

Elsie Arntzen, Superintendent

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA

Putting Montana Students First **A+**



MEETING PROJECT NAME: Education Advocates Meeting
DATE OF MEETING: July 21, 2020
TIME: 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM
Zoom Meeting

ATTENDEES:

PRESENT: As best of our records could show

Pete Donovan, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BOPE)
Kirk Miller, Executive Director of School Administrators of Montana (SAM)
McCall Flynn, Education Policy Advisor, Governor's Office
Jule Walker, Field Specialist, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)
Dianne Burke, Executive Director, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC)
Emily Dean, Director of Advocacy, Montana School Boards Association
Dan Rask, Executive Director, Montana Small Schools Alliance (MSSA)
Paul Furthmyre, Superintendent, Montana School for the Deaf and Blind
Angela McLean, Director, American Indian and Minority Achievement
Denise Williams, Executive Director, Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO)
Dennis Parman, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA)
Lance Melton, Executive Director, Montana School Boards Association
Laura Sankey Keip, Attorney, Legislative Services
Mark Beckman, Montana High School Association
Pad McCracken, Legislative Services
Nancy Hall, Governor's Office of the Budget and Program Planning (OBPP)

OPI STAFF

Elsie Arntzen, State Superintendent
Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent
Tim Johnson, Deputy Superintendent
Dylan Klapmeier, Communications Director
Ken Bailey, Chief Financial Officer
Paul Taylor, Budget Analyst
Tracy Moseman, Chief Operations Officer

RECORD KEEPER

Christy Perryman, Administrative Clerk, Office of Public Instruction

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Governor's Coronavirus Relief Fund Update, *McCall Flynn and Nancy Hall*

- Materials to follow soon

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Teacher of the Year (TOY), *Dylan Klapmeier*

- Great pool of applicants
- Colet Bartow is overseeing this program
- Announce TOY the 1st or 2nd week of September
- Shout out to 2020 TOY Linda Rost!

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Other Business

- Ken Bailey – Transportation: Materials Follow
- Ken Bailey – MAEFAIRS is open

Thank you for your patience and **Putting Montana Students First** during this uncertain time.

[Full Education Advocates meeting can be listened to at this link](#)



DATE: July 20, 2020

TO: Governor Steve Bullock

FROM: Superintendent Elsie Arntzen

RE: Amendments to July 15th Directive on CRF Pupil Transportation Funds

Governor Bullock,

Regarding your July 15th directive allocating \$10 million for pupil transportation support from the Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF), please see the below amendment requests from the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to better ensure that these funds are used as effectively as possible:

- The process in statute for reimbursing districts for pupil transportation expenditures is based upon the County Transportation Committee and the OPI approval of individual bus routes and individual transportation contracts. The obligation for the OPI to pay its portion of the reimbursement is created with the approval of a bus route and the subsequent running of the route. (20-10-112(5), 20-10-112(6), 20-10-141, 20-10-145(2), MCA). This statutory obligation by the OPI does not go away just because the Governor grants CRF funds to school districts. If the Governor's Office distributes the CRF funds to school districts to offset the OPI's obligation to pay as stated in statute, there must be a lawful mechanism to allow the OPI to deduct the CRF payments from its calculated payments. This action by OPI of deducting the CRF Payments must be authorized by emergency directive of the Governor. **The OPI requests the Governor amend the July 15th Directive or issue a new directive, specifically instructing the OPI to "reduce its pupil transportation claims payments to school districts accordingly."**
- Once a transportation budget, County reimbursement, OPI reimbursement, and CRF payment has been calculated for a district, changes must be anticipated and a mechanism for determining the best use of the CRF funds must be established. For example, if a school district creates a budget assuming full pupil transportation but then is forced to close for a month and rely on remote learning, how will the district amend their budget and dispose of the CRF funds granted? **The OPI requests the Governor establish a process for amendment when a significant change to the pupil transportation plan occurs at a district.**

- Guidance must be given to school districts on how to document the expenditures for pupil transportation from the CRF funds for federal audits. Districts will not be able to label individual routes as “COVID-19” routes as a way of documenting an expenditure as an allowable expense. **The OPI requests the Governor issue guidance to school districts concerning appropriate documentation to show the funds were expended on allowable costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Thank you for using Montana’s CRF funds to support Montana’s public schools and students. Please consider these amendments and let me know your decision. If you have any questions please call me on my cell phone at 406-698-7845 or by email at elsie.arntzen@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elsie Arntzen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Elsie Arntzen
Superintendent of Public Instruction