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Office of the Superintendent

Updates in Montana Education

The OPI wants to thank Montana's teachers, school leaders, parents, and students for going above and beyond to successfully complete the 2019-2020 school year. To our Class of 2020 graduates, You have accomplished great things that have made your family, community, and our state proud. Your graduations will look different this year, but that doesn't diminish the value of your diploma or sense of self-accomplishment. As you look forward to your future, do so with optimism. View Superintendent Arntzen's full graduation message on the OPI's [YouTube page](#).

- Guidance for reopening Montana schools this fall will be coming out on June 29th. Check the OPI's [website](#) for the latest information. Additionally, the OPI is revamping our kindergarten readiness information which will also be available in June.
- UPSTART offers free, online kindergarten readiness programs for families in Montana. We have 53 children signed up and need a total of 200 by August. Please share this opportunity with families in your community. You can find more information [HERE](#).
- Summer math and reading resources for families can be found [HERE](#).

Enjoy your summer! The OPI is here to continue serving Montanans over the summer and we look forward to a successful opening of the fall semester, even if it does look a little different.

Superintendent's Office June Zoom Events

- Board of Land Commissioners (in-person)
- Council of Chief State School Officers COVID-19 meetings
- Education Superhighway E-Rate meetings
- Montana State Library Commission
- Reopening Montana Schools Task Forces
- Montana School Safety Advisory Committee
- Board of Regents
- State Administration and Veterans Affairs Committee
- Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission
- Legislative Finance Committee
- Education Interim Committee

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

Assessment

Smarter Balanced

Districts are encouraged to consider using [Interims](#) as benchmark assessments this fall to drive individual student instruction. Formative strategies include the new [Tools for Teachers](#) webpage where teacher-created resources are housed that link to the standards assessed in an interim.

MSAA

The new [MSAA webpage](#) offers sample items while the [OPI Special Education](#) webpage offers resources and guidance for districts as they plan for the fall.

Montana Science Assessments

Development of Montana's comprehensive assessment system for science continues! Next spring, the MSA and AMSA will be delivered as operational field tests, integrating items developed for Montana with items previously field tested in our partner states. Results will be available after the testing window, and accountability determinations can be made after the test validation activities are completed. Educators interested in participating in development activities can complete the [2021 Science Content Development Team application](#). New for the 2020-2021 school year, Science interim assessments will be available on the [MT portal](#) for the Montana Science Assessment (MSA). Science interims will be available on the portal September 14, 2020.

ACT with Writing

Spring 2021 dates have been set for the Grade 11 ACT with Writing. Schools can use the three dates how they wish to best fit their school and district needs. Standard paper testing dates are March 23, April 6, and April 20. Accommodations paper testing windows and online testing windows will be posted on the [Montana ACT State and District website](#).

For more information, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

Career and Technical Education

New CTE Director

The OPI is excited to announce that Shannon Boswell has been hired as the new CTE Director! Shannon was previously the OPI's Agriculture Education Specialist and Interim- CTE Director. Shannon brings a wealth of experience and passion to this important position. Shannon can be reached at shannon.boswell@mt.gov or 406-444-4451.

Data & Technology

Access to Free, Unlimited Electronic Transcripts

Now that the school year has ended, we want to remind you of our partnership with Parchment that allows Montana students to benefit from free, unlimited electronic transcripts. Students can request transcripts from home, using an internet browser whether they're applying for post-secondary education, applying for scholarships, or looking for a job. If you already have a system for current student transcripts, but need help with alumni requests, Parchment can help with that too.

Get more information by:

- [Viewing Parchment's Website](#), or
- Reaching out to OPI's [Kaitlyn Kleppelid](#) (444-1610) or Parchment's [Scott Peony](#) (480.719.1646, Ext. 1091)

Federal Programs

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Updates

Comprehensive Support and Improvement

The 2020-2021 school year marks the third year of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI). On Monday, March 30, OPI received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for specific assessment and accountability requirements for this school year. The OPI applied for the waiver due to extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures. The waivers canceled requirements to administer the statewide assessments, suspended accountability system for the 2019-2020 year, removed certain elements from the ESSA report card, and provided financial flexibility to schools and districts.

As a result of the waiver, any school that is identified for comprehensive and targeted support and improvement in the 2019–2020 school year will maintain that identification status and continue to receive supports and interventions in the 2020–2021 school year. Due to the suspension of Spring 2020 testing, schools will not receive accountability ratings for the 2019–20 school year, which was year three of data collection by which CSI schools would need to meet exit criteria. Consequently, the OPI is gathering public comment and considering the need of a waiver related to this issue, to address using the data collection of 2020-2021 as the year three of data by which CSI schools would be measured to meet exit criteria and ensuring that we have the option to extend a fourth year in 2021-2022 for support and intervention while schools exit criteria is reviewed and determinations complete.

Rather than a Fall onsite meeting, we will be hosting a series of live/recorded webinars addressing the topics below from June-August. During these 1-2-hour sessions, we will work together to ensure all districts are moving forward with goals aligned from their CNA, GAP analysis, and other data, creating sustainable practices, and ultimately exiting comprehensive status. This year each school is required to complete an application in the e-grants system that synthesizes the CNA and gap analysis, outlines the improvement plan with progress monitoring steps, and aligns the budget to the improvement plan. The district and school leaders will set the budget and determine the use of section 1003 funds for any activity that it determines (and the OPI agrees) will help a school identified for CSI have improved student outcomes within the school. During the sessions, we will walk through the process with you:

- June 17th, 10am-1 hour-Entrance and exit criteria for Comprehensive status
- July 1, 10 am- 2 hour- Analyze the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) trend data
 - Identify the GAPs (are they the same or different?)
- July 29th, 10am- 1 hour-Review the Continuous Improvement Plan (CSIP) and make adjustments
- August 5th, 10 am- 1-hour- New e-Grant questions in Title I School Support
 - Budget alignment
 - Evidenced-based interventions defined by ESSA
 - External Partners (Instructional consultants)

The OPI just went through a request for purchase (RFP) process to conduct the rigorous reviews of external partners. This list will be made available on or before our first webinar in June. There are some additions to the list to help meet the needs of the districts. Based on your identified areas of growth and your CSIP goals, schools may opt to keep their current Instructional Consultant (IC), use an IC for more or less days, select a new IC, or opt not to use one at all.

Targeted Support and Improvement

Using the process for annual meaningful differentiation, schools are identified for targeted support and improvement (TSI) on an annual basis. TSI means that a school has any student group performing in the lowest 5% of all Montana schools. The list of [Targeted Schools](#) is posted publicly on the OPI's website as required under ESSA. Schools identified for targeted support and improvement work in partnership with the district to conduct a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) of instructional components and develop a Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) focused on academic goals and underperforming student groups.

We are sending out a pre-recorded webinar via email to outline components regarding the TSI status; such as, entrance and exit criteria. We will also be offering a competitive grant opportunity at the start of the 2020-21 school year for TSI schools along with technical assistance from the OPI. In addition, this year and going forward external partners will be available for TSI schools. An option for schools will be able to use their funding to hire an

instructional consultant that can specifically address the student group that needs improvement.

Seeking Public Comment

The OPI is conducting an extensive Public Comment Process to fully understand the implications on the following four federal waivers:

- Assessment requirements in section 1111(b)(2) for the school year 2019-2020.
- Accountability and school identification requirements in sections 1111(c)(4) and 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D) that are based on data from the 2019-2020 school year.
- Report card provisions related to assessments and accountability in section 1111(h) based on data from the 2019-2020 school year.
- Fiscal Flexibility waiver which provides flexibility in the use of funds and other requirements covered under ESEA including the Title I, Parts A–D, Title II, Title III, Part A, Title IV, Parts A–B, and Title V programs.

Since the federal waiver process was simplified and expedited to support states, it is possible some statutory and regulatory requirements were not fully requested. This will also allow an opportunity to learn if any additional waivers are warranted. Please visit the OPI Public Comment Page at the following link for resources and detailed information on the waivers, FAQs, and a Public Comment Survey.

<https://sites.google.com/a/opiconnect.org/2020-montana-waivers/>

Thursday, July 2: Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #6

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/517311509>

Meeting ID: 517 311 509

For more information, contact julie.murgel@mt.gov, 406-444-3174

2020 Virtual Summer E-Grants Tour

Due to COVID-19 travel limitations and social distancing guidelines, the OPI will not be able to do an onsite, in-person E-Grants Tour this summer. The OPI will conduct the summer trainings virtually over Zoom. Below are the seven dates for the trainings:

- **July 14, 15, and 16**
- **July 28, 29, and 30**
- **August 5**

Trainings will begin at 9:00 AM and run until approximately 1:00 PM and renewal units will be available. The agenda will include an overview of the E-Grants system, general grant rules and guidelines, and time to work in the application. There will be breakout rooms set up for specific federal programs.

Each session will be limited to 40 participants, and attendees will need to sign up on a first-come, first-served basis. Should a session hit maximum capacity, participants will be asked to sign up for another date.

To register for a session, please send an email to [Sheri Harlow](mailto:SHarlow@mt.gov) with the date that you would like to attend. One day before each training, those who sign up will receive an email to join the Zoom meeting. This email will contain a passcode to enter the room.

For more information, contact Sheri Harlow at SHarlow@mt.gov, or at 406-444-5660.

Finance

State Paid Tuition and Day Treatment Students

Don't forget to submit your 2018-19 Student Attendance Agreements (FP-14/14A) for students placed in a group or foster home outside the district of residence and Tuition Reports (FP-15) for students attending private, non-sectarian day treatment programs. The deadline for the OPI to receive these agreements is December 31, 2020. Districts may begin submitting claims for payment with the opening of MAEFAIRS in July. Additionally, districts may be receiving bills from youth detention facilities. Verify that students are residents of the district. The bills must be paid from either the Tuition (13) or Impact Aid (26) funds.

For more information, contact [Nicole Thuotte](mailto:Nicole.Thuotte@opi.mt.gov), at 406-444-4524

School Finance Staff Changes

We want to wish Kathleen Wanner all the best in her retirement! For questions regarding payment please contact [Mari Haefka](mailto:Mari.Haefka@opi.mt.gov), Financial Specialist, 406-444-0783.

We also want to wish Kara Flath the best of luck as she begins a new career in Oregon to be closer to her family. We have appreciated your leadership in School Finance and will miss you!

ESSA Guidance Update

The ESSA Guidance has been updated and can be viewed [HERE](#). If you have any questions or concerns please contact [Renee Richter](mailto:Renee.Richter@opi.mt.gov), Financial Specialist, 406-444-1960 or [Mari Haefka](mailto:Mari.Haefka@opi.mt.gov), Financial Specialist, 406-444-9852.

Audit Letter

The Audit letter for FY 2021 has been posted to the website and can be viewed [HERE](#). If you have any questions please contact [Dan Moody](mailto:Dan.Moody@opi.mt.gov), Auditor, 406-444-0701.

Understanding School Finance

The updated Understanding School Finance and can be found [HERE](#) If you have any questions please contact [Renee Richter](#), Financial Specialist, 406-444-1960.

Health Enhancement and Safety

School Nutrition Programs

Summer Meal Flexibilities Extended to August 31, 2020

[USDA Extends Flexibilities for Summer Food Service Program \[usda.gov\]](#). The following USDA nationwide waivers are extended until **August 31, 2020**:

- **Non-Congregate Feeding:** This waiver allows meals to be served to children outside of the normally required group setting to support social distancing.
- **Parent Pickup:** This waiver allows parents and/or guardians to pick up meals and bring them home to their children.
- **Meal Times:** This waiver allows meals to be provided a grab-n-go option. It also allows for multiple days of meals to be provided at one time.
- **Area Eligibility:** This waiver allows Program operators to locate SFSP open sites in areas that do not meet area eligibility requirements.

Contact Kim Lloyd, SFSP Manager, at kimberly.lloyd@mt.gov or (406) 475-0101 with questions.

Traffic Education

Summer-Only Traffic Education Programs -- Submit your TE01 District Application!

Wondering if your program is approved for Summer 2020? Visit the [Traffic Education Programs](#) page to search for your TE program by district. If your upcoming program dates are not shown, you need to submit a TE01 right away. School districts offering traffic education must submit an annual TE01 District Application prior to the start of classes (including the mandatory parent meeting). As soon as you have program dates scheduled and instructors hired, submit the application for OPI-approval.

- Programs ending ON OR BEFORE June 30, 2020, enter the TE01 in school year 2020.
- Programs ending AFTER June 30, with completion dates in July, August or September, enter the TE01 in school year 2021.
- Remember: all programs starting in the fall, please submit your TE01 no later than August 1.

Traffic Education Year-End Reports are due by July 10

Did your district operate a Traffic Education program this school year with courses ending between July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020? To ensure you receive the annual traffic education reimbursement payment in August, submit your *TE06 Year-End Report* no later than **JULY 10, 2020**. Check the number of eligible students recorded for your district by logging into TEDRS, then click on Reports/Student Counts. This number is entered on the report at Item H: Total Students. All TE06 Year-End Reports must be submitted via [TEDRS](#) this year due to COVID-19

work-at-home requirements. Delivery of mail and faxes is limited at this time. If you need assistance to complete and submit your TE06, send an email to [Patti Borneman](mailto:patti.borneman@opi.mt.gov).

Special TE06 Extension for 2020 courses completing after June 30, 2020

Several school districts had to postpone active traffic education classes in March due to the COVID-19 mandatory school closure directive. To keep students enrolled and engaged in classroom coursework, remote online instruction was permitted and supported by the Office of Public Instruction. However, behind-the-wheel instruction could not resume until after May 7, 2020. For those school districts that would have completed these classes during school year 2020, but have extended the course completion date to end after June 30, the OPI is asking that the district submit a special reimbursement request when they submit their 2020 TE06 Year-End Report (due July 10).

This online addendum to your 2020 TE06 Year-End Report can be found on the OPI webpage: <http://opi.mt.gov/Forms-Reports>.

Traffic Education Availability and Alternatives?

A special message from Traffic Education Director, Tara Ferriter-Smith

As you are aware the COVID-19 pandemic has presented us with challenges to meet the demand for traffic education in our state. Cancellation or postponement of classes has resulted in delays for hundreds of driver education students across the state. We really appreciate your willingness to be resourceful in offering online courses and for working with your local community to problem-solve safe ways to resume behind-the-wheel driving in these unprecedented times.

We know the call volume from families wishing to enroll students in the limited number of slots available in the state for Driver Education has increased at the local level as well as here at OPI. In response to this we have compiled **Driver Education FAQs for Families**. Please feel free to direct families to our [webpage](#) to read these latest FAQs to help them better understand Montana's laws for Driver Education.

Montana DRIVE Summer Workshops – advanced driver education for teachers, staff and school bus drivers

Attend a Montana DRIVE One-Day Summer Workshop in Lewistown! The season started June 15 and ends August 7. Workshops are nearly full, but we have room for adults and teens. Teachers can earn up to 9 renewal units or one college credit through MSU-Northern. Please share with your school bus drivers, too. Workshops cost \$335 and are open to all drivers. We are also accepting applications for teens to attend during Teen Week in July. State Farm Insurance gives an annual grant to the OPI so the teen workshop is affordable for all who wish to attend. Visit <http://montanadrive.mt.gov> to view the latest workshop calendar of openings and register soon.

For more information, contact [Tara Ferriter-Smith](mailto:tara.ferriter-smith@opi.mt.gov) or [Patti Borneman](mailto:patti.borneman@opi.mt.gov).

Licensure

Licensure Options

- Educators that have completed a traditional accredited educator preparation program in an endorsable area.
- Educators that have completed a non-traditional educator preparation program that have a valid, unrestricted out-of-state license in an endorsable area **and** five years of successful experience verified by their out-of-state accredited P-12 school employer.
- Current certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in an endorsable area.
- Foreign nationals **may** qualify for licensure provided the evaluation of their credentials done through an agency vetted through the National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) reflects equivalency to a US educator preparation program. (**Read all details [here!](#)**)
- The Class 5 Provisional License is an option for those holding a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution in an area other than education, who now desire to become an educator. The applicant must submit a plan of study from the institution that they are intending to complete their educator preparation program through. The Class 5 allows three years for program completion. During this three-year period, the provisional license holder may be employed and teaching in the classroom in the subject area of their program. The Class 5 may also be used by a currently licensed educator that now wants to add a new endorsement to their license. The Class 5 option may be utilized once.
- Internship is an option for those holding a Class 1, 2 or 3 license that now want to add a new endorsement to their license. The internships are an agreement between the educator, their employer and a **Montana** institution of higher education that the applicant will be working with to complete the endorsement. Internships are issued in one-year increments, for a total of three years.
- Emergency Authorization of Employment is an option when recruitment efforts have been unsuccessful in obtaining a licensed educator to fill a vacancy. A school administrator may become aware of a professional in their community that they believe will be able to fulfill their school district and student needs. The administrator submits the application to OPI for approval. This individual is not a licensed educator. If approved, the school district is given authorization to employ this individual in the requested capacity for the school year. (See Emergency Authorization of Employment application/qualifications [here.](#))

- License applicants that meet all requirements other than having completed their Praxis test, will be given a one-year license. This will give them time to settle in and organize, then complete and submit their Praxis results within the one-year time frame.

Please view the licensure process details for applicants; administrator guidance of the licensure process for applicants; and, the steps followed by the OPI Licensure office [here](#).

For more information, contact Kristine Thatcher at kthatcher2@mt.gov or 406-444-2580.

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