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Office of the Superintendent

Updates in Montana Education

Happy new year and welcome back to the new semester! The OPI looks forward to another year of service and partnership with your districts. Please don't hesitate to reach out. This month, the OPI wants to highlight Mrs. Linda Rost from Baker High School for being named a [finalist](#) for NATIONAL Teacher of the Year. Our state is incredibly proud of Linda and her accomplishments. Beginning in February, the process will start all over again to find Montana's 2021 Teacher of the Year, check out our [website](#) and nominate one of your awesome teachers!

Update on DPHHS Rules Affecting Schools

DPHHS's new [administrative rules](#) were filed with the Secretary of State on January 7th. The OPI and education partners met with DPHHS and DEQ on January 17th for the first communication planning meeting to coordinate information and resources for schools. We want to ensure that schools have one point of contact and are not bombarded with reach outs from different agencies. As we compile resources and solidify communications plans, we will keep you updated. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

OPI Digital Communications

The OPI's Digital Communications team has been working with schools to produce high-quality videos highlighting innovation occurring in Montana classrooms. Check out their new [webpage](#) and reach out if your school would like one of your innovative programs highlighted.

Federal Education Funding

On December 19th, President Trump signed a federal funding bill to fund the federal government through September 30, 2020. Below are the education allocations. NOTE- most education programs are forward funded. We will have Montana's funding projections available later this spring.

The Labor-HHS-Education bill provides a total of \$72.8 billion for the U.S. Department of Education, a \$1.3 billion increase over FY2019 funding:

- \$16.31 billion for Title I (increase of \$450 million over 2019)
- \$12.76 billion for IDEA Part B grants to states (\$400 million increase)
- \$2.13 billion for Title II (\$76 million increase)
- \$1.21 billion for Title IV-A (\$40 million increase)
- \$1.25 billion for 21st Century Community Learning Centers (\$28 million increase)
- \$1.28 billion for Career and Technical Education (\$20 million increase)
- \$787 million for Title III, English Language Acquisition (\$50 million increase)
- \$33 million for Statewide Longitudinal Data Systems (\$700,000 increase)
- State assessment grants are level-funded at \$378 million.
 - The Impact Aid program also saw a \$40 million increase to \$1.49 billion.

Outside of ED funding, this spending deal also includes:

- Increases in the HHS budget of \$550 million each for Head Start (\$10.6 billion total) and the Child Care and Development Block Grant (\$5.8 billion)
- \$7.6 billion for the 2020 Census
- Increased funding for rural broadband access

New Montana Census Webpage

The 2020 Census is just around the corner! Check out Montana's new census webpage for classroom resources: <https://census.mt.gov/>. Also, The U.S. Census Bureau is looking for teacher ambassadors to join the Statistics in Schools Ambassador Program. Are you a Pre-K through 12th grade teacher or know someone who is? Email CLMSO.SISambassador@census.gov for more information and how to apply to represent your school and community on a national scale.

Superintendent's Office January Events

- Business Days, check out the [video](#) if you haven't already!
- Recurring Land Board, Education Advocates, Library Board, Board of Regents, and Board of Public Education meetings
- Meeting with Education Northwest
- Interim Education Committee Meeting
- Legislative Week
- Shodair Children's Hospital luncheon
- DPHHS and stakeholders meeting regarding new ARM
- Meeting with the ACLU on disproportionate rates of discipline report
- Tobacco/nicotine prevention discussion with Capital High students
- Radio appearances with the Montana Teacher of the Year Linda Rost
- Meeting with Dean of the Helena College

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:  
For more information, contact [Dylan Klapmeier](#), 406-444-3559.



- **Family, student, and community engagement**
- **Safety, mental health, and suicide prevention**



- **Celebrating teacher excellence and extending leadership opportunities**
- **Teacher retention and recruitment**



- **Closing achievement gaps**
- **Improving math and reading with a focus on middle school**



- **Expanding industry, military, and post-secondary partnerships**
- **STEM, CTE, and workforce development emphasis beginning in middle school**

Assessment

ACCESS for ELLs Test Window

Schools across Montana have been administering the ACCESS for ELLs English Language Proficiency assessment since December 4, 2019. The ACCESS for ELLs Test Window closes on Wednesday, January 29, 2020. Currently, the only test administration monitoring occurring is the ACCESS for ELLs monitoring. If your school district is selected, you will be contacted by the OPI and asked to provide testing date ([Testing Date Tool](#)) information for the purpose of this visit.

Smarter Balanced Interim Use Across Montana

The Smarter Balanced interim use is highest in January and February across districts. The current number of completed interims as of the middle of January 2020 is 24,044, compared to 10,320 completed interims a year ago at the same time and 3,985 completed interims in January 2018. Research from the Montana Data Use Culture grant has shown that students that have taken the interims prior to taking the summative state assessment are likely to have performance gains. Some districts are starting to use interims in the high school grades as well.

Science Assessment Development

Progress continues with the development of the Montana Science Assessment and its alternate. Practice tests for both have been posted on the [Montana testing portal](#), and new documents on the assessments and accommodations will be posted in the Resources tab as they become available.

ASSIST Conference

The [OPI Data and Assessment Conference](#) was held in Helena, MT at the Delta Hotel on January 13 and 14, 2020. Over 250 educators, school test administrators, and district personnel were in attendance. During the 2-day conference, session presenters shared some of the best practices for using data appropriately to inform instruction while ensuring educators are successful in administering the Montana statewide assessments. Presentations will be posted to the [ASSIST Conference Page](#) of the OPI website by early February.

For more information, contact the Assessment Division at OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov or 844-867-2569.

Career, Technical, and Adult Education

New Perkins V Webpage

The Office of Public Instruction has a [NEW Perkins V Webpage](#) to help you develop your Perkins V Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment for the upcoming 2020-2021 Perkins fiscal year. This [link](#) will take you to the resources listed below:

There are several new posts:

- Are You Perkins V Ready? (A timeline to keep your district on track)
- The full Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) Manual
- **Fillable CLNA Template pages!! (Please save your work as this will be uploaded to E-grants as the main section of your E-grant for the coming year)
- Labor Market Dashboard- (designed by the Department of Labor using MT Career Pathways)
- 16 Career Pathways website
- Templates for each pathway with possible course combinations
- NEW Work-based Learning Manual
- Course Codes to use when reporting Work-based Learning
- Dual credit courses for specific pathways and college campus contacts

Questions can be directed to Rerlandsen@mt.gov, 406-994-6986.

Content Standards and Instruction

MT Comprehensive Literacy Development Grant Update

In fall 2019, [Montana was awarded a 5-Year \\$50 Million Federal Literacy Grant](#). Please visit [the program webpage](#) to see the list of eligible districts. Eligible districts received written notification during the week of January 13. Check the [MCLSDP webpage](#) in the coming weeks for additional updates on applications, grant workshops, and sub-grant timelines.

Contact MTLiteracyGrant@mt.gov with any questions.

Content Standards Negotiated Rulemaking Updates

- Social Studies Negotiated Rulemaking Committee will meet in Helena on February 10.
- Career and Technical Education Negotiated Rulemaking Committee will meet in Helena on February 11.
- Computer Science, Library Media, and Technology Negotiated Rulemaking Committee will meet in Helena on February 12.
 - [Watch or listen](#) to the negotiated rulemaking committees on MPAN.
- Responses to Economic Impact Surveys for Social Studies, Career and Technical Education, and Computer Science are due by January 31, 2020. Additional surveys for Library Media and Technology will be opened in mid-February.
 - [Career and Technical Education Survey](#)
 - [Computer Science Survey](#)
 - [Social Studies Survey](#)
- Interested parties may submit their views and comments concerning the proposed negotiated rulemaking process to Colet Bartow, Director of Content Standards and Instruction, Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, Montana 59620, faxed to (406) 444-3924, or electronic mail to cbartow@mt.gov, no later than January 31, 2020.
- [Press Release](#) (November 25, 2019)

Resources

- [K-12 Content Standards and Revision Webpage](#)
- Download the [2017 - 2027 COMPLETE REVISION SCHEDULE](#)
- Take the *Montana Content Standards 101* course on the [Teacher Learning Hub](#)
- Watch the [Montana Content Standards Revision Overview](#) video.

OPI Learning Opportunities Portal

Visit the [Learning Opportunities Portal website](#) to find out about upcoming 2019-20 classes, workshops, and courses. The Portal is just one of the ways the OPI informs educators about upcoming professional learning opportunities in our state.

Learning Hub

If you haven't already, [check out](#) what more than 12,000 Montana educators have experienced! Our Hub team is always adding and updating our self-paced and facilitated courses. Please check the [Learning Hub homepage](#) for a complete [listing](#) and [catalog](#). Now is the perfect time to make your professional learning plan for the 2019-20 school year and beyond.

For more information on these topics, contact OPICSI@mt.gov.

Data and Technology

Montana Student Privacy Alliance Launched

The OPI is proud to announce the launch of [the Montana Student Privacy Alliance](#). The Alliance was created in response to the 2019 Montana Legislature's passing of [House Bill 745](#) and is the direct result of the cooperation with and efforts of the Montana Educational Technologists Association, the School Administrators of Montana, and the Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA). House Bill 745 requires all Montana school districts to ensure their technology software and/or services (for example, apps, websites and other software) that collect or otherwise use student information have contracts and agreements in place that contain very specific language around protecting student data and privacy.

School officials and staff can visit the [Montana Student Privacy Alliance website](#) to help them better understand and meet these new requirements. The site offers training videos, [links to the Montana Student Data Privacy Consortium](#) (where sample vetted agreements are housed) and other information to help schools protect student information and preserve student privacy.

For more information, please contact the OPI's Data Privacy and Security Officer, agrover@mt.gov, 406-444-3502.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Update

School Climate Surveys

The Montana State Plan outlines **5 indicators** that are used for the accountability system. Currently, the Montana OPI is researching measures of school quality for the 5th Indicator. After the research phase, we will be reaching out this Spring (2020) to collaborate and consult with our partners in education on this component of the ESSA plan.

1-4 Federally Required Indicators

- Academic Achievement on Statewide Assessments: ELA/Reading & Math
- Academic Growth on Statewide Assessments ELA/Reading & Math (K-8 Only)
- English Learner Progress
- Graduation Rates (HS only)

5th Indicator for Montana Flexibility: School Quality or Student Success Indicator

- Attendance
- College & Career Ready (HS Only)
- CRT Science Assessment (2016-2017)

The 5th Indicator is addressed on pages 24-26 of the Montana State Plan, which reads,
“The OPI will be creating a measure of school quality that takes into account high quality implementation of these programs and practices. This measure will be weighted at five points within the system. The OPI will submit this survey to the Department of Education once it is developed and will not use it in the accountability system until it is developed and approved.”

Current Research Considerations:

1. Finding an established survey:
 - Aligned to stakeholder intent and the OPI’s HOPE initiative, to create and maintain positive, safe learning environments.
 - Valid and reliable tool: Measures program quality indicators for improving school climate, reducing behavior issues, and increasing engagement.
 - Able to meaningfully differentiate school performance
2. Financial Impact of a survey
3. Data Safety and Security: Use of Data
4. Implementation Capacity
 - OPI, district, and school staff training
 - Technology requirements/infrastructure
5. Reducing Survey Burden:
 - Alternating years from Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)
 - Administration Logistics- is the survey manageable, effective, and efficient

For more information, contact julie.murgel@mt.gov, 406-444-3172.

Federal Programs

New SRSA Program Application Process

The Federal Grants Division of the OPI has received exciting news from USED regarding the Small, Rural School Achievement (SRSA) program under Title V, Part B. They have created a newer and more streamlined grant application! The letter from USED can be found on the Title V [webpage](#). For more information, contact Christy.hendricks@mt.gov, 406-444-0794.

Finance

Upcoming Election Deadlines

- Tuesday, February 25th – Trustees call for election (send copy of resolution to the county election administrator within 3 days of passage)
- Friday, March 6th – File mail ballot election plan with the Secretary of State
- Monday, March 9th – Notice of close of regular registration (verify publication with the county election administrator)
- Thursday, December 12th through Thursday, March 26th – Trustee candidates file for election with the district clerk (verify voter registration and signature with the county election administrator)

[Election Calendar](#)

[Election Handbook](#)

For more information, contact [Nicole Thuotte](#), 406-444-4524

FY 2019 Federal Audit Reports Due to OPI March 31, 2020

The Federal Audit Reports (formerly A-133 audits and required by 2 CFR Part 200) are due to the OPI by March 31, 2020, for entities that have federal expenditures of \$750,000 or greater, which include USDA commodities. FY 2019 Yellowbook Audits (regular audit) are required for entities with all revenues totaling more than \$750,000 are due to the OPI by June 30, 2020. FY 2019 Reviews (Agreed Upon Procedures) are required at least every four years for entities with \$750,000 or less revenues, are due to the OPI by June 30, 2020.

Please remit audit reports and correspondence to OPIAuditReports@mt.gov.

For more information, contact Dan.Moody@mt.gov, 406-444-0701.

FY 2021 Preliminary General Fund Budget Data Sheets

On or before March 1, 2020 the OPI School Finance Division will post the FY 2021 Preliminary General Fund Budget Data Sheets and the General Fund Budget Excel Spreadsheet to assist schools in budgeting for FY 2021. The budget data sheets will reflect the state entitlement rates shown in 20-9-306, MCA and the current rates for the special education instructional block grant and related services block grant.

Please contact the following individuals with questions: Renee Richter, Finance Specialist 406-444-1960, Renee.Richter@mt.gov or Keri Ludwig, Finance Specialist 406-444-0783, Keri.Ludwig@mt.gov.

FY 2021 Indirect Cost Rate Applications Now Available

Districts that plan to charge indirect costs (e.g., general administration, accounting services, and personnel services) to FY 2021 federal and state grant awards using an indirect cost rate must complete an indirect cost rate application form. Application for an indirect cost rate does not increase the amount of the grant award. Please review the instructions and additional documentation for more details.

If you reclassify costs to adjust the indirect cost rate, please read the Indirect Cost Rate Instructions prior to reclassification of costs for an adjusted rate. Costs that may be reclassified are highlighted in blue. A reclassification calculator is available for aiding in the determination of an adjusted indirect cost rate.

If you have questions about how to complete the indirect cost rate application, please contact Renee.Richter@mt.gov, 406-444-1960 or Keri.Ludwig@mt.gov, 406-444-0783.

New and Returning School Finance Staff

We are happy to announce the School Finance division is fully staffed. We have a retirement coming in July so Mari Haefka has rejoined the team to cross-train with Kathleen Wanner. Since Rehanna Olson has moved on from the OPI, there was a vacancy which Renee Richter has filled. We are thrilled to have these two as part of the school finance team.

Mari's contact information is Mari.Haefka2@mt.gov, 406-444-9852 and Renee's contact information is Renee.Richter@mt.gov, 406-444-1960.

For more information, contact Kara.Flath@mt.gov, 406-444-3249.

Health Enhancement and Safety

OPI Summer Food Service Program

Summer should be a time for fun and relaxation, however, some kids lack access to the healthy food they need to grow and thrive during the summer. Help us ensure all kids have access to food for success year-round. Summer Food Service Program applications open **March 2, 2020**. You can learn more about the Summer Food Service Program by visiting the Montana OPI School Nutrition Programs [website](#) or start the application to sponsor a Summer Food Service Program site by calling (406) 444-0772. **The deadline for new sponsors to apply for the SFSP is May 1, 2020.**

NEW Learning Hub Course: Emergency Operations Planning

New Learning Hub Course: [Emergency Operations Planning](#) This Learning Hub course helps guide schools and districts in developing and/or updating high-quality, customized Emergency Operations Plans (EOPs). It is designed to walk planning teams through the process of developing/updating a plan, giving specific and organized steps.

For questions, please contact [Tammy Lysons](#), 406.444.0829.

Vaping Prevention Presentations

The OPI Tobacco Use Prevention Education Program has provided student presentations for quite a few schools districts in the last several months. Our middle and high school vaping prevention presentations focus on 3 key points:

1. Nicotine is addictive, especially for the teen brain.
2. It's not a harmless water vapor.
3. Safer doesn't mean safe.

These presentations are offered to school districts free of charge by the OPI. Contact [Kris Minard](#), 406.444.0785 for more information about scheduling a presentation for your school.

Free Help for Emergency Operations Plans

Does the thought of writing or updating your emergency operations plan have you feeling overwhelmed? Have you thought through issues such as how to reunify families following an emergency, what formal agreements with community partners do you need to have in place to support students following a tragedy, or specific plans for evacuating students with special needs? Through a grant with Homeland Security, OPI can offer help to district staff tasked with writing, updating, or training on the district plan.

If you have questions, want someone to review your existing plan, or even come to your district to problem solve unique challenges, contact [Tracy Moseman](#), 406-444-3000.

Increase School Safety and School Threat Assessment

The Bureau of Justice Assistance is soliciting to apply for STOP School Violence Grant. The program's objective is to increase school safety by implementing training and school threat assessments and/or intervention teams to identify school violence risks among students. The [STOP School Violence Grant](#) closing date is March 3, 2020. For more information, contact christine.steele@mt.gov 406-444-4706.

Jeremy Bullock Safe Schools Summit

August 18-19, 2020 in Butte. Learn more: jeremybullocksafeschools.com.

Indian Education

Trauma-Informed Care Using Restorative Practices

Resolutions Northwest in partnership with the Office of Public Instruction Indian Student Achievement Unit will assist with facilitating a gathering where youth, elders, school staff, and community members can envision how they want to begin or continue restorative practices in their schools and communities. This will be April 20-22, 2020 in Billings, Montana at the Northern Hotel. [Registration Information Link](#)

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)

ASIST Train the Trainer is a five-day course that prepares local resource persons to be trainers of the ASIST workshop. This workshop is for those who want to feel more comfortable, confident, and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide, along with being willing to learn how to be a trainer for others. This will be held March 30 – April 3 at Montana State University – Billings. [Registration Information Link](#)

Indian Education for All Best Practices Conference

The Indian Education for All Unit of the Office of Public Instruction is holding its 14th annual Best Practices Conference May 3-5, 2020, at Montana State University-Billings. There will be mini-institutes and a field trip on May 3, with the main conference on May 4-5. There is a registration fee based on the sessions you attend. There will be renewal units provided.

[Registration](#)

[Preliminary Agenda](#)

[Presentation Proposal for Breakout Session](#) – due February 14, 2020

[Advocacy Award for Excellence in Indian Education for All – Nomination Form](#) – due February 20, 2020 at noon

Transformational/Advanced Opportunities

The Board of Public Education Qualifies Advanced Opportunities Applications

The Board of Public Education qualified 33 districts, at their January 17, 2020 meeting. Nine of the 33 districts will receive FY 2021 funding. The remaining districts have a firm place on the priority list for FY 2022 funding. The priority list can be accessed on the OPI website's Advanced Opportunities Act (HB 387) page.

The appropriation for FY 2021 was \$750,000.00. The appropriation for FY 2022 is projected to be \$1,649,057. All districts on the current priority list and new applicants would be funded in FY 2022 with this appropriation amount. The window for FY 2022 opens on the first Monday in December 2020 and closes in January 2021.

Transformational Learning Grant Window Opens February 3

The Transformational and Personalized Learning Grant window for FY 2021 opens February 3, 2020 at 8:00 a.m. and closes February 21, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. Districts who are applying for the first time or districts that are already funded but looking to increase their FTE for the second year of funding, should remember that this is a first-come, first-served application process. All application submissions are time and date stamped. The appropriation for FY 2021 is projected to be: \$1,588,070.00.

First-Come, First-Served Process Feedback

The Interim Education Committee questioned the effectiveness of the first-come, first-served process in both of these legislative bills during their January 16, 2020 meeting. The rationale behind the method was to ensure that any size district would be able to compete for funding.

A diverse team of educational advocates began analyzing the process in December. Your suggestions are encouraged. This team is scheduled to meet again on February 11, 2020. Please email your thoughts by February 10, 2020.

For more information, contact [Sharyl Allen](#).

Student/School Opportunities

Keep Montana Green Art Contest

The Keep Montana Green contest is more than just an art contest! Its wildfire prevention message can be incorporated in each of the core school subjects using the teaching tools provided at www.keepmontanagreen.com:

1. Math – Look at the wildfire statistics in Montana and nationwide, how many fires were there last year?
2. Language arts – Read firefighter stories and learn and explore firefighting terminology.
3. Science – How is fire created, how do the three ingredients of fire interact with each other and what happens if you take one of the three away?
4. Social Studies – How has wildfire changed our society, our culture and those around us?
5. Art – Pull it all together on paper with a unique or common theme of wildland fire prevention. This year's theme is, "Everyone Plays a Part In Preventing a Wildfire Start."
6. Computer technology – Did you know Keep Montana Green has an audio/video division for students interested in creating a commercial or digital wildfire prevention message?

The 59th Keep Montana Green contest deadline is Friday, February 21, 2020. Entries can be submitted to local DNRC offices, found at www.keeptomontanagreen.com/art-contest-rules. Entries are judged in regional and statewide contests; cash prizes are given to statewide winners. Email KMG Executive Director Kristin Sleeper at Kristin.Sleeper@mt.gov with any questions. We look forward to seeing what your students create for this year's contest!

NW Regional App Challenge

My name is Marianne Smith, I wanted to let you know about a competition we, Code Girls United, is hosting in Kalispell, MT. It's the NW Regional App Challenge for girl teams (4th - 8th grade). It will be on May 2/3 at the Flathead Valley Community College. This should be a fun event for the girls where they get to meet other girls with similar interests, show of their projects, and have some fun! Additionally, scholarship prizes will be awarded to the winning teams (1st \$5000, 2nd \$2500, 3rd \$1000), amount to be split between team members. The finals judges consist of CEOs, Venture Capitalists, and University Professors.

The event is free and registration will close on March 8. Last year the event hosted 50 girls from all over the region. It was a great success and the winners were recognized on the US House floor in Washington, DC. The Code Girls United website has more information and registration is under the competition tab, or contact me at 406-407-0201.
www.codegirlsunited.org.

Do the Write Thing Challenge

Montana's 2020 Do the Write Thing Challenge has begun. The Montana Board of Crime Control is honored to continue this program for Montana's middle schools in 2020. Last year we received over 450 submissions from our schools and we are hoping to grow the program. To participate in the Do the Write Thing Challenge 2020, please view the information on our website: [MBCC Do the Write Thing 2020](#). The website includes instructions for educators, lesson plans and permission forms.

-END-