



OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

MERRY
christmas

and



*From all of us! Your commitment to putting Montana students first, is seen and honored as the most important mission. We look forward to working with you in **2021!***

BREAKING NEWS

A 2nd CARES Funding Approved by Congress and awaits our President's signature. Upon its approval, it is anticipated that the funding will be sent to the OPI within 30 days. The package includes new flexibilities to address learning loss and facilities renovations. There is a total of \$54.3 billion dollars in this package for K-12 education. It is projected that districts may receive 4x the amount in the first ESSER funding release. This is only a projection, at this time.

The GEER funding of \$4.05 billion goes to Governors' for distribution. From the Governor's funding \$2.75 billion is to go to non-public schools. There is also additional funding identified for ages 5-24 in this bill.

There is a Broadband provision in the bill with \$3.2 billion for low income family subsidies for connectivity. There is \$1 billion for Tribal broadband.

The OPI's team is actively unpacking this funding package and what it will provide to school districts. A future webinar will be offered for superintendents, board chairs and clerks, once the bill is signed by our President and the Department of Education has provided responses to key questions being asked now. .





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

The OPI Monthly Summary: December 2020

Office of the Superintendent.....3-4

- Montana Education Updates

Finance.....5

- Spring Student Count for ANB
- School Elections
- Impact Aid
- Second Semester Bus Inspections

School Innovation and Improvement Department.....6-9

- Accreditation
- Changes to the ESSA Accountability System
- Implications of the Addendum and TSI Waiver on the Accountability System
- New EL Specialist
- National ESEA Conference

Student Support Services Department.....10-14

- Celebrating the IDEA's 45th Anniversary
- Retirement of Dick Trerise
- Montana Autism Education Program
- Updated Special Education Guidance and Resources
- Submit your TE01 District Application for the 2021 School Year
- Traffic Education Programs Online and Behind the Wheel Instruction
- Summer Food Service Program Claim Rate Change
- Verification of Free and Reduced-Price School Meal Applications
- Personal Protective Equipment for Schools
- School Safety Professional Development Grants
- Montana Tobacco Free School Districts of Excellence

Teaching and Learning Department.....15-20

- Assessment
- Career, Technical, and Adult Education
- Standards, Instruction, and Professional Learning





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Office of the Superintendent

Montana Education Updates

2021 Legislative Priorities

1. BASE Aid plus inflation
2. Adding special education to BASE Aid plus inflation
3. Fund in-state residential treatment for at-risk students
4. Transfer the Broadband for Montana Schools program from the Department of Commerce to the Office of Public Instruction

Program 9 (funding to schools) [comparison](#)

Program 6 (state-level activities) [comparison](#)

The OPI is committed to hosting Education and Tribal Education Caucuses this session:

OPI Tribal Education Caucus:

4:00 pm every Thursday Room 350 at the Capitol Starting January 7th

OPI Education Caucus:

7:00 am Every other Tuesday morning Room 335 at the Capitol Starting January 12th

Chapters 55, 57 and 58 Review

Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen and the Board of Public Education are reviewing ARM Chapters 10.55 (accreditation), 10.57 (licensure) and 10.58 (educator prep). We must continue working to provide our school leaders and educators with flexibilities that COVID-19 has taught us are vital for our education systems.

Federal Waivers

- Summer Food Service Program: extended to June 30, 2021
- Report Card: still required for available data points
- Assessment: ED has not made a decision on spring standardized assessments. The OPI is pursuing a shortened test, and a waiver or determining how local interim data could be used as a strategic assessment method instead of the state-wide test.
- The OPI has continued to advocate an extension of the CRF deadline and this effort is now part of the CARES funding that Congress has passed that awaits our President's signature. It would extend the CRF deadline for one year.

CRF Payments to Schools

- A breakdown of CRF payments to districts can be found under the [finance section](#) of the reopening Montana schools webpage.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Stars and Stripes Initiative

The OPI and American Legion of Montana are partnering on a [Stars and Stripes initiative](#) to donate American Flags for Montana classrooms. The cost of the Flags is \$10 and donors can choose which school that flag goes to. The Flags are classroom-sized 16"x24" and include the staff and wall mount bracket.

Promoting Career and Technical Education

The OPI continues to partner with businesses and industries to promote career and technical education. For the legislative session, we have March 26th scheduled for a Montana Ready Rotunda Day. If you haven't already seen this [promotional video](#) we made with the Montana Chamber, check it out and share!

Transformational Learning and Advanced Opportunities

Transformational Learning and Montana Advanced Opportunity grant applications and annual report submissions opened Monday, December 7th at 8 am MST. Applications and annual report templates are found on the OPI website under Leadership-Academic Success-Transformational Learning/Montana Advanced Opportunity. The submission window closes Monday, January 11th at 5 pm MST. Montana Advanced Opportunities has funding available for FY 2022. Remember, positioning on the funding waitlist is first-come, first-served. To submit a district application or annual report, combine all documents into 1 PDF file. At 8am on December 7th, the submission area will open up on both the [Transformational Learning](#) and [Montana Advanced Opportunity pages](#), allowing for submissions to be accepted through 5:00 p.m., MST, on January 11, 2021. . For more information, contact krystal.smith@mt.gov, 406-249-0758

Superintendent's Office November Activities

- Board of Public Education meeting
- CCSSO Annual Policy Forum virtual conference
- MIC3 meeting
- Land Board meeting
- Meeting with Native American Caucus
- Zoom meeting with local administrators

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:



For more information, contact [Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent](#) 406-444-5658.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

School Finance

Spring Student Count for ANB

The Spring Student Count for ANB is Monday, February 1 and is due no later than Friday, February 5, 2021.

For more information, contact [Nica Merala](#), 406-444-4401.

School Elections

The window for regular candidate filing is Thursday, December 10, 2020 through Thursday, March 25, 2021. Candidates in 1st class districts in counties with populations of 15,000 or more must report to the Commissioner of Political Practices. Please check the OPI School Finance Election page for calendars, the Handbook, and forms. [Election Webpage](#)

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

Impact Aid

Impact Aid applications must be submitted no later than February 1, 2021 for FY 22. Late applications are subject to a 10% payment penalty. Applications are now submitted through the [Impact Aid Grant System](#) (IAGS), instead of G-5. Data sheets are available to assist districts with completion of the application. [Impact Aid Data Sheets](#)

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

Second Semester Bus Inspections

School districts must have all bus inspections for the second semester performed by the Montana Highway Patrol by January 31, 2021.

Only school buses that pass inspection may be used to transport students and only school buses that pass inspection will receive state and county transportation reimbursement.

A school bus that fails to pass inspection will not be eligible for state and county reimbursement until the bus is re-inspected and approved by the inspecting officer.

The school district is responsible for contacting the Montana Highway Patrol to perform bus inspections prior to the deadline.

Second semester bus inspections must be entered electronically into the Pupil Transportation System upon completion and a copy sent to the county superintendent.

For questions or assistance, please contact [Donell Rosenthal](#) or call (406) 444-3024





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

School Innovation and Improvement Department

Accreditation

Applications for Variances to Standards and Charter Schools Due 3/1/2021

The Board of Public Education's Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 10.55.604(1)-(10) "[Variances to Standards](#)," allows accredited schools to implement a variance to a standard or standards and to create a charter school/program ARM 10.55.604(11)(a)-(d). Districts interested in seeking an initial or renewal of a variance to a standard or initial or renewal of a charter school/program must apply to the Office of Public Instruction by Monday, March 1, 2021. An approved application will take effect at the beginning of the 2021 academic year.

The ARM 10.55.604 requires local trustees to provide evidence of the community's public participation and evidence of official board action approving the variance to standards and charter school/program application before submission to the [Variances to Standards Review Board](#). The [Variances to Standards Application Materials](#) are located on the OPI website.

For more information, contact [Linda Vrooman Peterson](#), 406-444-5726.

Changes to the ESSA Accountability System through an Addendum to the 2019-2020 Waivers and a limited Waiver for Targeted Support and Improvement Identification

Purpose of the Addendum and TSI Waiver

On March 30, 2020, Montana OPI received a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) for specific assessment and accountability requirements for the 2019-2020 school year. The OPI applied for the waiver due to extraordinary circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures. The waiver cancelled assessments in the 2019-2020 school year, suspended the accountability system, and removed specific elements related to assessments and accountability on the report card ([see the 2019-2020 waiver for details](#)).

The waiving of these requirements, as well as the continued implications of COVID-19, have impacted how Montana has been able to implement its Consolidated State Plan under ESSA in the 2020-2021 school year. Thus, the Department has created a streamlined process, the





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

COVID-19 Addendum, to account for one-year changes (e.g., changes to how the State will hold schools accountable for the 2020-2021 school year) and two specific long-term changes: (1) shifting forward timelines by one year for identifying schools and (2) shifting forward timelines by one year for meeting measurements of interim progress (MIPs) and long-term goals due to COVID-19.

The **COVID-19 Addendum is important** as it seeks to provide school districts with an extension of the COVID-19 Accountability waivers and relief from the impact of COVID-19 on the accountability system for the 2020-2021 school year. Given that Montana cannot adequately calculate an academic growth measurement, defined by comparing two consecutive years of a student's normalized assessment scores, or some of the measures of Montana's fifth flexible indicator for School Quality and Student Success (SQSS), it cannot meet the requirement to differentiate all public schools based on all five required indicators. Thus, Montana is proposing to shift the identification process forward one year to 2022-2023. See the [Montana Addendum Template here](#).

Because the waiver addendum does not apply to the annual requirement to identify Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools, which are schools with one or more consistently underperforming subgroups for three consecutive years, Montana is also seeking a specific TSI waiver. See the [TSI waiver letter here](#). Montana has sought these changes to provide relief and support to schools as a result of the **ongoing COVID-19 pandemic**. Montana will continue to advocate for school communities and students. These proposed changes do not preclude Montana from submitting amendments or additional waivers to gain greater flexibility in the future. Please note that the Montana OPI is currently applying to the USED for an assessment waiver for 2020-2021 statewide testing.

Implications of the Addendum and TSI Waiver on the Accountability System

Through the Addendum and the TSI Waiver, Montana proposes to address the following components of the accountability system:

- Shift forward timelines by one year to 2022-2023 for identifying CSI and ATSI schools because the growth indicator and the Student Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicator cannot be calculated in 2020-2021.
- Shift exit criteria for CSI and ATSI schools to be in 2022-2023 based on data from the 2021-2022 school year.
- Shift forward timelines by one year for measuring long-term goals and measurements of interim progress.
- Waive annual requirement to identify TSI schools in 2020-2021 for consistently underperforming subgroups.



OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Timeline and Public Comment Process

The Montana OPI is seeking public comment on this addendum and the TSI waiver. Please visit the [Public Comment Website](#) for detailed information. Any comments on this addendum or waiver should be directed to essainput@mt.gov.

The **Timeline** outlining the addendum process with stakeholder involvement:

Date	Milestone	Details
December 14, 2020	Start public comment	Email to stakeholders and information posted on the OPI webpage with links to the accountability addendum, waiver letter and FAQ. Survey for Public Comment posted.
January, 2021	Consult Governor	
January 7, 2021	Webinar 1 for public input	You must register to join the meeting. Click here to register in advance for Webinar 1.
January 14, 2021	Webinar 2 for public input	You must register to join the meeting. Click here to register in advance for Webinar 2.
January 15, 2021	Board of Public Education	Presentation and discussion with the Montana Board of Public Education
January 15, 2021	Survey closes	
January 19, 2021	Education Advocates	Introductory discussion with Education Advocates
January 21, 2021	Webinar 3 for summary of comment.	You must register to join the meeting. Click here to register in advance for Webinar 3.
February 1, 2021	Submission	Final Draft prepared and submitted to the USED

Please send feedback, input and questions to ESSAinput@mt.gov

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



OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

New EL Specialist

Please join the OPI in welcoming Evelyn Paz- Solís as our new English Learner Specialist. Evelyn has a wealth of experience and knowledge working with EL's across the country and at the university level.

Our expanded EL team is excited to work with districts in supporting our ELs. A reminder that the WIDA Assessment window is OPEN. Due to the pandemic and for your safety, the window has been extended until February 26, 2021. Please also note that we have been busy updating and adding to the [EL webpage](#).

For more information, contact:

EL Instruction/PD Contact:

WIDA Assessment Contact:

Title III Funding Contact:

[Evelyn Paz-Solís](#)

[Jacob Barto](#)

[Crystal Andrews](#)

Phone: TBA

Phone: 406-444-4420

Phone: 406-444-6325

National ESEA Conference

The National ESEA Conference, formerly known as the National Title I Conference, will be held virtually this year February 8-11, 2021. Attendees will receive the same high-quality, positive, interactive, and diverse experience – now accessible from the comfort of your own home or office. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused chaos for educators, suddenly sending schools system-wide into online distance learning in such numbers no one could have anticipated. Given these new challenges to America's schools, and renewed determination to end the persistent inequities that impact already marginalized children and families - the National ESEA Conference, and the professional development it offers, are more important than ever.

For more information or to register please click on the following link: <https://www.esenetwork.org/conference>.

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





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Student Support Services Department

Celebrating the IDEA's 45th Anniversary

Nov. 29, 2020, marked the 45th anniversary of President Gerald Ford signing the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142), now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

In adopting this landmark civil rights measure, Congress noted that the law would accomplish two important goals:

1. It would guarantee a free appropriate public education to every child, regardless of disability, on an equal basis with all other children; and
2. It would advance all Americans' understanding of disability by bringing children with disabilities out of the shadows and into American schools where their gifts and strengths could be recognized.

While tremendous progress has been made over the years, we must continue the hard work to address the challenges that still exist. Although we are able to help many children with disabilities to achieve their goals, we must continue our work to ensure that all children have the supports they need and to find ways for all children with disabilities to achieve meaningful results and outcomes. Even if we still have work to do to fully realize IDEA's promise in the future, there is much to celebrate.

Please visit the [IDEA 45 anniversary page](#) to find downloadable IDEA 45 graphics to use with your own celebrations.

Retirement of Dick Trerise

After serving Montana's education system for 45 years, Dick Trerise has decided to retire effective December 31, 2020. We want to thank Dick for his service both in the schools of Montana and at the OPI. Dick's dedication and leadership has had a significant impact on the continuous improvement of education for all students in Montana.

The OPI will soon be seeking applicants to fill this position. If you have questions for the Special Education Team, please reach out to Jenifer Cline, State Special Education Director at jenifer.cline@mt.gov.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Montana Autism Education Program

The Continuing Education and Technical Assistance unit continues to provide training opportunities for Montana public school educators. We have provided scholarships to attend online versions of the following nationally-recognized trainings, which we would typically offer in-person:

PECS

The Picture Exchange Communication System (**PECS**) teaches students who do not have verbal language how to communicate using picture/icon cards or assistive technology. The OPI provided scholarships to the online two-day initial PECS Level 1 certification. Those scholarships allowed 43 educators from 30 districts and four special education cooperatives to become certified in PECS. Over 50% of the scholarship recipients were from rural school districts.

Social Thinking

These trainings help students of all abilities better understand themselves and others and provide them with skills to navigate the complex world of social interaction, foster peer relationships, and improve their social and educational performance. The OPI provided scholarships so that 196 Montana educators from 51 school districts could attend six different half-day online trainings.

We also continue to offer our popular Online Autism/Behavior Training, which has 49 hours of training in applied behavior analysis (ABA) and teaching students with autism.

For more information, contact Doug Doty at ddoty@mt.gov, 406-459-5303.

Updated Special Education Guidance and Resources

On 12/1/2020 the Special Education Unit updated guidance on personal protective equipment and students with disabilities. This update was to add additional clarification. Please see the update at <http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Special-Education/COVID-19-Special-Education-Information#9384510892-personal-protective-equipment--updated-1212020>

For more information or with special education COVID-19 related questions please email SpedCovid@mt.gov.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Submit your TE01 District Application for the 2021 School Year

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, 2021, enter the TE01 in school year 2021.
- Programs ending AFTER June 30, with completion dates in July, August or September, enter the TE01 in school year 2022.

The application can be entered in TEDRS or call the Traffic Education Office for assistance: (406) 444-4432 or email pborneman@mt.gov.

Traffic Education Programs Online and Behind the Wheel Instruction

To keep students and teachers safe during this time, the six hours of required in-vehicle instruction must follow safety protocols that minimize contact. All occupants in the vehicle should wear face masks at all times, use hand sanitizer, take frequent breaks to bring fresh air into the vehicle, and use sanitizer to disinfect surfaces. Check with county health officials for local guidance on best practices.

State-approved traffic education programs can continue to deliver classroom coursework via online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please use assessment tools to track student progress. There are at least two times that in-person meetings should be held: the Parent Meeting and Knowledge Exam testing. Contact the OPI Traffic Education Office for more information: (406) 444-4432 or email pborneman@mt.gov.

Summer Food Service Program Claim Rate Change

Summer Food Service Program reimbursement rates are updated annually based on the Consumer Price Index. This change normally happens in late January.

December SFSP claims are due no later than January 10. Since the SFSP will be operating during the rate change, Montana OPI will need to lockout December claims from January 11 through the date when the new SFSP claim rate is released. No December claims may be submitted starting January 11. If you miss this deadline, December claims can be submitted after the reimbursement rates are released and Montana OPI has made the update in MAPS. Claims submitted after January 11 will be processed with January claims in February.

For more information, contact Christine Emerson, 406-444-2502.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Verification of Free and Reduced-Price School Meal Applications

Districts that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), including those that started the school year using the NSLP then changed to the Summer Food Service Program, must conduct verification of 3% of applications received during the 2020-21 school year and report the results in MAPS by February 28, 2021.

For more information, contact Alie Wolf, 406-444-4413 or visit the School Nutrition Programs Meal Eligibility website.

Personal Protective Equipment for Schools

Hopa Mountain [hopamountain.org], a Bozeman-based nonprofit organization, has been distributing personal protective equipment (PPE) to organizations throughout Montana and is now focusing on supporting schools and school-based programs to meet their PPE needs. Currently, Hopa Mountain is able to ship face shields and adult masks (as available) to schools free of charge. Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer welcomes inquiries from anyone who would like to request face shields and/or masks, or would like to know more about other personal protective equipment available through Hopa Mountain. Please call their office at 406-586-2455.

School Safety Professional Development Grants

The OPI is currently accepting applications for HB 601 School Safety Professional Development Grants. For this round of awards, the Montana Legislature provided a total of \$100,000 for the OPI to award to Montana schools, with approximately \$40,000 still available for the current school year. Schools who did not receive an award for the 2019-2020 school year can apply for grants of \$1000 to \$10,000 to conduct school safety professional development during the 2020-2021 school year. Details on this grant are available on the HB 601 School Safety Professional Development Grant web page where applications can also be submitted. Grants for allowable activities will be funded in the order in which they are received until funds are exhausted.

For more information, contact Tammy Lysons, 406-444-0829.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Montana Tobacco Free School Districts of Excellence

Congratulations to Cayuse Prairie, St. Ignatius, Sweet Grass County High School and Victor Public Schools for gaining recognition as Montana Tobacco Free School Districts of Excellence. The Montana Tobacco Free School Excellence Initiative was first introduced over a decade ago and now nearly 90% of Montana school districts have been formally recognized for adopting comprehensive tobacco free policy. With ever changing tobacco products, keeping school policy updated can be a challenge. Your diligence is appreciated as there is no doubt that a school environment can help empower students to stay tobacco free...hopefully for life! If you are interested in learning more about having the OPI host a tobacco use prevention related virtual session for you and your students or for your staff, please contact Kris Minard at kminard@mt.gov or 406-444-0785.





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Teaching and Learning Department

Assessment Unit

OPI's Strategic COVID-19 Waiver Process

This timeline is specific to the 2020–2021 school year and the state activities that led to Superintendent Arntzen's December 2020 decision to submit a request for testing, accountability, and reporting federal waivers under 20 U.S. Code §7861 and ESEA-ESSA Section 8401.

Note: readers should recognize that the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) cannot act on these efforts until a determination has been made by the U.S. Department of Education (Department) and the Montana Board of Public Education (Board). The Department may take up to 120 days to approve or deny the waiver requests under the Section 8401 process. See the full [Montana Strategic Waiver Actions Zoom Webinar Schedule](#) more details on this timeline and process.)

The OPI will conduct several Zoom meetings posted in this schedule and release a public comment survey to gather input. Any interested person or group that is [likely impacted](#) by these waivers is encouraged to submit comment to ESSAInput@mt.gov or complete the January public comment survey.

Public Comment Period: December 23, 2020 – January 28, 2021

Date	Activity
December 23, 2020	The OPI released the public comment survey [36 Days] seeking comment on the OPI's request to waive the testing, accountability, and reporting requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act (or ESSA) .
February 5, 2021	The OPI submits the package to U.S. Department of Education.
March 8, 2021	The first content area assessment will open as published on the OPI's 2020-2021 Test Calendar .
June 5, 2021	USED has until June 5, 2021 to respond.

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





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

ACCESS for ELLs Testing is Underway

The test window is open! The window is opened for 12 weeks from December 2 to February 26, 2021. To ensure a smooth and successful assessment, check with test administrators to confirm that they've completed the required training in the [WIDA Secure Portal](#) and recommendations within the [FY2021 COVID-19 State Standardized Testing Guidance](#). The Assessment Team hosted a 1-hour session to provide just in time information on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 testing and local monitoring strategies on December 9, 2020. The recording for this webinar is located on the [Stay Informed with Assessment Updates](#).

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

Register for the 2021 ASSIST Conference!

Join us in celebrating over 16 years of excellence! The OPI will conduct the [ASSIST Conference](#) virtually using Zoom software from January 28–29, 2021 and attendees are encouraged to attend the full two-days to meet the diverse local testing needs. There will be a total of 24 60-minute sessions across three unique strands, two keynote sessions, two networking times, and breaks throughout the day. Planned networking time is intended to foster critical partnerships with stakeholders to build strong local assessment and data practices. The conference is FREE to attend and also flexible so you can customize your sessions as it fits into your daily schedule.

Who Should Attend? System Test Coordinators, School Leaders (e.g., Superintendents, Principals, District Administrative Staff, Curriculum Directors, etc.), and Educators (e.g., general and special education teachers). Other interested community members are also welcome to attend the event. We know you'll leave this conference with the tools to make meaningful connections between your data and instruction. Featured presentations are described in the [At-A-Glance One Page Agenda](#) and **registration closes on January 9, 2021.**

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

Submit Comments on the 1.0 Percent State Cap





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

The [State 1.0 Percent Cap Guidance and Monitoring Site](#) has information on the requirements for assessing students with significant cognitive disabilities using Montana's alternate assessments, the statewide data analysis and use plan, guidance for student identification, and the OPI's recommendations for providing staff and student support on these alternate assessments. The OPI hosted a [1-hour webinar on December 3](#) to provide technical assistance and training on this topic as well as the opportunity for public comment. The [public comment survey](#) allows the OPI to solicit comments from all interested stakeholders on the implications of exceeding the 1.0 percent alternate assessment cap. You can also submit written comments to the OPI Assessment Help Desk opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov.

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

Montana NAEP 2021 Postponed

This 2020–2021 school year 121 Montana schools were selected to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP or “*Nation’s Report Card*”) in mathematics and reading for grades 4 and 8 scheduled between January 25–March 19, 2021. We want to thank Montana testing coordinators for their time and effort around planning and preparing for the assessment. From these “Student Attendance and Schedules” MyNAEP preparation activities, as of November 2, we learned that 34% of schools are conducting remote/hybrid-instruction and that 61% of schools will not allow visitors. With these variable instructional models, health and safety concerns, and school access restrictions the assessment has been postponed until 2022. Commissioner James Woodworth at the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) explains the reasons for this decision in the [NCES Commissioner’s statement](#).

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

Career, Technical and Adult Education Unit

Fall CTE Data Collections Now Open

The AIM Fall Career & Technical Education (CTE) Collection is now open and ends December 31, 2020. Please review all the AIM user guides for the Fall Enrollment and Program Participation collections on the [AIM User Guides Page](#).





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

The Fall Career & Technical Education (CTE) Data Collection is a follow-up to the Spring CTE Collection. Students identified as CTE Concentrators in the Spring who graduated in the Class of 2020 must be contacted to identify their status six months after high school graduation. For more information, please see the AIM Fall CTE Collection User Guide and the recorded webinar on this collection.

2020 Secondary Rural Reserve Grant RFP

We have been awarded some additional funds to help support our smaller schools with additional Perkins dollars. Schools allocated under \$5,000 are eligible to receive this additional grant.

Purpose: To create career awareness, recruit, and retain students within a CTE Secondary Program of Study that leads to a high skill, high wage, or in-demand occupations.

Awards: Grants of **up to \$2,000** each will be available to secondary Perkins eligible: school districts who receive less than \$5,000 in Perkins funding and are considered remote rural schools as defined by NCES. Schools will have had to complete the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) and E-Grant application as well.

For more information please email Shannon.Boswell@mt.gov

HiSET Testing at Home

The [HiSET at Home Option](#) is now available to minors in Montana. In order for 16 and 17 year old HiSET test takers to partake in the remote proctored option, they must complete either the [16 Year Old Waiver](#) or the [17-18 Year Old Waiver](#) to HiSET test. The waivers forms have been updated to include an area where test takers must acknowledge the HiSET at Home Option is recorded. After the waiver is completed, the test taker submits the application for the state for approval and then the state “unblocks” the account which allows the test taker to register for the test. For more information please email [Emily Fuller](#).

For CTAE questions, please contact:

[Shannon Boswell](#), CTAE Director - 406.444.7915

[Eric Tilleman](#), Agriculture Education Specialist - 406.444.4451

[Renee Erlandsen](#), Health Sciences Education Specialist - 406.994.6986

[Ian Beagles](#) CTE/Perkins Data Control Specialist - 406.444.9019

[Mike Houghton](#), Industrial Technology Specialist - 406.444.4452

[Austin Schweitzer](#), Marketing Program Coordinator - 406.444.2059

[Eric Swenson](#), Business Education Specialist - 406.444.7991

[Megan Vincent](#), Family & Consumer Sciences Education Specialist - 406.444.3599

[Katie Madsen](#), Adult Education State Director/HiSET State Administrator- 406.444. 4443

[Emily Fuller](#), Adult Education Program Specialist, 406.444.1691

[John Stankowiak](#), Veterans Education- 406.444.4122

[Wanda Arlint](#), HiSET Administrative Assistant, 406.444.4151





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Standards, Instruction, and Professional Learning Unit

Stay in the Know – News from SIPL

Our team has a number of newsletters that help you stay in know about the work our team is doing. To sign up for one of the newsletters described below, just click the link! Please feel free to share our newsletters with other interested educators!

[Choose your OPI Email Updates](#)

- **3 Big Ideas** – A weekly email for educators interested in news about standards, instruction, and professional learning. Includes an update from the Teacher Learning Hub each month.
- **English Language Arts** – A monthly email written by Stephanie Swigart for educators interested in professional learning and exciting opportunities related to English Language Arts and Literacy.
- **Math** – A monthly email written by Marisa Graybill for educators interested in professional learning and exciting opportunities for all educators of mathematics in Montana.
- **Math Elementary Community** – A monthly email written by Marisa Graybill about upcoming Montana Elementary Math Community (MEMC) virtual gatherings and professional learning specific to elementary educators.
- **Professional Learning Provider Insider** – A monthly email written by Carli Cockrell for professional learning providers and renewal unit providers.
- **STEM News** - A monthly email written by Michelle McCarthy for educators interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math news, professional learning, and opportunities.

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 the Professional Learning staff at OPIRUPS@mt.gov with any questions or to let us know about changes to your events.

New Courses on the Teacher Learning Hub

New to the Hub?—[take a tour!](#) We encourage you to check-in regularly with us at the [Teacher Learning Hub](#) and see what nearly 17,000 Montana educators are excited about! The Hub team is always adding to and updating our current library of over 130 self-paced (SP) and facilitated (FA) courses with an additional 30 + currently in design! Please check the Learning Hub [homepage](#) for a complete [course listing](#) and to view the [Hub catalog](#).





OPI Summary of Activities | opi.mt.gov | December 28, 2020

Hope you have time to check out these terrific releases:

- **Resilience: Strategies to Increase Optimism** - Creating joyful classrooms provides the backdrop for students to be successful in their education. This brand new course provides specific strategies to support students to grow in optimism, motivation, and help them to build resilience! (SP – 2 RU's)
- **STREAM: Developing Fraction Sense (3-5)** - A look at learning progressions related to fraction sense and understanding. (FA – 15 RU's)
- **STREAM: Connecting Length, Area, and Volume (K-5)** - expand your vision of what it takes to develop conceptual understanding of linear measurement, perimeter, area and volume. (FA – 15 RU's)
- **Vocabulary: Explicit Instruction of Word Knowledge** - This course reveals the importance of quality vocabulary development no matter the subject area and illustrates ways to make that happen effectively! Teachers come away with practical tools to boost student vocabulary development which in turn leads to gains in overall learning development. (SP – 2RU's)

Contact the Teacher Learning Hub staff at OPILearningHub@mt.gov with any questions.

Contact Us!

- [Colet Bartow](#), Senior Manager, Teaching and Learning Department, 406-444-3583
- [Stephanie Swigart](#), English Language Arts and Literacy Coordinator, 406-444-0736
- [Michelle McCarthy](#), Science Coordinator, 406-444-3537
- [Marisa Graybill](#), Mathematics Coordinator, 406-444-0706
- [Terri Barclay](#), Comprehensive Literacy State Development Program Manager, 406-444-0753
 - Literacy Grant Specialist, [Liz Tuss](#)
 - Literacy Grant Specialist, [Rachel Anderberg](#)
- [Carli Cockrell](#), Professional Learning Coordinator, 406-444-0769
 - Renewal Unit Providers, OPIRUPS@mt.gov
- [Allyson Briese](#), Teacher Learning Content Specialist, 406-444-0716
- [Marjorie O'Rourke](#), Professional Learning Data & Information Specialist, 406-444-3538

-END-