Elem. (Tues)**
- **Moving Mustangs (Tues 2x/mo)**
- **Computer Club (Tues 2x/mo)**
- **Student Life Social Hour (Wed)**
- **Student Council (Wed)**
- **Snack Shack (Wed/Fri)**
- **Flying Hooves-MS/HS (Thurs)**
- **Gaming Club (Fri)**
- **Dungeons & Dragons (Fri)**
- **Alley Cats Bowling Club (Sun)**

Rodeo

By Carter



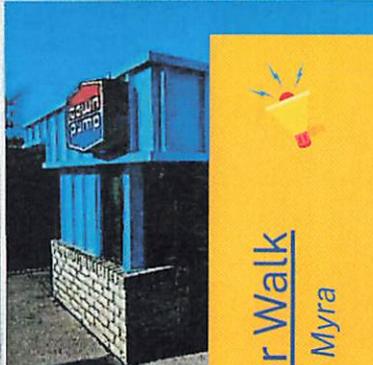
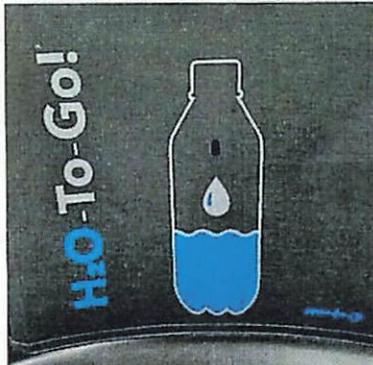
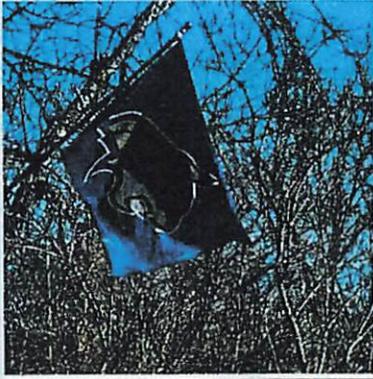
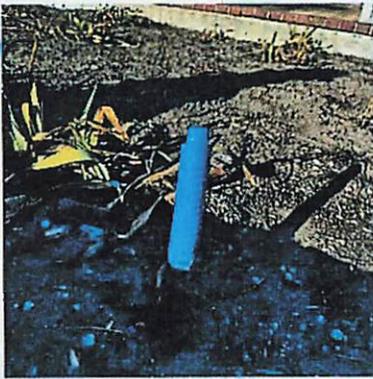
Thank you, Bently (Miss Rodeo Montana), for giving us tickets to the rodeo and for interpreting. We had a great time, and I hope we can do it again soon. My favorite part of the rodeo was when they were chasing and lassoing the cows. JJ, the rodeo clown, was very funny--even when he was throwing the ball to Marias. David's throw back was funnier. I really wanted to watch the cowboys ride the bulls. It was really cool to meet a DHH cowboy. He was very nice and an awesome guy.



Super Bowl Party

By Carter

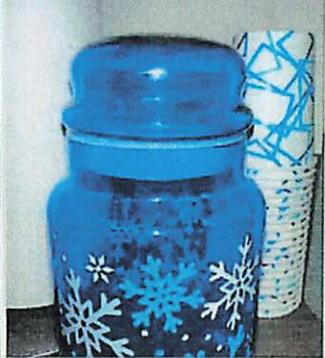
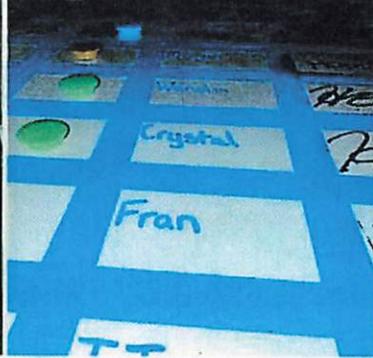
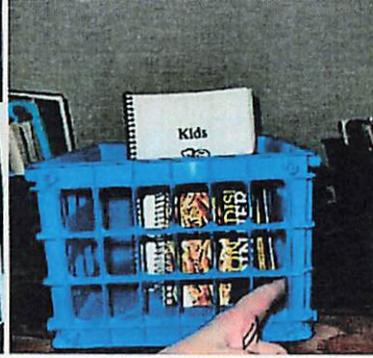
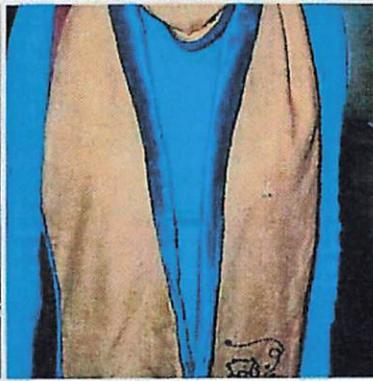
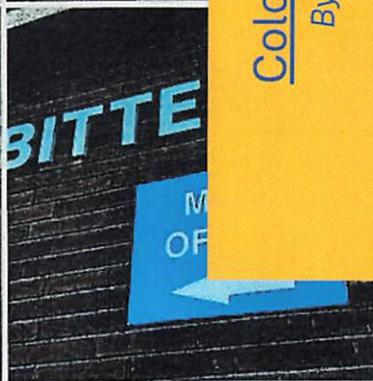
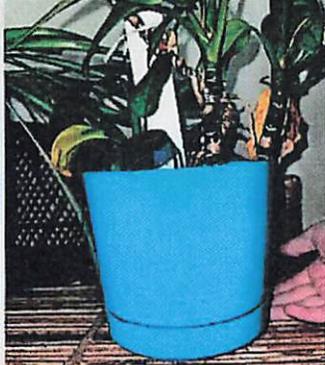
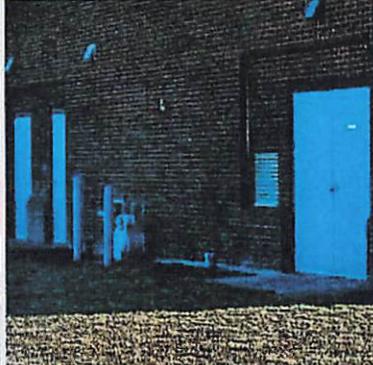
We had a Super Bowl party in the activity room. There was lots of decorations for the Seahawks and the Patriots. We had lots of food and vegetables to eat. Everyone voted for the Seahawks except Bill. The Seahawks won the game. We played Super Bowl Bingo, and I won. At half time, we played a game with party blowers, and I won that, too. My favorite food was the buffalo chicken dip. My favorite part of the party was the food.

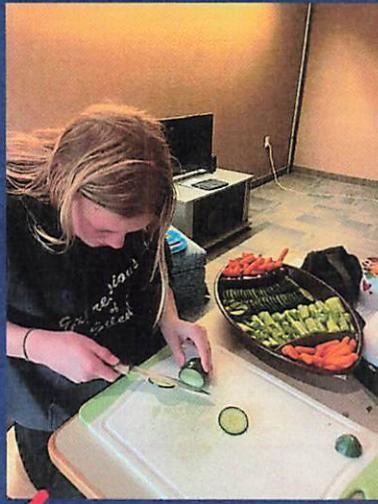




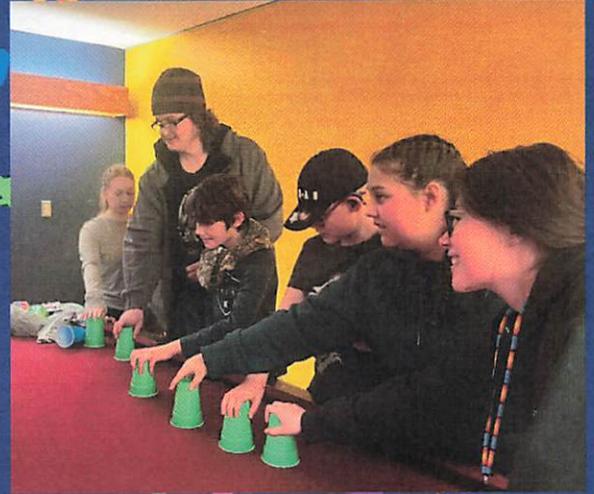
Color Walk
By Myra

A couple weeks ago, I went on a color walk. I went with Cheyanne and other kids to Great Falls High, and we took pictures of things colored blue. We had fun!





Super Bowl Party!



SEATTLE
SEAHAWKS



PATRIOTS

Who you want to win?

MC
A's
Cheyanne
Megan
Anita
Clancy
Christina L
Amanda K.
Darreck

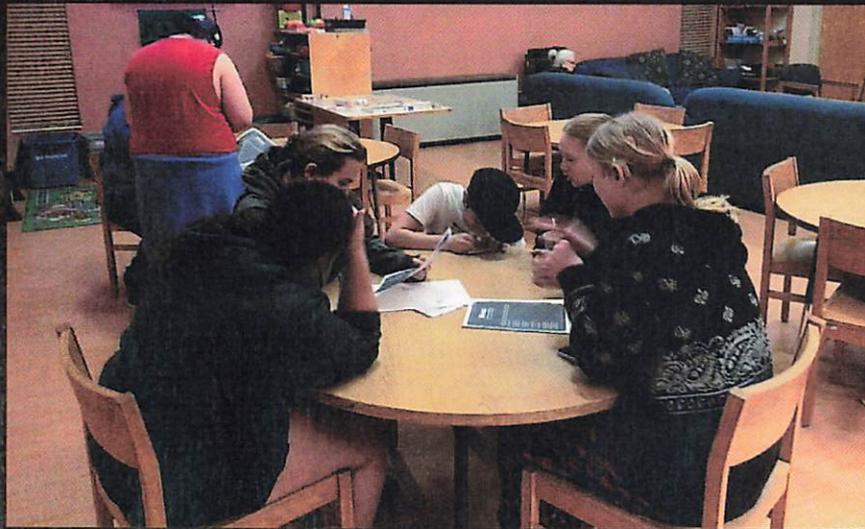
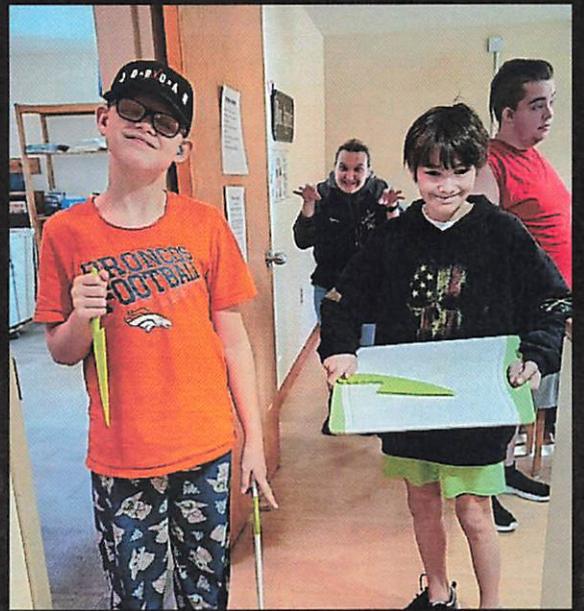
Trevor
Carter
Morriss
Lilly A

Pumpkins
Goal post

Sign
your
name

Bill





**A Day in the
Life at MSDB**

**9089 Mont Sch for
Deaf & Blind District**

3911 Central Avenue, Great Falls, MT 59405
Generated on 03/03/2026 08:06:46 AM Page 1 of 1

Student Enrollment Summary Report

Effective Date: 03/03/2026 Enrollment Types: P, S, N
Total Race/Ethnicities: 5 of 7 Total Schools: 2
Race/Ethnicity Source: Federal Male/Female/Total: 19/18/37

Student Population by Race/Ethnicity and Grade Level (Male/Female/Total)

MT Sch For Deaf & Blind EI

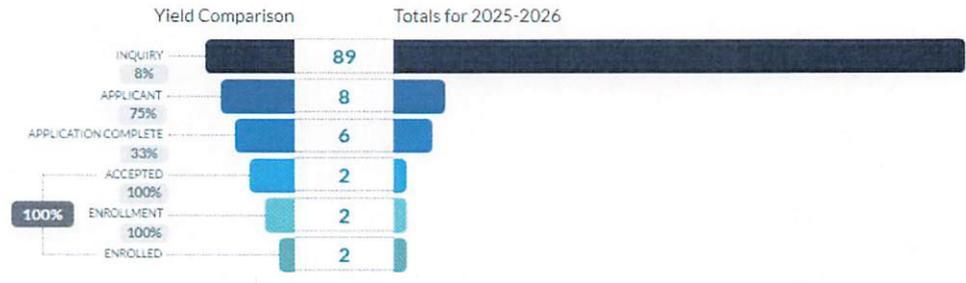
Grade	1:Hispanic/Latino	2:American Indian or Alaska Native	3:Asian	4:Black or African American	5:Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	6:White	7:Two or more races	Total
01	-	-	-	-	-	1/1/2	-	1/1/2
03	-	-	-	-	-	2/1/3	-	2/1/3
05	-	-	-	-	-	2/3/5	0/1/1	2/4/6
06	-	-	-	-	-	1/0/1	1/0/1	2/0/2
07	-	-	-	-	-	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	-	-	-	-	3/2/5	-	4/2/6
PS	0/1/1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0/1/1
All Grades	1/1/2	0/1/1	1/0/1	-	-	9/10/19	1/1/2	12/13/25

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

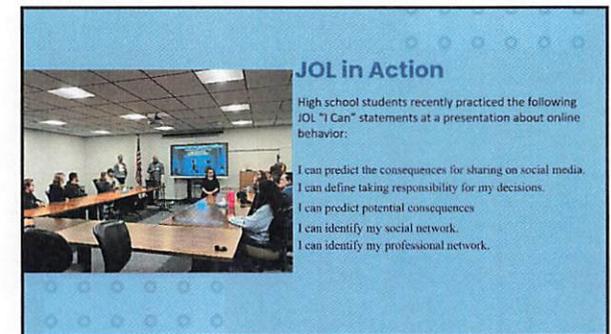
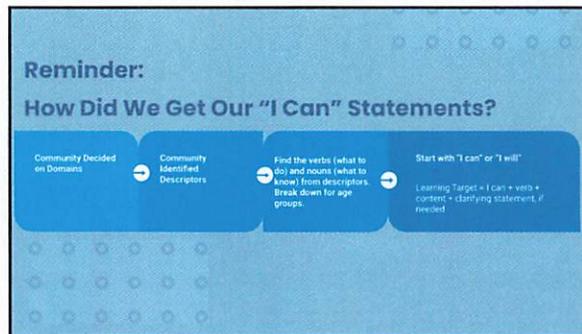
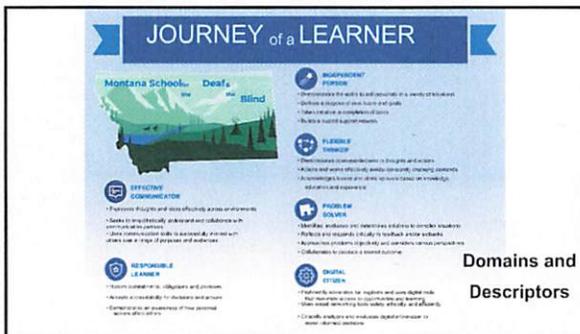
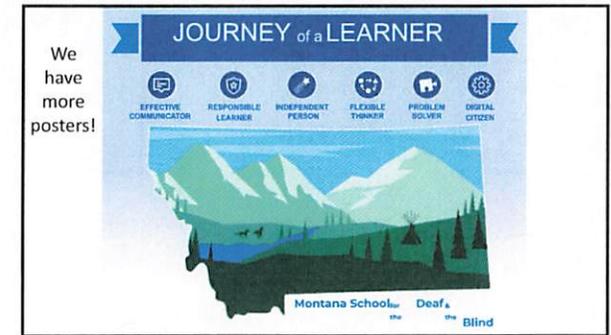
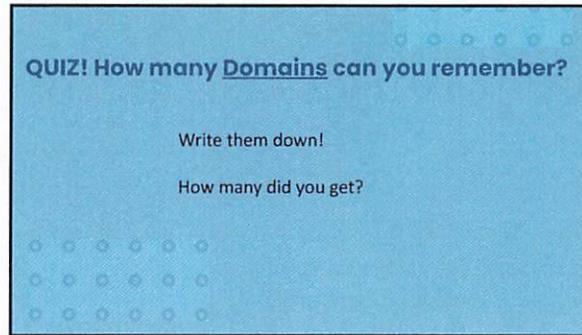
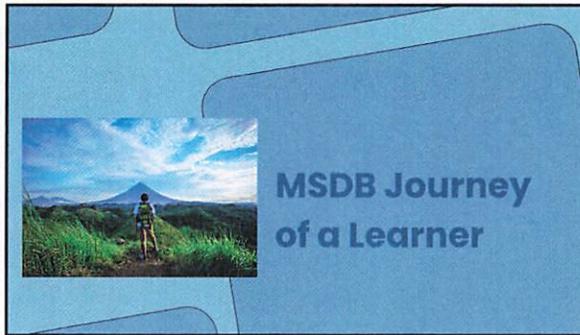
Student Population Excluding White not of Hispanic Origin

School	Total	Percentage
MT Sch For Deaf & Blind EI	6	24.00%
MT Sch For Deaf & Blind HS	4	33.33%
Total	10	27.03%



Admissions

INQUIRY	APPLICANT	APPLICATION COMPLETE	ACCEPTED
Inquiry	Applicant	Application Complete	Accepted
Inquiry Completed	Application Withdrawn By Parent	Review In Progress	Did Not Enroll
Inactive Inquiry	Collecting Educational Documents	Waitlisted	Enrollment Date Selected
Inquiry Referred To Outreach	Collecting Medical Documents	Applicant Ineligible For Services	Parent Declined
		Current Ten Day In Process	
		Document Review In Progress	
		Ten Day Observation Scheduled	

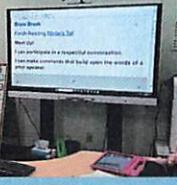


JOL in Action

DHH Elementary students are practicing the following JOL "I Can" statements in ELA and art class:

ELA:
I can participate in a respectful conversation.
I can make comments that build upon the words of a prior speaker.

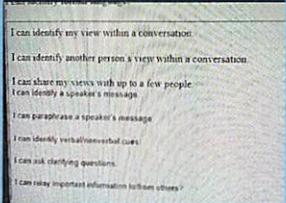
Art:
I can focus on my work for 5 minutes.



ES/MS Art PROJECT
Pop Art 3D Sculpture
I can make 3D art
JOL I can focus on my work for 5 minutes.
Materials: Model clay, JOL drawing

JOL in Action

JOL statements added to lesson plans.



- I can identify my view within a conversation.
- I can identify another person's view within a conversation.
- I can share my views with up to a few people.
- I can identify a speaker's message.
- I can paraphrase a speaker's message.
- I can identify verbal/non-verbal cues.
- I can ask clarifying questions.
- I can relay important information to/from others.

JOL in Action

JOL posters made in the cottage by students.



Problem Solver
5 + 10 = 15
break it down!

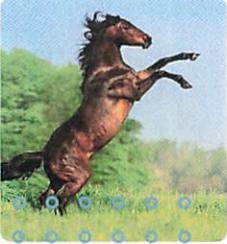
JOL in Action

- Take 2 minutes and think about at least 3 ways you have used or want to use JOL Learning Targets, "I Can" statements in your environment.
 - Bell Ringers/Exit Tickets
 - Incorporating into Lesson plans
 - Posted in room
 - ??
- Write your ideas down
- Turn to a colleague and share what you will try this next week

Using Learning Targets from JOL

Bell Ringer Examples

Domain	"I Can" Statement	Activity
Digital Citizen	I can identify what is bullying I can identify what is not bullying	Watch "Is it Cyberbullying?" by Step Cyberbullying Video
Problem Solver	I can identify a solution to a problem	Break printed apart for students to do independently. Or complete on Smartboard drawing link connecting problems and solution Problem Solution Match
Effective Communicator	I can express to others in conversation what I like I can express to others in conversation what I don't like	Play a few rounds of "would you rather?" with students and after each choice of statements, have students explain why they selected one thing over another. Would You Rather? prompts



To Do List:

- Use your idea!
- Quiz yourself on the domains.
- Go be awesome!

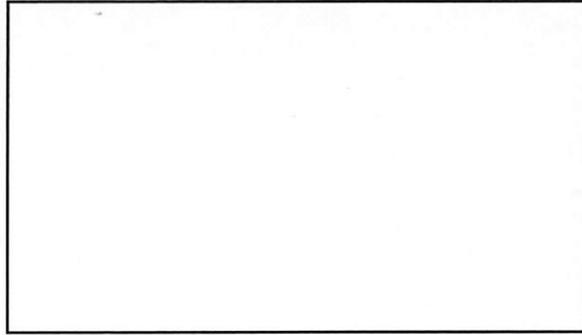
[Jan/Feb JOL I Can Statements](#)

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.**



Walk Through Data Outreach

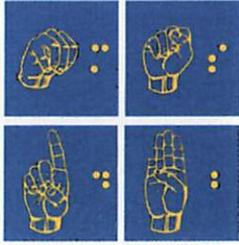
January 2026

1. Community Partnerships = 129
2. School District consultation = 890
3. Trainings by consultants = 9
4. Family Consultation = 232
5. Student evaluations = 27
6. New Referrals = 28
7. Consultant Professional Development = 123
8. Regional Events attended by consultants = 14

Definitions:

1. Community Partnerships
 - a. How many community partners did you reach out to? (Part C, Event Space, DB Project, MT Empowerment, etc.)
2. School District Consultation
 - a. How many times did you consult with a school district? (student specific)
3. Training
 - a. Training offered to school district staff, Part C, community partner, presenting at a conference, etc. done by a consultant
4. Family/Student Consultation
 - a. How many times did you offer consultation to a family or student over 18 years old? (child specific, for our EC team and post grads.)
5. Student Evaluations
 - a. Report how many evaluations you have completed (observation, evaluation and report written/presented to be considered complete)
6. New Referral
 - a. How many new referrals received this pay period
7. Consultant Professional Development
 - a. How many development opportunities did you take part in (ASL classes, APH HIVE courses, virtual training, in person training, etc.)
8. Outreach Regional Event
 - a. How many regional events did you attend this pay period

MSDB Outreach Consultant Coverage Map & Contact Information

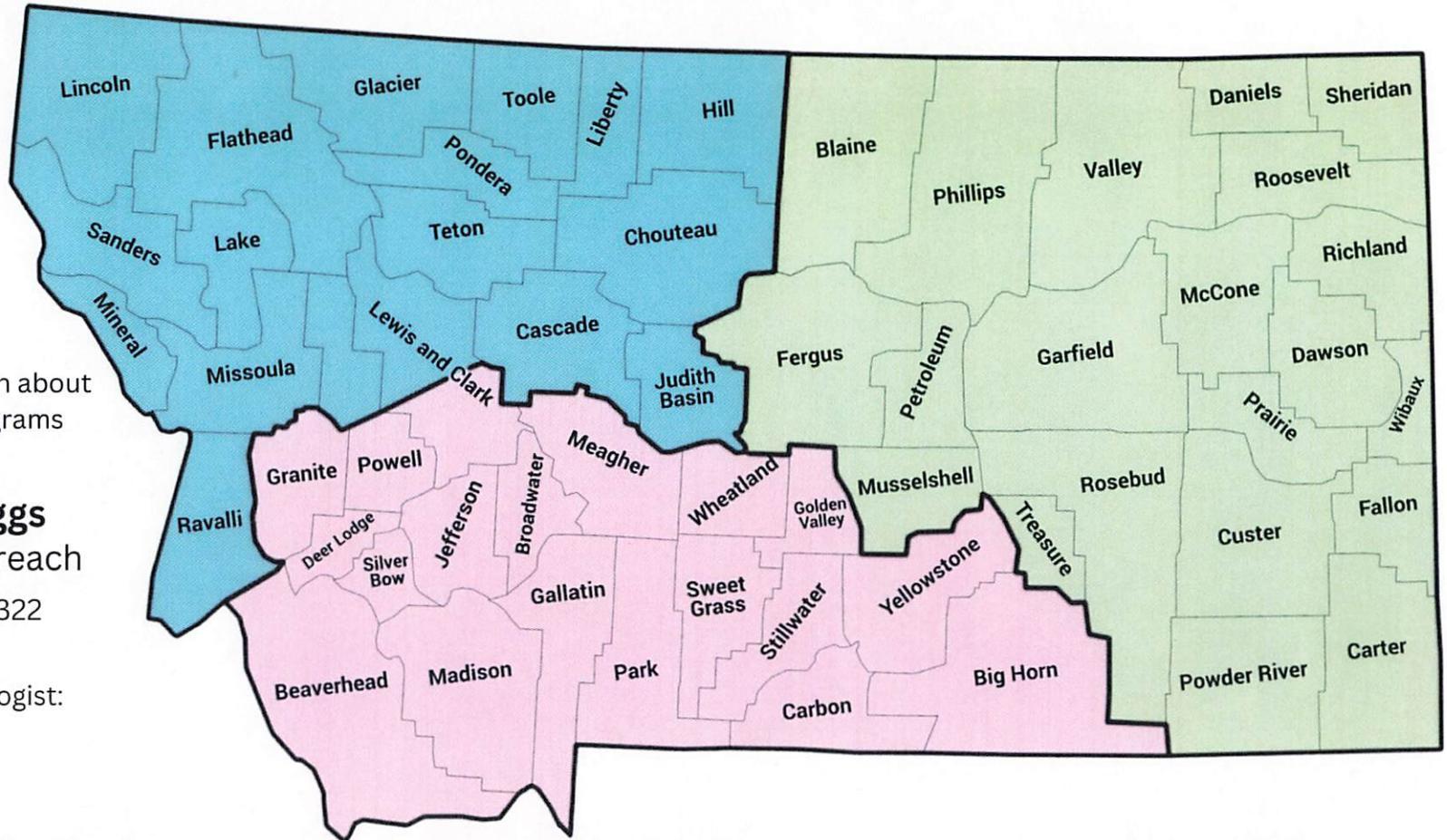


MONTANA SCHOOL
for the Deaf & the Blind

For more information about
our Outreach programs
contact:

Miranda Briggs
Director of Outreach
Cell: 406-403-1322

Consulting Audiologist:
Lisa Cannon



Northwest Region

Early Childhood (up to 5 yrs) & DeafBlind

Kerri Norick (VI)
Alice Anderson (DHH)
Lisa Cannon

Blind - Michelle Cross

Low Vision - Heather Hill

Hard of Hearing - Tailore Moore

Deaf - Lace Lesofski

Southwest Region

Early Childhood (up to 5 yrs) & DeafBlind

Jenn Norlander (VI)
Desiree Tietje (DHH)
Lisa Cannon

Blind - Kacie Wilmot

Low Vision - Amy Tangen

Hard of Hearing - Melissa Fisher

Deaf - Amber Bateen

East Region

Blind/Low Vision & DeafBlind

Susan Davis

Hard-of-Hearing/Deaf & DeafBlind

Amanda Vanorsdale

Support from:

Kerri Norick
Alice Anderson
Amber Bateen
Michelle Cross
Lisa Canon

Outreach Consultant Contact Information

All consultants can be reached by email using the format: **first initial + last name @msdb.k12.mt.us**

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Alice Anderson
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Kerri Norick
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Amber Bateen
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Lace Lesofski
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Amy Tangen
406-868-0851

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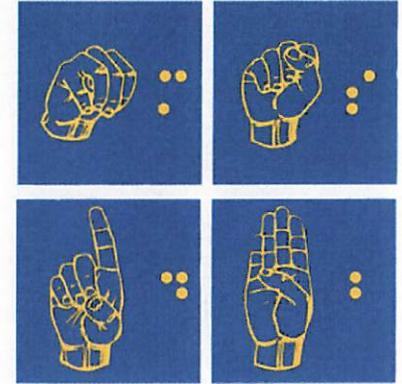
Melissa Fisher
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Susan Davis
406-670-3569

Jenn Norlander
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Tailore Moore
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MONTANA SCHOOL
for the Deaf & the Blind

State Wide Resources

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406-403-1322

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Consulting Audiologist
and Early Childhood
406-422-6095

Reena Feeler
Administrative Assistant
406-771-6088



MSDB | March 2026



Outreach Newsletter

Reaching out across Montana.

TOGETHER
WE THRIVE

Building Strong Connections

A simple guide for families, educators, and community partners to build strong connections with deafblind children.

Children who are deafblind learn about the world mainly through touch, movement, and trusted relationships. Strong connections help them feel safe, communicate, and learn. Below are simple, practical ways to build that bond.

1. Connect through touch and clear communication

Touch is not just comfort, it is communication.

- Hold and touch the deafblind child often. Gentle, consistent touch builds trust.
- Let them know before you move them. Use a familiar touch cue before picking them up.
- Let them explore your face. This helps them recognize you and understand emotions.
- Keep babies close. Using a carrier during daily routines helps them feel your movement and presence.

Your touch is their bridge to the world.

2. Respond and follow their lead

Every small movement means something.

- Respond quickly. This teaches the deafblind child that their actions matter.
- Join what interests them. If they tap, tap back. If they explore an object, explore it together.
- Offer simple choices. Let them choose between two objects when possible.
- Play back-and-forth games. Simple turn-taking builds communication skills.

Remember-small responses are big communication.

3. Create Predictable Routines

Consistency builds security.

- Keep daily routines similar. Repeated Patterns help the deafblind child understand what comes next.
- Allow extra time in new places. Transitions can be overwhelming.
- Watch for “attentive stillness.” If the deafblind child becomes very still and quite, they may be concentrating-not ignoring you. Continue gently interacting.

Please remember to slow down, be consistent, notice small signals, and celebrate small responses. These strong, patient, loving connections help children who are deafblind feel understood and ready to explore their world.

Building Trusting Relationships NCDB Practice Guide

[CLICK HERE](#)



Touch

By Robert Smithdas

There is no need to speak;
I understand each quick, impulsive movement of
your hand.

By some strange magic of the heart, I guess the
meaning of each gesture, each caress.

Your fingers can be gentle, firm, or kind, or fierce
when anger surges through your mind.

Or they can trace, with such exquisite grace, the
tenderness love mirrors in your face.

Oh, when I reach to take you by the hand, it is
because I need to understand that I am not alone
in this broad land.

The Power of Touch

Deafblind poet **Robert Smithdas** wrote about how touch carries meaning, emotion, and connection. His poem **Touch** reminds us that hands can communicate love, comfort, and understanding without words.

Connected from the Start

Nurturing young children who are blind or low vision.

For young children who are blind or have low vision, strong relationships and predictable routines create a powerful sense of safety. Families, educators, and community partners all play an important role in building these early connections.

Create Simple, Predictable Routines

Consistent cuddle times, such as in the morning, before naps, or at bedtime can help young children who are blind or have low vision feel secure. Pair these moments with songs, fingerplays, or gentle touch games like “This Little Piggy” or “Pat-a-Cake.” Add multisensory experiences such as textured books, musical instruments, rocking, or humming. Your voice, touch, and steady presence creates a cocoon of comfort.

Use Clear Cues and Support Exploration

Children who are blind or low vision rely on sound and touch to understand their world. Narrate your actions (“I’m going to pick you up now”) and use consistent verbal cues during transitions. Keep furniture and favorite toys in predictable places and create simple tactile landmarks to encourage confident exploration.

Encourage Social Connection

Interactive games with clapping, movement, music, and playful touch promote joyful engagement. When appropriate and with permission, children can gently explore faces with their hands to learn about expressions. Model warmth and enthusiasm in your voice to support social understanding. Inclusive music or community classes can also provide meaningful opportunities to connect.

Every child is unique. Celebrate small moments of connection, trust your instincts, and partner with early intervention specialists for individualized support.

Tools for Building Connection Through Play

[CLICK HERE](#)

Communication and Connection from Day One

Simple ways to support young children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Loving, responsive relationships are the foundation for healthy emotional, social, and communication development in young children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Simple, everyday moments like cuddling, rocking, holding a deaf or hard of hearing child close, smiling, singing, and making eye contact. Can help little ones feel safe, secure, and connected.

When families, educators, and community partners respond warmly to a deaf or hard of hearing child’s communication attempts, you want to follow their lead, and offer encouragement, so they feel understood and valued. This support builds confidence, strengthens security, and nurtures early communication skills.

Build Connection Through Shared Communication

1. **Joint Attention**

- Focus together on the same toy, book, or activity to encourage interaction and early social learning.

2. **Try Engaging Activities**

- Read books with bright, engaging pictures.
- Tell simple stories using sign language or visual supports.
- Play interactive games like *Peek-a-Boo*.

3. **Use Supportive Strategies**

- Provide clear visual cues.
- Use expressive facial expressions.
- Pair spoken words with gestures or sign.

With consistent love, patience, and responsive communication, young children who are deaf or hard of hearing can thrive emotionally, socially, and communicatively.

**Building Strong Bonds: Practical Tips for
Everyday Connection**

[CLICK HERE](#)





PUNK CHEF

Deaf Role Model: Scott Garthwaite

Scott is a well known Deaf chef in England. He worked with renowned chefs in the UK during his culinary training years that helped shape his culinary identity today. During his studies, Scott started making video blogs in British Sign Language (BSL) for the Deaf community on social media, where he was found by a production company that is Deaf led. This partnership created ***Punk Chef TV***, a cooking series for the Deaf community. Scott wanted to show the Deaf community how easy it was to make tasty meals and show that their disability shouldn't be a barrier to learning new skills, while being able to personally relate to the Deaf community since he is deaf himself. Since the start of his show, Scott has been able to showcase his talent globally in festivals, taking center stage as the first Deaf chef for the main cooking event at Ludlow's Food and Drink Festival in 2019. Scott continues to empower the Deaf community in the culinary sphere. His most recent venture of starting a food truck, designed to fuse sign language and food, was to celebrate Deaf culture and bring employment opportunities for Deaf individuals.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

Play, Communicate, and Thrive

Supporting communication, community, and fun for children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Being apart of a Deaf or Hard of Hearing (DHH) community offers connection, support, and shared understanding. Families, educators, and community partners can help children find this community through Deaf organizations, events, and online groups.

Being a Good Communication Partner

- Use sign language, visual cues, gestures, and facial expressions.

- Get the child's attention before speaking.
- Be patient, responsive, and engaged .
- Learn more about effective communication with Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals.

Fun Activity for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Game time can be fully inclusive with simple adaptations. Games like UNO, Jenga, Pictionary, Scrabble, or Charades can be played using:

- Sign language or visual cues.
- Expressive gestures or drawing.
- Silent play for a visually rich experience.

These adjustments can help a Deaf or Hard of Hearing children practice turn-taking, paying attention, patience, and communication skills, all while keeping playtime fun and engaging.

Hands-On and Heartfelt: Deaf-Friendly Play Ideas

[CLICK HERE](#)

Empowering Blind and Low Vision Students Every Day

Supporting Students Who Are Blind or Have Low Vision in Promoting Friendship, Confidence, and Independence

Creating inclusive learning environments that foster social connection, independence, and self-advocacy is a shared responsibility among families, educators, and administrators. The following evidence-informed practices adapted from guidance by the American Printing House for the Blind. Provide practical strategies to support students who are blind or have low vision in developing meaningful peer relationships and essential life skills.

Helping Blind and Low Vision Children Build Friendships

- **Keep social groups small.** Invite one or two classmates over. Smaller groups are easier to navigate and more comfortable socially.
- **Suggest simple activities.** Art projects or games can help break the ice. Step back once the blind or low vision child feels confident.
- **Encourage reciprocity.** If the blind or low vision child is strong in a subject, have them offer help to a peer. Avoid using gifts (candy, toys) to build friendships, a sincere thank-you is enough.

- **Practice through role-play.** Take turns practicing conversation starters and provide supportive, realistic feedback.

What True Inclusion Looks Like

Inclusion extends beyond physical placement in the classroom. It requires intentional planning to ensure access, participation, and independence.

Key elements of inclusive classrooms

- Materials in braille, large print, audio, or screen reader–friendly formats.
- Verbal description of visual content, demonstrations, and board work.
- A consistent, organized, and clutter-free classroom layout.
- Clear communication (avoid vague terms like “this” or “that”).
- Access to assistive technology.
- Active and meaningful participation in collaborative learning.
- Extra time when needed.

Empowering Peers to Support Inclusion

Small, intentional actions make a difference by encouraging others to:

- Introduce themselves when speaking.
- Use clear, descriptive language.
- Explain visual information aloud.
- Ask before offering assistance.

Strengthening Self-Advocacy Skills

Developing self-advocacy is key to independence and success. Students and individuals who are blind or have low vision can practice the following skills:

- Introducing themselves clearly.
- Asking speakers to identify themselves in groups.
- Requesting descriptions of nonverbal cues.
- Informing others when entering or leaving a conversation.
- Speaking at a natural, conversational volume.

By embedding these practices into everyday routines at home, in schools, on the job, and within the community, families, educators, and employers can create inclusive environments that promote belonging, independence, and confidence for individuals who are blind or have low vision. Ongoing collaboration among all members of a support network is essential to ensure equitable access, meaningful participation, and full engagement in all areas of life.

Learn more about Inclusive
Environments

CLICK HERE

Learn more on Tips for Promoting
Friendships

CLICK HERE



SAVE THE DATES

- April 11-12: Goalball Enrichment Weekend, Great Falls, MT
- April 17-18: Spring Campus Enrichment Days, Great Falls, MT
- June 5-7: Family Learning Weekend, Great Falls, MT

Contact the Outreach Office at
406-771-6088 for additional
information on upcoming
events.

Thanks for being part of our MSDB community. Please check out our Facebook Page and our school website.



[CONTACT US](#) | [MANAGE PREFERENCES](#)

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BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TOURS & ACTIVITIES

- 9:15AM RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY HIGH
SCHOOL TOUR – AUTOMOTIVE SHOP
130 3rd AVE NW**
- 10:00AM RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY MIDDLE
SCHOOL TOUR – AG/GARDENING
35885 ROUND BUTTE RD**
- 10:30AM RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY MIDDLE
SCHOOL TOUR – SMALL ENGINES
35885 ROUND BUTTE RD**
- 11:00AM RONAN CHARTER ACADEMY
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION
130 3rd AVE NW**

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS May 21-22, 2026
Great Falls, MT

Student Representative – Last Meeting & Recognition

MACIE Update

Review Public Charter School Performance Reports

Action on K-12 Schools Payment Schedule

Assessment Update

Federal Update

Content Standards Revision Update

Accreditation Update – Student Performance Standards

Action on Accreditation Procedures and Schedules

Action on Accreditation Status of All Schools

Review Draft CAEP MOU

Executive Director Performance Evaluation