



Accreditation Process for the 2020-2021 School Year

Release 9.17.2020

The Board of Public Education determined the following at their September 10, 2020 meeting regarding Accreditation Status for schools and districts:

- As there is no 2020 student performance data on which to base status, schools and districts will be given the same accreditation status for student performance data as they had for the 2019-2020 school year. In other words, they are “held harmless” for student performance data.
- All districts are still required to complete the 2020-2021 TEAMS data collection process. The TEAMS data system collects data from schools and districts that, along with accreditation assurances, also includes critical data for school finance, and the federal government required collections.
- The assurances collected in the TEAMS report can only improve an accreditation status of a district. It cannot lower the 2020-2021 status from what it was for 2019-2020.
- A school or district that has already worked to correct accreditation deficiencies may have their accreditation status improved.

These changes are in effect for the 2020-2021 school year only.

Note: The accreditation process includes two sets of data: (1) student performance (2) assurance standards. Due to COVID-19, student performance data for 2020 is not available. The assurance standards are completed through the TEAMS data collection process.

Questions related to the accreditation process should be referred to opiteams@mt.gov.



OPI Guidance on Aggregate Hours During the COVID-19 Crisis

August 25, 2020

"Aggregate hours" means the hours of pupil instruction for which a school course or program is offered or for which a pupil is enrolled.

The following are options available to districts to ensure that aggregate hours are met for ANB purposes. Average number belonging" or "ANB" means a student count for each school district that is used for school funding purposes.

1. Declaration of an Unforeseen Emergency

Make certain that your district's **local board of trustees has declared an ongoing emergency** under 20-9-806 MCA, for the 2020-2021 school year. This action allows the district to close for one day without making up the lost pupil-instruction time. In addition, by taking this action, Trustees may later adopt a resolution that **a reasonable effort has been made to reschedule the pupil-instruction time lost** because of the unforeseen emergency. **If the trustees adopt the resolution, the pupil-instruction time lost during the closure need not be rescheduled to meet the minimum requirement for aggregate hours** that a school district must conduct during the school year in order to be entitled to full annual equalization apportionment." However, this statute requires **"at least 3 school days or the equivalent aggregate hours must have been made up, outside the existing school calendar, before the trustees can declare that a reasonable effort has been made."**

2. Offsite Learning

The [July 31, 2020 directive](#), eased the restrictions in **20-7-118 MCA, offsite provision of educational services by school district**. Districts are able to count offsite instruction for aggregate hours of instruction as clearly outlined [in 209-9-311 \(10\) \(a\) MCA](#).

3. **Online learning** is covered under the offsite instruction statute.

4. Proficiency Based Learning

The local board of trustees can declare its students proficient in content as determined by the school board **using district assessments**. [20-9-311 \(4\) \(d\) MCA](#), provides that a school district can include a proficient student in its ANB count regardless of the aggregate hours provided, with ANB converted to an hourly equivalent based on the hours of instruction ordinarily provided for the content over which the student has demonstrated proficiency. **Students that demonstrate proficiency, regardless of the time necessary, are not required to meet aggregate hours.**

Districts should contact the OPI Chief Financial Officer, Ken Bailey at kbailey2@mt.gov, for additional assistance.

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Guidance on Determining Attendance for the Fall 2020 ANB Collection Student County

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[Administrative Rule 10.20.102](#) (4)(a) states ...

A school district may not count as enrolled for purposes of ANB calculations a student who has been absent for the 11th consecutive pupil instruction day immediately prior to and including the official count date.

Today, attending school looks different for many students. Provided are examples for taking attendance in offsite learning. Examples include but are not limited to: check-in process with a specific teacher, student digital login to the district's learning management system, date and time stamped work submitted during the day in google classroom, calling students, Zoom check-in, emails from students, etc.

Careful review of this specific ARM is encouraged by all districts as it highlights specific requirements for counting students. Remember a school district must conduct the minimum number of hours of instruction, in order to collect full ANB, [See ARM 10.20.102 \(15\) \(a\)](#), unless the district's board has adopted proficiency as found in [20-9-311 \(4\) \(d\) MCA](#).

District questions should be directed to the OPI Chief Financial Officer Ken Bailey at kbailey2@mt.gov.