



SCHOOL ELECTION UPDATE

Nicole Thuotte
Finance Specialist
Office of Public Instruction

Putting Montana Students First **A+**

ELECTION BASICS

Types of Elections

- Regular school election – First Tuesday after the first Monday in May (May 5, 2020).
- Special elections – elections held on dates other than the dates scheduled for regular elections (primary, general, regular school election day).
- Primary or general elections.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

ELECTION BASICS

Types of Elections

- Trustee and general fund levy elections (other than in legislative years) must be held in May.
- All other elections may be held at any other time (consult with the county election administrator).



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

ELECTION BASICS

Election Procedure

- Calendars, training materials, and forms available on the OPI webpage:

<http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Finance-Grants/School-Finance/Elections>

- First class districts in counties with populations of 15,000 or more must report campaign finance activities (trustees AND ballot issues) to the Commissioner of Political Practices:

<http://politicalpractices.mt.gov/campaignfinance>



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

ELECTION BASICS

Election Procedure

- Districts may run elections by mail ballot or poll. Mail ballot election plans must be approved by the Secretary of State at least 60 days before the election:

<https://sosmt.gov/elections/>

- Districts may run their own elections or request the county conduct their elections – must be done by June 1 for elections in the following fiscal year (county can refuse).



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 130

Extends the date of the canvas from 15 to 25 days.

- Also extends the date of the organizational meeting from 15 to 25 days.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 148

- Allows late registrant ballots to be dropped of at a polling location.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 162 - EARLY PREPARATION:

- Revises when and how ballots may be prepared and counted.
- Eliminates sequestration of observers of an early count.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 162 - EARLY PREPARATION:

County with 8,000 or more registered electors at close of regular registration

OR

County with 5,000 or more absentee electors at close of regular registration

Then: Up to 3 business days before the election the secrecy envelope and the ballot may be separated.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 162 - EARLY PREPARATION:

- May not be conducted on a Saturday or Sunday.
- Must be open to the public.

Otherwise: One business day before election day.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 162 – BALLOT COUNTING:

Machine Tabulation – may begin the day before the election	OR	Hand Count – may not begin until election day
--	-----------	---



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 162 - SEQUESTRATION

- No longer required to sequester observers of the early count.
- Must take an oath administered by the election administrator or chief election judge – “I, *name*, will not discuss the results of the early counting of votes at any time prior to the closing of the polls on election day.”
- Penalty of up to 2 years in state prison and/or fine between \$100,000 and \$500,000.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

SB 291

- County must supply accessible voter technology for all elections (one device per polling location).



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HB 166

- One sample ballot at each polling location, instead of one in each voting booth (should be the largest size possible).



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3

- Interim study on accessibility for disabled electors.
- State Administration and Veteran's Affairs (SAVA) Committee.
- September 2019 to August 2020.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: September 3

- Beth Brenneman, Disability Rights Montana discussed rights of disabled electors in regard to federal and state law and Montana case law regarding accessible voting technology.
- Sheri Scurr, Staff Research Assistant, discussed SAVA's previous work, SB 291, current law/options.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: September 3

- Dana Corson, Elections Director, Secretary of State, discussed Express vote certification, HAVA grants.
- Regina Plettenberg, Association of Clerks and Recorders and County Election administrators talked about data on AutoMark and ExpressVote replacements.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: September 3

- I talked about school district procedures for disabled electors and presented the number of school districts by county.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: October 29

- Discussion about the training provided to county and school election administrators and judges.
- Denise Williams, MASBO, and I will present an outline of the annual election trainings done in November/December and a list of other trainings conducted throughout the year.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: December 3 and Beyond

- Currently working on a survey that will go out to districts regarding the conduct of their elections.
- Important that as many districts as possible complete the survey in a timely manner.
- One response per district.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: Survey Questions

- Type (EL/HS/K12/Combined).
- Number of registered electors (report supplied).
- Number and type of elections (mail/poll).
- Who administers the elections.
- Election administer and judge training.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: Survey Questions

- Accessibility of polling and/or mail ballot deposit locations.
- Services provided to disabled electors.
- Who you collaborate with in regard to disabled electors, if any.
- If AutoMark devices are available to electors.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

2019 LEGISLATION

HJ 3: District Participation

- Plan to have surveys out to districts by the first of November with a due date of November 18 (results presented at the December 3 meeting).
- Districts interested in participating in the HJ 3 discussion should plan to come to the October 29 or December 3 meetings.
- Contact Sheri Scurr at sscurr@mt.gov or (406) 444-3596.



Putting Montana Students First **A+**

QUESTIONS/FEEDBACK?



Putting Montana Students First **A+**