



MEETING PROJECT NAME: Education Advocates Meeting

DATE OF MEETING: October 20, 2020

TIME: 9:30 AM – 10:10 AM

LOCATION: Zoom Meeting

ATTENDEES:

PRESENT: As best of our records could show

Dan Rask, Executive Director, Montana Small School Alliance (MSSA)

Dianne Burke, Executive Director, Montana Quality Education Coalition (MQEC)

Paul Furthmyre, Superintendent Montana School for the Deaf and the Blind (MSDB)

Angela McLean, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE)

Peter Donovan, Executive Director, Board of Public Education (BOPE)

McCall Flynn, Education Policy Advisor, Governor's Office

Pad McCracken, Legislative Services

Dennis Parman, Executive Director, Montana Rural Education Association (MREA)

Emily Dean, Director of Advocacy, Montana School Boards Association (MTSBA)

Jule Walker, Field Specialist, MTSBA

Katie Rubinger, Legislative Assistant, Senator Tester's Office

Kirk Miller, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana (SAM)

Nancy Hall, Governor's Office of Budget and Program Planning (OBPP)

Laura Sankey Keip, Attorney, Legislative Services

OPI STAFF

Elsie Arntzen, State Superintendent

Sharyl Allen, Deputy Superintendent

Tim Johnson, Deputy Superintendent

Dylan Klapmeier, Director of Communications and Federal Relations

Ken Bailey, Chief Financial Officer

Julie Murgel, Senior Manager School Innovation and Improvement

Tracy Moseman, Chief Operations Officer

RECORD KEEPER

Phoebe Williams Executive Office Administrator, Office of Public Instruction

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Update on 3 New Federal Grants, Tracy Moseman

- Reviewed 2020 new federal grants: Material Follow
- Announced award of a new nutrition grant
- Summer food program waiver extended through the end of the school year

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

School Cyber Security Update, Michael Sweeney

- October is Cybersecurity Awareness month -what that means for OPI: Materials follow

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

ESSA Amendment, Julie Murgel

- [Small School Exit Criteria Amendment](#)

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Equitable Services Guidance, Ken Bailey

- Reviewed updated guidance on Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)
[OPI ESSER Page](#)

TOPIC & PRESENTER INFO

Legislative Priorities, Tim Johnson

- [2021 Legislative Session](#)
- Diane Burke (MQEC), Dennis Parman (MREA), Kirk Miller (SAM), Emily Dean (MTSBA), and Angela McLean (OCHE) summarized their legislative priorities for the group.

[Full Education Advocates meeting can be listened to at this link](#)



2020 New Federal Grants

The **Montana Project AWARE** (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) Initiative will develop state infrastructure at Montana's Office of Public Instruction and Children's Mental Health Bureau to support school districts across Montana in developing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for mental health promotion and response. This grant will also fund three Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in Montana to implement evidence-based and culturally competent school mental health practices. The participating LEAs include Billings Public Schools, Dillon K-8 School District and Rocky Boy Public Schools. The two major overarching goals of the grant are: **Goal 1:** Increase the awareness and capacity of Montana school systems and staff to prevent and respond to mental health issues using the Multi-Tiered Systems Framework. **Goal 2:** Increase the capacity of three Local Education Agencies in Montana to connect youth who have behavioral health issues and their families to needed services.

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) will partner with the Montana Healthcare Foundation (MHCF) to support the **School Wellness Initiative** implementation. The School Wellness Initiative will support new partnerships between schools and high-performing health care providers (including federally qualified health centers, rural health centers, tribal health departments, and behavioral health providers) to implement school-based health centers. The initiative will target schools with the highest concentration of students most in need of services, as judged by academic and health data. These include roughly 70 schools, among them alternative schools and schools with the lowest academic performance. OPI staff will help enlist participation by priority schools; provide trauma-informed care training and coaching and support for academic data reporting; help schools plan and implement participation in OPI's Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for students with behavioral issues; and identify and implement restorative discipline practices. Partnerships will include MHCF, OPI, local school districts, clinical service partners, public health, and the School-Based Health Alliance. The project's overall goal is to improve students' health and academic outcomes by providing in-school access to health care services and fostering a supportive school climate for students.

State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) This project will increase LEA capacity to support and sustain the implementation of the Montana Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) through distance learning and web-based formats for professional development and coaching support focused on data-analytic problem solving at the systems level. The project will utilize implementation teams at the state, regional, district and building level to increase capacity for implementation and create an efficient infrastructure for professional development, technical assistance, coaching, and communication. This project will prioritize rural LEAs and indigenous majority LEAs. In addition, the project will increase opportunities for school personnel who work with student with disabilities to exercise choice in professional development.

2020 New Federal Grants

Summary overview:

- 5-year grant, November 1, 2020-October 31, 2025
- Grant focus-Improve and expand professional development and coaching support focused on data-analytic problem solving at the systems level
- Management structure-State, regional, district and building level implementation teams
- Subgrants to districts for PD-school personnel who work with students with disabilities
- Year 1 November 2020-October 2021-focus on training coaches, developing materials and working on hub courses
- Training/support begins Fall 2021 and will be piloted in Region 1 with 3 districts
- Expansion to other regions in subsequent years



School Cybersecurity Update

October is cybersecurity awareness month. What that means here at the OPI is all of our employees are undergoing annual refresher training on cyber-security best practices and basic security awareness so we can avoid becoming a victim of a cybersecurity attack. It is important to know that the vast majority of cyber-security incidents are the result of manipulating people via social engineering, not through sophisticated hacking or technology. In other words, the bad guys are hacking people and the only way to defend against it is through constant training and awareness.

What I wanted to talk about today briefly is some awareness and training efforts the OPI is working on with our partners to better support schools and districts.

Late last month the OPI sent an advisory to many districts about an issue affecting Tyler Technologies. It went out only to districts using Tyler. Tyler provides accounting and student information systems to many districts. Due to an issue related to ransomware affecting the company internally, Tyler advised their customers to change passwords to accounts that Tyler support personnel might have had to some district systems. We have not heard of this issue causing losses or breaches of any data to any Montana districts using Tyler software. I'd like to say thanks to Rob Watson in Missoula and Kirk Miller here at SAMMT for bringing this to our attention so we could get the word out.

One thing that this incident did was show that there is a need to quickly and confidentially disseminate important cyber security information to schools and districts. Myself and Kirk Miller have been in discussion with the Department of Administration and Montana National Guard and we are looking into having some state and national cyber security prevention and response resources made available to schools and districts, similar to how they are already available to state agencies and many counties and cities. Some of the information provided is confidential and not for public consumption, for example vulnerabilities that need patching are not something you want to be advertising. We are looking at creating a clearinghouse and repository of Montana district tech and cybersecurity contacts to communicate with. Many districts get their tech support through consortiums, private companies and other means besides "in-house" staff so we're exploring how best to setup and manage a group like that.

Prior to COVID, we were exploring some ideas around the Department of Administration being able to offer districts support in managing their network infrastructure, again similarly to how state agencies and many counties and local governments in Montana are doing. Thanks to COVID, we've all been pursuing other priorities but I wanted to share that this is coming back

on the radar. Having proactively managed networks and cyber-security is not inexpensive, however the idea of consolidating and centralizing some of that, and how it would be resourced, is something we're looking at again and in the early stages of exploring opportunities and ideas.

In the meantime I think what we have settled on as achievable and within the constraints of the resources we all have is the clearinghouse/notification and access to the prevention and response resources.