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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](#).

- Superintendent Arntzen has created two task forces to provide guidance and resources for families, educators, and schools as they look towards the new school year. MT Learn 2020 is made up of parents, students, teachers, and community members to look at ways to support non-traditional learning. MT Flex 2020 is made up of school administrators and education associations to look at flexibilities needed in state and federal rules and statutes. Learn more on the [OPI's website](#).
- To view the latest updates and press releases from the OPI, DPHHS, the Governor's Office, and other state agencies visit this [LINK](#).
- For updates related to COVID-19 visit this [LINK](#) (being revamped to "Re-Opening Montana schools")
- Be sure to sign up for the OPI's newsletters at this [LINK](#).
- Summer math and reading resources for families can be found [HERE](#).
- The OPI and the family of Jordana Hubble invite all K-8 students to participate in a bus safety digital poster contest! The purpose is to recognize the issues surrounding school bus safety and to honor Jordana as she recovers from injuries sustained due to a driver failing to yield to a stopped school bus. Learn more [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.

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

Assessment

2019-2020 MontCAS Debrief

Annually, the Assessment Division allows System Test Coordinators (STC) the opportunity to help improve the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) program and future test administrations by learning what went well, what could have gone better, and how the OPI can provide resources to support school system needs moving forward. STCs requesting renewal units in recognition of the professional development/training required to administer the state tests should complete this debrief form by June 26, 2020 if they are interested in receiving renewal units or giving feedback.

If you have questions about renewal units or program feedback, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

ACCESS for ELLs Online Score Reports

The ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs electronic score reports were available on [WIDA AMS](#) on Friday, April 24, 2020. To view score reports, select “Test Results” from the “Report Delivery” menu to display the “Test Results” page. Printed WIDA score reports were delivered on May 12, 2020. Some reports may be delayed due to the “shelter in place” orders across the country.

For more information on this topic including the status of printed reports, contact the OPI Assessment Help Desk at 1.844.867.2569 or OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov.

NAEP 2021 Testing

Montana will participate in the 2021 administration of NAEP from January 25 to March 5, 2021. In early summer, schools will be selected and will receive an email regarding selection. The 2021 program will include testing on tablets in mathematics and reading at grades 4 and 8 and in civics and U.S. history at grade 8 only. Students will only be assessed in one subject.

For more information, contact Shantel Niederstadt at 406-444-3450 or sniederstadt@mt.gov.

Montana Science Assessments

The 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](#).

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

Career and Technical Education

New Ag Ed Specialist at OPI

An experienced FFA Advisor and Ag Ed Teacher from Cascade has been named to head the Montana Ag Ed program at the Office of Public Instruction. Eric Tilleman will take over from Shannon Boswell, who was recently promoted to the Interim Division Manager for all Career and Technical Education at OPI. For the past 16 years, Tilleman has taught Agricultural Education at Cascade High School, home to one of the most successful Ag Ed and FFA programs in the state. Eric can be reached at Eric.Tilleman@mt.gov or 444-4451.

MT ACTE Expands CTE Learn COVID-19 Support

Recognizing the dramatic impact of COVID19 on instructional efforts, Montana ACTE negotiated the offer of a selection of free online courses through Montana CTE Learn to prepare CTE teachers to teach online.

As we approach the conclusion of this free offer (May 31st), we've been getting requests to develop a broader offering of courses to engage CTE teachers and staff in a wider range of professional development activities while they are working remotely. In response to this need, Montana ACTE is pleased to offer CTE professionals and institutions 50% off from June 1st to July 31st on any Montana CTE Learn course and subscription key purchases (150+ online courses).

Simply use VIP Code CTE50 to make your purchase on [CTE Learn](#). Purchased keys can be used anytime within one year of purchase.

Mark Branger
Region V Vice President
Montana ACTE, Executive Director
W: 406.967.2540 x360
C: 406.855.5776

2020 Region V Conference Rescheduled

The Region V Conference originally scheduled for April 22-25 has been moved to October 28 – 30. Information regarding registration, registration costs, and tours will be posted in June. Please continue to check the [Region V Conference webpage](#) for updates.

Content Standards and Instruction

Online Learning Resources/Remote Learning Sharing Sessions

As we work to bring remote learning to our students during the COVID-19 pandemic, we know you want the opportunity to connect with other Montana educators to network, share resources, and ask questions.

OPI will continue to host remote learning sharing sessions through the beginning of June. There are multiple subject areas and grade levels to help accommodate K-12 educators and administrators. More than 3000 participants have shared their great ideas over the past weeks!

[Session Schedule and Online Learning Resources](#)

In addition to the weekly sharing sessions, our professional learning teams are planning additional professional learning opportunities related to remote and online learning. Communication about the opportunities is forthcoming and will be posted on the Learning Opportunities Portal, shared in upcoming newsletters, and posted to the OPI [Professional Learning](#) webpage. In the meantime, recommendations can be sent to [Carli Cockrell](#), OPI Professional Learning Coordinator.

Contact OPICSI@mt.gov with any questions, suggest a topic, or volunteer to share your expertise.

OPI Learning Opportunities Portal

Visit the [Learning Opportunities Portal website](#) to find out about classes, workshops, and courses. The Portal is just one of the ways the OPI informs educators about upcoming professional learning opportunities in our state. We are updating with any cancellations or postponements as we are made aware of these changes.

Contact [Carli Cockrell](#) with any questions or to let us know about changes to your events.

Learning Hub

If you haven't already, [check out](#) what more than 16,000 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](#).

Contact OPILearningHub@mt.gov with any questions.

Federal Programs

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Updates

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/>

Webinars:

Thursday, May 21: Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #3

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/729302396>

Meeting ID: 729 302 396

Thursday, June 4: Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #4

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/443598579>

Meeting ID: 443 598 579

Thursday, June 18: Implications for 2020 Waivers: Lend Your Voice #5

<https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/254699718>

Meeting ID: 254 699 718

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

Comprehensive School and Improvement (CSI) Staff Update

Carrie Kouba has been named the new Title I School Improvement Unit Director. Carrie recently worked as an Instructional Coordinator in the Title I School Support Unit and prior to that assignment, she served in the Federal Grants Unit. She has been employed in education and professional development since 2001 and has taught K-12 students. Prior to joining the OPI she was a Principal at Lone Rock K-8 in Stevensville, MT and an Instructional Coach in Rochester, MN. Ms. Kouba is passionate about assisting schools in reaching their goals and providing professional development and coaching opportunities. Carrie can be reached at Carrie.Kouba@mt.gov or 406-444-0794.

Professional Development Webinars for Homeless Liaisons

The OPI's Homeless Education Program is offering a series of webinars to assist all homeless liaisons in obtaining the professional development hours required in Montana's ESSA Plan. Any staff member interested in attending should contact the State Homeless Coordinator, Heather Denny, for an invitation to the webinars.

- May 28, 2pm - Self Care for Education Professional Supporting Homeless Students
- June 11, 2pm - An Intro to Using TransAct's McKinney-Vento Forms and Documents
- June 25, 2pm - Intro to Using the OPI's GEMS Data Warehouse
- July 23, 2pm - Serving LGBTQ Homeless Youth in Montana

For more information, contact Heather Denny at hdenny@mt.gov, 406-444-2036.

Finance

State Paid Tuition and Day Treatment Students

Please continue to submit your 2019-20 Student Attendance Agreements (FP-14/14A) for students placed in a group or foster home outside the district of residence. Tuition Reports (FP-15) for students attending private, non-sectarian day treatment programs should be submitted at the close of school or as soon as the last month's bill is available. The deadline for the OPI to receive these agreements is December 31, 2019. However, 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](#), at 406-444-4524

Special Education Permissive Tuition Levy

The FY 21 Special Education Permissive Tuition Levy calculator has been posted.

CLICK HERE: <http://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Finance-Grants/School-Finance/Tuition-and-Attendance>

Please direct questions to [Nicole Thuotte](#), at 406-444-4524.

Second Semester Transportation Claims

By **May 24th**, school districts must electronically enter and submit TR5 Individual Contract Claims and TR6 Bus Route Claims to the OPI Pupil Transportation System. Upon submittal, claims must be signed by the board chair, and a copy sent to the county superintendent.

Claims Reporting Information

During the school closure period, the OPI will reimburse districts based on actual days of operation up to the point of school closure (March 15th). From that point on the district will claim the originally planned school days which can be obtained from the approved school calendars submitted to the OPI through the TEAMS system.

Districts must still enter and submit claims by the **May 24th** deadline as outlined in statute. However, districts will receive reimbursement based on the routes using TR1's submitted prior to the closure of schools, and reimbursement will be based on individual contracts using the TR4's prior to the closure of schools. Changes or new TR1's and TR4's may not be entered or requested.

NOTE: Districts are required to honor the individual contracts (TR4) only up until March 15th, 2020, and after that the district Board of Trustees may have the funding available to pay for any of the allowable expenses that have been outlined in OPI guidance. See the list of allowable expenses under the ***"How can districts use the transportation fund during the closure period?"*** heading at the following

link: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZvNlqRfKUR5hbynEb_7EGnREw-ci5gh8/view

During the process of entering bus claims for reimbursement, districts may recognize that they are receiving a reduction in days due to an expiration date of the driver during the school closures period in either their CDL, MEC, or FA/CPR. In this case, a temporary expiration date will need to be entered on the TR35 to include the extension time related to the COVID-19 restrictions. Please contact Donell Rosenthal at (406) 444-3024 or email drosenthal@mt.gov for the extension to avoid a loss in reimbursement.

By **June 1st**, the county superintendent must review the claims for accuracy and electronically approve these claims. A signed paper copy of the claims must be received by the county superintendent before approval is made. As stated above, changes or new TR1's and TR4's may not be entered or requested.

The OPI will not continue to receive transportation claims or approvals after the close of business day Friday, June 5th, 2020. Any claims received by the OPI after this final deadline date will not be paid.

For questions or assistance entering second semester claims, please contact [Donell Rosenthal](#), at (406) 444-3024.

Health Enhancement and Safety

School Nutrition Programs

2020-21 School Year Applications will be open for updates and submittal in [MAPS](#) on June 1. Schools electing to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision must complete the application process by August 31. Be sure to make direct certification matches for CEP eligibility by June 30.

USDA waivers for meal service flexibility are effective through June 30, 2020. We are hoping that the waivers will be extended through the end of summer. We will let you know as soon as we hear about any changes to the effective dates.

For more information, contact [Christine Emerson](#), 406-444-2502.

Traffic Education

The Governor has returned local control to school districts. We encourage districts to consult with their local health department, union representatives, and attorneys in developing re-entry plans for all instruction including driver education and Behind the Wheel driving, visit the [OPI Driver Education website](#) to review considerations for Traffic Education due to COVID-19.

Districts should include traffic education in their re-entry plans. The OPI has worked in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services to provide [guidance for planning school re-entry](#) and recovery after a pandemic event. The state is currently in phase 1 and physical and structural environments and physical health are addressed on pages 3 and 4 of this guidance document. This information may be valuable as districts determine next steps for Traffic Education instruction.

For more information, contact [Tara Ferriter-Smith](#) or [Patti Borneman](#).

Rural Mental Health Preparation, Practice and Pathway

[RMHP3](#) is a federally funded grant program designed to prepare counselors for Montana's rural schools and communities. Through the grant, counseling students will be prepared and placed in rural schools across Montana as an integral part of their graduate counseling training. **For more information please contact [Holly Mook \(OPI\)](#), [Dr. Anna Elliott \(MSU\)](#), or [Dr. Kirsten Murray \(UM\)](#).**

Remote Learning Tobacco Use Prevention Resources

We hope teachers, administrators and parents will find these [tobacco prevention education resources](#) especially helpful as we deal with *education in the time of Covid-19*. If you would like to offer a **free ZOOM training** current tobacco trends for your staff this spring. For scheduling or more information, contact [Kris Minard](#) 406.444.0785 or visit the [OPI Tobacco Use Prevention Education](#).

Montana School Nurse of the Year Nominations

Each year, the members of MASN select one of their peers to be honored as Montana's School Nurse of the Year. The Montana School Nurse of the Year is eligible for the NASN National School Nurse of the Year award. Each state's School Nurse of the Year is also recognized at the NASN Annual Convention, and in NASN publications.

Eligibility for this award is based on NASN criteria and includes:

- Evidence of excellence in school nursing practice and leadership in school health
- Member of MASN/NASN
- Active participation in MASN
- Minimum of 5 years of practice as a school nurse
- Past recipients may not be re-nominated

Nominations may be submitted to: erica_harp@gfps.k12.mt.us

HB 601 School Safety Grants

Applications are now open for the second round of HB 601 School Safety Grants. Visit the [OPI's website](#) to learn more.

Indian Education For All

The OPI IEFA Unit Wants Your Feedback

The OPI Indian Education For All (IEFA) Unit has created a survey to gather feedback from teachers who have used OPI resources. Our goals are to understand which resources are most useful for teachers, improve the resources we produce, and better understand statewide school IEFA needs. Your willingness to provide us feedback is appreciated

The survey can be accessed on the [IEFA In Action](#) page of the IEFA website.

For more information, contact [Stephen Morsette](#), 406-444-0754

Indian Education For All Grant RFP Is Open

The OPI Indian Education For All (IEFA) Unit has opened the RFP portal for 2020-21 IEFA grant proposals in the e-grants system. Districts can apply for of funding up to \$12,000 to develop and support activities that strengthen and enhance their IEFA implementation efforts. Proposals must be submitted in the e-grants system by July 31st, 2020. However, districts interested in submitting a proposal must contact Zach Hawkins, OPI IEFA Director, to talk through their ideas prior to submitting a proposal. The deadline to contact him and discuss your proposal ideas is June 30th, 2020.

For more information and to discuss your proposal ideas, contact [Zach Hawkins](#), 444-0708

Licensure

Extension Approved for Provisional Licenses/Third-Year Internships

A recommendation from the OPI to grant a one-year expiration extension for provisional licenses and third-year internships expiring 6/30/2020 was approved by the Board of Public Education (BPE) at their May meeting. This request was taken to the BPE due to the unavoidable disruption the COVID-19 has created for these educators relative to their current license requirements.

These educators have been notified through email (provided a current email is in their MSEIS record) of this approval. The email also explained that their certification expiration date will be adjusted and updated provisional licenses will be mailed prior to June 30, 2020. Those in their third-year of internship were advised to address the extension with their institution and employer.

Renewals – Don't Delay

A reminder for all to check the expiration date of licenses. Those up for renewal are encouraged to submit the online renewal as soon as possible. All professional development and or college courses applicable to license renewal must be earned during the validity period of the license, i.e. July 1, 2015 through August 31, 2020.

There are a multitude of free, online, quality professional development resources available at the [OPI Learning Hub](#) and through [Professional Learning Opportunities](#). Click [here](#) to renew or find additional renewal resources.

Considerations for the Upcoming School Year

1. If employing an out-of-state applicant not previously licensed in Montana, things to ask:
 - Did they complete a traditional educator preparation program at a regionally accredited institution?
The area of program endorsement verified by their institution determines the endorsement to be applied to Montana licensure.
 - Did they complete, instead, an alternative educator preparation program?
If so, they need to hold a valid, unrestricted out-of-state educator license and be able to provide **five (5) years of successful teaching experience verified by their out-of-state, state accredited P-12 employer**. Endorsements on their out-of-state license that align with Montana endorsements will be the areas of endorsement to be applied to Montana licensure.

If you employ applicants not yet licensed in Montana, please:

- Instruct them to immediately apply online for their Montana educator license;
 - Have them confirm with you via email that they have submitted their application;
 - When you receive this email confirmation, forward it to cert@mt.gov;
 - This greatly assists Licensure in prioritizing processing of applications.
2. Considering employing a foreign national, please review the process [here](#).
 3. A reminder that emergency authorization is an alternative if you have advertised a vacant position(s) statewide and are unable to fill the position(s) with a licensed, properly endorsed educator. If you have found a professional in your community that is not a licensed educator, but whom you believe has academic qualifications or significant experience related to the area of need, you may request emergency authorization of employment for this individual. This is not a license, and the school district will not receive quality educator pay for individuals in this capacity.

Emergency Authorization of Employment applications may be submitted in July and any time after for the upcoming school year. They are valid for one year. The law and rule details and application are located [here](#).

A reminder that helpful information may be found on our [Licensure](#) home page. Also, important resources, licensure forms, etc., are in the Useful Resources tab.

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

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