



# MONTANA OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

## ESEA CONSOLIDATED MONITORING

PROCESSES & PROTOCOLS

FEDERAL PROGRAMS UNIT



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### INTRODUCTION

The Montana Office of Public Instruction and Federal Programs unit strive to build collaborative partnerships with districts through the implementation of federal grant programs. The monitoring of federal grant programs allows the OPI and districts to collaborate while providing equitable education to all students and ensuring accountability. Monitoring the use of funds and program implementation under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is an essential function of the OPI's Federal Programs unit. ESEA has tremendous potential to improve the public education of historically underserved students through the following programs:

- Title I, Part A, Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title II, Part A, Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III, English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act
- Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IX, Part A, Education for Homeless Children and Youths

ESEA requires that SEAs and LEAs monitor and evaluate these programs' impact to ensure that all students, particularly those from historically underserved groups, have equitable access to a high-quality education.

### BACKGROUND

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorized in 2015 as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), was passed as a civil rights law to provide funding and resources to states, districts, and school leaders to enhance their capacity to meet the strengths and needs of educators and students in their community. Each Title program under ESSA has a specific purpose to provide focused resources to support students who are historically, or currently, marginalized and/or are experiencing barriers to an academically enriching curriculum in a safe and inclusive environment.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of ESEA Consolidated Monitoring is to provide the support districts need with the implementation federal programs while navigating the requirements that each program has within the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The intent is not to look for things that are wrong, but to learn from districts what they are doing with their federal funds, assure that they are meeting the requirements within each fund, and if this is not the case, assist the district with implementing changes that will help them meet the requirements while also strengthening their programs. This process is done to help protect districts and the state of Montana from any



consequences that may occur from state or federal audits of federal programs and funds in the consolidated application. The objectives of the OPI for monitoring are centered around three key areas:

1. **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS – WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER.** The main objective for the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is to raise student achievement for Montana's public school children. Through cooperative assessment of the federal programs between the OPI and Montana school districts the quality of services to students will be strengthened and improved.
2. **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE – WE'RE HERE TO HELP.** The OPI Federal Programs team provides technical assistance during the review and beyond. It is not the OPI's intent to tell the district how to run its title programs, but rather to answer questions, facilitate dialogue, and exchange ideas and information for program improvement while, at the same time, meeting all federal requirements.
3. **COMPLIANCE – IT'S THE LAW.** Monitoring federal programs helps ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. Monitoring is intended to be a collaborative partnership between the OPI and districts to ensure compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

While accountability to federal requirements is important, the goal of monitoring is to provide technical assistance and support districts in their implementation of federal programs.

### PROTOCOL

The responsibility for monitoring resides with the OPI, mandated by ESEA statute. The Federal Programs unit has synthesized ESEA program requirements into a meaningful and manageable collection of requirements in a [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#). The [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#) includes information on the requirements within ESEA for which districts will be monitored. While the indicators listed in this document provide a comprehensive overview of the programs, it does not encompass every requirement in a grant program. A table is included for each title program that contains:

- a description of each of the monitoring indicators.
- the relevant portion of ESEA law that applies.
- supporting documentation that should be maintained by the district.

All districts are encouraged to use this tool as a resource for organizing, collecting, and submitting documentation related to ESEA federal programs when a district is selected for monitoring. The Federal Programs unit will use the [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#) and its indicators to evaluate ESEA program compliance.



## PROCESS

### FALL MONITORING

In the timeframe of **September to November**, the OPI will initiate communication by sending an email notification on or before the first week of September, detailing the submission process for evidence and documentation. Districts are required to compile and submit all relevant materials in **PDF format** to the OPI, with continued access to coaching and technical assistance throughout this phase.



By **December 1**, districts must submit their ESEA Monitoring evidence and documentation to the OPI, marking the deadline for submissions. Following this, the OPI will commence a thorough review of the submitted materials. Starting in December, districts will receive a report outlining any findings and necessary corrective action plans, with the OPI remaining available for support until all issues are resolved and the monitoring process is officially completed.

### SPRING MONITORING

In the timeframe of **January to April**, the OPI will initiate communication by sending an email notification on or before the first week of January, detailing the submission process for evidence and documentation. Districts are required to compile and submit all relevant materials in **PDF format** to the OPI, with continued access to coaching and technical assistance throughout this phase.



By **May 1**, districts must submit their ESEA Monitoring evidence and documentation to the OPI, marking the deadline for submissions. Following this, the OPI will commence a thorough review of the submitted materials. Starting in June, districts will receive a report outlining any findings and necessary corrective action plans, with the OPI remaining available for support until all issues are resolved and the monitoring process is officially completed.

## SUBMISSION OF MATERIALS

The OPI will provide the LEA superintendent with a secure link to a district monitoring folder for uploading evidence, which will be accessible to both the OPI and the LEA. The LEA will use the [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#) as a checklist to compile all required documentation. Each document must be saved individually in PDF format and renamed to include the relevant item number from the [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#), such as IA-A, CC-H, MV-B, etc. Once the documentation is collected and prepared, the LEA will upload it to the district monitoring folder via the secure link. Within this folder, program subfolders will be organized under the Evidence Folders.



**Notice to all districts:** Due to the wide range of district and school parental notification forms, and the fact that many do not meet federal requirements, beginning with School Year (SY) 2021-22, [Pathwise/TransACT](#) documents must be used by ALL LEAs. Those sections where Pathwise/TransACT forms must be used are identified within the [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#). The OPI has partnered with Pathwise/TransACT Communications to provide state approved and legally reviewed parent notices, forms, and letters at no cost for district and school staff. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) pays for a state subscription to Pathwise/TransACT for all Montana districts.

- Pathwise/TransACT Parent Notices must be completed with LEA contact information, updated annually, and made available/accessible to parents and families.
- LEAs are encouraged to include annually updated Pathwise/TransACT Parent Notices as part of student enrollment packets, parent/student handbooks, and district webpages.
- Required Pathwise/TransACT Parent Notices are listed on each program's monitoring tool.

## REVIEW OF MATERIALS (DESK MONITORING)

Using the [Monitoring Organizational Tool](#), submitted materials are reviewed to determine district compliance. Upon completion of the review, The OPI will prepare a detailed report to share desk monitoring review results with the district.

## MONITORING REPORT & CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

After reviewing the documentation and evidence submitted by the LEA, the OPI will issue a detailed monitoring report. This report will outline the LEA's compliance status, suggest next steps, and highlight any findings along with necessary corrective actions to address findings.

The monitoring report is based on the primary formula grant program for:

- Title I-A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
- Title II-A: Supporting Effective Instruction
- Title III: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act
- Title IV-A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
- Title IX: Education for Homeless Children and Youths

The reports for each program are in five sections:

- **Compliance area:** Section of the program being monitored.



- **Description:** Provides a brief overview of the text from federal or state law that addresses each section being monitored.
- **Finding Status:** Describes issues of compliance that will require response and correction by the district to continue to be eligible for ESEA/ESSA funding.
- **Corrective Action Plan:** Lists steps the district must take to correct the findings as it reviews and revises its Title programs. It also gives the time frame in which these corrections must take place.
- **Recommendation:** Provides additional comments, suggestions, or recommendations that the LEA may want to consider.
- **Program Contact:** Provides the contact information of the Program Specialist for this section.

Program Specialists will work with LEAs to ensure the completion of all necessary corrective actions. Once these corrective actions are finalized, the OPI will inform the LEA that the monitoring process has concluded.