



October 19, 2020
Amendment to Montana's State Plan under ESSA

Dear Partners in Education,

After reviewing Montana's Consolidated State Plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the US Department of Education indicated that Montana must include an exit criterion for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) small schools, similar to the exit criteria that is outlined for regular CSI schools.

Purpose: The purpose of the exit criteria is to ensure continued progress to improve student academic achievement and school success in CSI small schools identified through the annual meaningful determination process. [ESEA section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i)(I)].

Thus, the OPI is preparing to submit an amendment to the Montana ESSA plan and seeks public comment on the following **proposed amendment**:

Using the process for annual meaningful differentiation, the OPI will monitor the schools identified for small school comprehensive support. The OPI has identified two criteria for exiting small school comprehensive support.

The first criteria is to exit out of the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools. This is the basic criteria necessary to exit small school comprehensive support. Title I schools that are no longer in the lowest performing 5 percent and all high schools that have improved graduation rates to be at or above 67 percent will be eligible to exit small school comprehensive support.

Once schools have met the first criteria, they must meet the second criteria to demonstrate continuous improvement and not fall back into the lowest performing five percent.

The second criteria is to meet the academic growth goals (ELA and Math) set in a school's Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) for the year they are in small school support and improvement as well as the following year. Every district and school is required to submit a continuous improvement plan. The plan will be driven by a comprehensive needs assessment and the school's report card and growth goals that include the same growth percentages each year as the long-term and interim goals set by the state.

Below is a timeline outlining the amendment process with stakeholder involvement:

Timeline:

October 19, 2020- ESSA Update and posting of proposed amendment for public comment period on the OPI website

October 20, 2020- Introductory discussion with Education Advocates

October 27, 2020-Introductory discussion with LEA superintendents and County Superintendents

October 29, 2020- Consultation with the Governor's office

November 5, 2020-Presentation and discussion with the Montana Board of Public Education

November 17, 2020- Feedback and input discussion with Education Advocates

November 30, 2020 Final Draft prepared and submitted to the DOE

Please send feedback, input and questions to ESSAinput@mt.gov

Putting Montana Students First **A⁺**