D. Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement

1. Entrance and Exit Procedures

(ESEA section 3113(b)(2)): Describe how the SEA will establish and implement, with timely and meaningful consultation with LEAs representing the geographic diversity of the State, standardized, statewide entrance and exit procedures, including an assurance that all students who may be English learners are assessed for such status within 30 days of enrollment in a school in the State.

Montana has developed standardized, statewide entrance procedures for the accurate and timely identification of all English learners (ELs). In order to create the necessary processes and procedures, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) met with stakeholders from across Montana who represent the geographic diversity and understand the unique needs of ELs. In addition to stakeholder meetings, the OPI conducted EL-focused sessions to solicit specific feedback from stakeholders regarding EL portions of the state plan. The feedback was combined and embedded into the plan.

Based on two standard setting studies convened by WIDA (2016) that recommended raising the bar in academic English language proficiency expectations, in August 2019, the OPI convened stakeholders to review the exit criteria for Montana ELs. The OPI selected participants from a diverse group of Montana stakeholders, including (but not limited to): School administrators, school Title coordinators (e.g., Title III), English learner specialists, Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) teachers, cultural experts (i.e., persons with heritage language expertise with immigrant, indigenous and colony students), community, and parents. The purpose of the OPI WIDA Standard Validation Workshop was to establish meaningful proficiency criteria for Montana's ELs and meet the federal statutory requirement for assessments used in the statewide accountability system and Peer Review as mandated by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). Additionally, it was also important for the OPI to ensure the exit criteria is realistic for unique ELs of Montana and based on the most current research. In order to meet these requirements, the committee reviewed historical WIDA and content area performance data (e.g., Smarter Balanced and ACT). The work from this committee was used to comply with the Peer Review USDOE requirements, statewide reporting, and the contents of the Montana State Plan amendment for English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement entrance and exit procedures.

Montana has established a standardized, statewide entrance process, which starts with identification of ELs. In order to gather information on language(s) spoken in the home or in the student's life, the first entry point to the identification process is administering the standardized, statewide home language survey to every student at the time of enrollment and returned within 14 days. The home language survey establishes eligibility for the student to be screened using the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English language screener (wida.us). Starting in the 2017-2018 school year, EL students in Grades 1-12 will be screened using the WIDA online screener, and students in kindergarten will be assessed using the WIDA K W-APT language screener. These screeners assess students in all four domains of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. If a student's scores fall below the English language proficiency criteria, he or she is identified as an EL and qualifies for services.

¶In order to be eligible for services, defined criteria scores for the screeners are used. The screener criteria for kindergarten is a score below 25. In Grades 1-12 the WIDA on-line screener criteria is an

overall ~composite score with no domain sub-scores at or above 5.0 a 4.7. This 4.7 overall composite score was revised in Fall 2019 from a 5.0 overall composite score and a 4.0 or better sub-score in each of the language domains. Scores below this level indicate a need for EL services, reflecting the OPI's revised exit/reclassification criteria. The screening process and EL identification status will be completed by a LEA within 30 days of a student's enrollment in the school. An assurance in the OPI E-grant application for ESEA funds will ensure that all schools adhere to this timeline. School applications will not be approved, nor will ESEA funding be available, until they agree to this assurance.

Based on experience with American Indian ELs and the fact that they are the largest group of identified ELs in the state,

Montana has created a second entry point for eligibility of EL status through a standardized Teacher Observation Checklist that is available on the OPI website to all schools. The checklist allows classroom teachers the opportunity to observe a student's language skills and determine whether there could be a language other than English impacting the student's English proficiency. Once it is established that a language other than English may be present, the WIDA on-line screener or WIDA W-APT is administered to determine EL status. The same criteria to determine EL status is used for all students in the state, regardless of their eligibility entry point. Upon determination that a student is an EL, the student will immediately begin to receive appropriate EL services from the school.

 Montana has established a standardized, statewide exit process to determine when an EL no longer requires EL services, which as mentioned above, was revised in the 2019 Montana WIDA Standards Validation Workshop. Montana's minimum requirement to exit EL services, is that an EL must obtain an overall composite score of 4.75.0 or better along with a score of 4.0 or better in each of the language d listening, speaking, reading, and writing on the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment. Each school must develop a plan to review EL data from the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 tests on an annual basis to determine if an EL has attained proficiency according to Montana's exit proficiency criteria. A template for schools to use during the data evaluation process is available on the OPI website. Schools may make exit decisions based solely on the criteria established for the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 tests, but they are encouraged to consider other data related to academic achievement and the student's ability to be successful in various community, college, and career settings. Additional data may include assessments of reading comprehension and writing from classroom, district, and statewide content assessments.

In addition to the WIDA ACCESS for ELLS 2.0 assessment, Montana administers an alternate test designed specifically for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities. During the 2019 Montana WIDA Standards Validation Workshop, the stakeholders established a minimum requirement to exit EL services for ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities as an overall composite score of P2 on the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment. Stakeholders also set recommendations that consideration for exit should take place with the EL specialist and the IEP team of the student. The determination to exit the student should be supported with additional quantitative and qualitative data. Recommended quantitative data included: 3rd-8th grade and 11th grade- MSAA test scores; reading comprehension and writing assessments; and data from the IEP about student progress towards reading, writing, and EL goals. Whereas, qualitative data listed was: The influence of

language differences and disabilities on learning behaviors and utilization of the OELA English Learner Toolkit Chapter 6, Tool #2 for guiding a discussion and gathering qualitative data that will help the IEP team differentiate language and literacy acquisition.

The OPI has created webinars on the new entrance and exit criteria to assist schools and districts with these processes as they implement the revised proficiency criteria changes in the 201997-202018 school year.

2. *SEA Support for English Learner Progress*
(ESEA section 3113(b)(6)): Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:
   i. *The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State's English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and*

   ii. *The challenging State academic standards.*

i.   Montana is a minimally-funded Title III state with a unique population of ELs. ELs consist of 2 percent of the total student body population in Montana. American Indian languages have the highest number of ELs at 6167 percent of the total, with German at 1211.6 percent and Spanish at 129.5 percent. The data for ELs in Montana demonstrate that our American Indian student population struggles with academic language in the content areas. The OPI has created a framework and focus to support American Indian ELs with the development of school and district-level Academic Language Development Teams that support teachers in meeting the unique needs of American Indian ELs. The professional development support for teachers includes rationale and strategies of how to best support American Indian ELs and provides teachers with instructional tools to meet these needs. The OPI will assists eligible entities in meeting the long-term goals and interim progress through a tiered system of support. The first tier of supporting schools is the provision of technical assistance during the development of the annual Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP). During this planning process, schools will evaluate the performance data of their ELs and determine strategies and interventions to support ELs in meeting English language goals. The OPI will provides online resources and connections with regional facilitators and experts to assist in this work. Once a school's CSIP is complete, the OPI will provides online resources, face-to-face professional development, and technical assistance to support schools as they review, refine, and improve their instruction for ELs to ensure they will meet the state goals.

ii.   The OPI will assists eligible entities in supporting ELs in meeting the challenging state academic standards bythrough providing professional development for districts to improve EL programs and teacher effectiveness. One purpose of professional development is embedding EL strategies into core content instruction in order to support students in accessing and engaging with the state academic standards. These strategies are will be embedded into the effective instruction and not just for intervention purposes., although those may be necessary, as well. Through the OPI Hub, the Title III partnersing with Title I and the OPI Content Standards and Instruction Division towill ensure that the professional development aligns with best practices for ELs and with state standards, including newly revised and adopted standards. In addition to online courses, the OPI offers regional workshops and

~~online~~ professional learning opportunities through partnerships with other educational entities ~~communities~~ that focus on improving teacher effectiveness and building capacity. ~~The professional learning communities meet online so that teachers from all areas in Montana can participate in relevant professional development and network with other teachers and resources across the state.~~ All professional development opportunities and resources can be accessed by Montana teachers to improve effectiveness of instructional strategies for ELs.

3. *Monitoring and Technical Assistance*
   (ESEA section 3113(b)(8)):Describe:
   > i.   *How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A sub-grant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and*
   > ii.   *The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.*

A variety of monitoring methods are used by the OPI to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met by all Title III subgrantees. The process for monitoring begins with the E-grant system. Schools agree to assurances and prepare a Title III application describing how they will use the funds to assist ELs in achieving English language proficiency. During this process, the OPI supports LEAs by providing technical assistance and support for linking the goals from their CSIP to the funding sources and supports for ELs, teachers of ELs, and families of ELs. Many of the districts that receive Title III funds are part of a consortium because they do not meet the minimum requirement of a $10,000 allocation. That means that they receive very little funding to support the small number of identified ELs. The OPI understands the funding considerations and monitoring of these smaller districts and takes that into account when providing access to technical assistance, professional development opportunities, and frequency of monitoring.

~~During the 2017-2018 school year, t~~The OPI ~~will~~ merge~~d~~ the Title III and the Title I monitoring systems and schedules, including desk monitoring and on-site monitoring visits. This ~~will~~ provide~~s~~ a more cohesive monitoring system and enable~~s~~ closer collaboration between Title programs and a clearer process for districts. In addition to the specific Title monitoring system, the OPI also provides on-site visits for high-need districts. Other monitoring and support systems at the OPI, such as the American Indian Task Force, special education monitoring, and accreditation reports support schools across internal work units and grant efforts in meeting the needs of ELs and supporting language development.

Through the continuous school improvement process, the E-grant application system, and the tiered system of support for professional development, the OPI ~~will~~ support~~s~~ districts as they monitor student progress and adjust their EL intervention programs accordingly. The U.S. Department of Education's English Learner Toolkit and OPI guidance ~~will~~ support~~s~~ districts through their goal-setting and monitoring process.

The OPI ~~will~~ use~~s~~ the statewide tiered system of support to ensure that technical assistance, resources, and services are delivered strategically and comprehensively to districts that are not meeting their long-term and interim goals. Through online modules and regional face-to-face trainings, the OPI ~~will~~ ensure~~s~~ that identified districts have access to high-quality professional development to support the use of effective strategies and interventions for ELs, as well as evaluation and modification of program components. The OPI has developed facilitated and self-paced courses through the Hub for on-going

professional development for educators of ELs. In addition to OPI support, the WIDA Consortium has high-quality English language proficiency standards, professional development workshops, and ongoing online modules to support districts in improving their EL program to meet the needs of ELs.

Through collaboration with the Title I School Support unit, the OPI ~~will~~ ensures that the needs of the EL population are specifically met through Universal, Targeted, and Comprehensive Support strategies. For Schools ~~could be~~ identified for Targeted and Comprehensive school improvement status based on EL growth and performance; ~~therefore,~~ the OPI's Title III personnel ~~will~~ provides additional and more robust support ~~for these schools~~ using high quality resources. The OPI ~~will~~ supports districts during the planning stage of their CSIP in order to make sure they are systematically developing procedures and strategies to support ELs in meeting long-term and interim goals. Additional assistance is~~will be~~ provided through online supports and guidance, on-site assistance, and through collaboration with Title I school improvement consultants. ~~Through progress monitoring, the OPI will continuously support the needs of districts in these improvement categories referred to in the graphic on page 62~~

Here is the link to the WIDA Standards Validation briefing booklet that we referred to in this morning's ESSA meeting: https://sites.google.com/a/opiconnect.org/mt-wida-validation-workshop/11