

**Applicant Name:** Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI)

**Project Title:** An Evaluation of Assessment Utility: How Through-year Assessments Support Teachers, Students, and Parents to Use the Data Effectively

**Type of Grant Requested:** (select one)       Early-Phase     Mid-Phase     Expansion

**Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses:** (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 2-- Field-Initiated Innovations—General

Absolute Priority 3-- Promoting STEM Education

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Absolute Priority 5-- Educator Recruitment and Retention

**Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses:** (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Competitive Preference Priority 2—Supporting a Diverse Educator Workforce and Professional Growth to Strengthen Student Learning\* **(FOR EARLY-PHASE AP5 APPLICANTS ONLY)**

**Total number of students to be served by the project:** 4,482

**Grade level(s) to be served by the project:** 3-8; emphasis on grades 5-6

**Definition of high-need students:** Significant gaps in mathematics learning outcomes have led the OPI to identify all students, including students receiving Special Education services and students identifying as American Indian as high-need students.

**Brief description of project activities:**

- Partner with Stanford University to design community embedded PL supports and observation protocol to support educators in implementing high quality mathematics instruction surrounding through-year assessment (TYA) testing windows.
- Partner with the University of Montana and Tribal colleges to create and implement a strong research agenda that examines how flexible TYA- aligned to local scope and sequence and including items aligned to local context and culture - and the supports surrounding teacher use of those assessments, impact student outcomes.
- Identify best practices and room for improvement: 1) enhance the state TYA program; and 2) support scaling of TYA to other states interested in exploring similar models.

**Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes:**

- Build a strong research base through data analysis and in-depth case studies to explore the impact of TYA, reports, tools, and PL on teacher-driven decisions and instructional practices for

grades 3-8 mathematics educators, and the impact on each individual learner including, students receiving special education services and American Indian students.

- Develop a suite of high-quality, innovative professional learning experiences to help mathematics educators use TYA data to improve instructional practices and support student learning in a way that includes the local community.
- Create a public facing platform and disseminate best practices and research for scaling flexible TYA to other grades and subjects, benefiting both Montana and the broader education community..

**Summary of how the project is innovative:** Montana is set to be the first state to submit through-year assessments, aligned to local scope and sequence, for peer review. This project establishes the research base surrounding these innovative assessments, and explores the supports needed to help educators use such systems to support instruction. Montana's TYA system provides valuable real-time information to mathematics instructors to help inform instruction, OPI acknowledges that data alone won't lead to transformative change. Educators require additional support on how to translate data into actionable strategies for effective teaching practices. The project expands on work to date and emphasizes the importance of more frequent, locally aligned assessments paired with effective professional learning to improve teacher practices and decision-making for the benefit of students. Professional learning will be built to help address local community needs, and will include multiple rounds of community engagement and teacher observation as teachers look to the data from 5 assessments given over the course of the year to help them make decisions. Both the assessments themselves and the ways in which professional learning is being implemented are innovative and reflective of Montana's focus to build systems closer to the community that are reflective of the culture and context in the state.

**Other studies related to the proposed project:** (1) Institute of Education Sciences. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making*. U.S. Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse. (2) Garet, Michael S.; Wayne, Andrew J.; Stancavage, Fran; Taylor, James; Walters, Kirk; Song, Mengli; Brown, Seth; Hurlburt, Steven; Zhu, Pei; Sepanik, Susan; Doolittle, Fred (2010). *Middle School Mathematics Professional Development Impact Study: Findings After the First Year of Implementation*. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. (3) Konstantopoulos, Spyros; Miller, Shazia Rafiullah; van der Ploeg, Arie (2013). *The Impact of Indiana's System of Interim Assessments on Mathematics and Reading Achievement*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, v35 n4 p481-499. (4) NC Department of Public Instruction. (2016). *The North Carolina Testing Program Summary Report 2015-16 Proof of Concept Study, Grade 5 Mathematics and Grade 6 English Language Arts/Reading*. Please see Evidence Form of for additional details.

**Proposed implementation sites:** Early pilot districts of Montana's mathematics through-year assessment system will be primary implementation sites with the expectation that results will contribute to sustainability and scaling as TYA are expanded to all schools in the state.

**Organizations partnering with this project:** Stanford University; the University of Montana; New Meridian (Assessment Vendor)