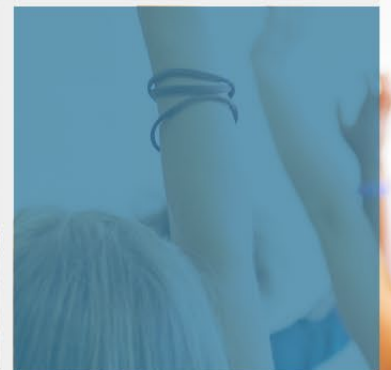




The Montana Office Of Public Instruction **2025** **Annual Plan**



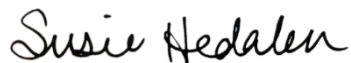
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Introduction from the Superintendent

In accordance with House Bill 692 (2025) and Section 2-12-104, MCA, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is pleased to share our updated Annual Plan for the year. This report highlights the work being done across our divisions, the goals we’ve set for the year ahead, and the measurable outcomes we aim to achieve on behalf of Montana’s students, families, and educators.

Each year, this plan serves as a roadmap—showing how OPI’s programs and initiatives connect to our broader mission of ensuring every student in Montana is prepared for success in school, work, and life. Key priorities include improving academic achievement, strengthening career and technical education, supporting safe and welcoming schools, and empowering our teachers.

We are proud of the progress happening in Montana’s classrooms and communities, and we remain committed to transparency and collaboration as we continue building a stronger education system for every student.



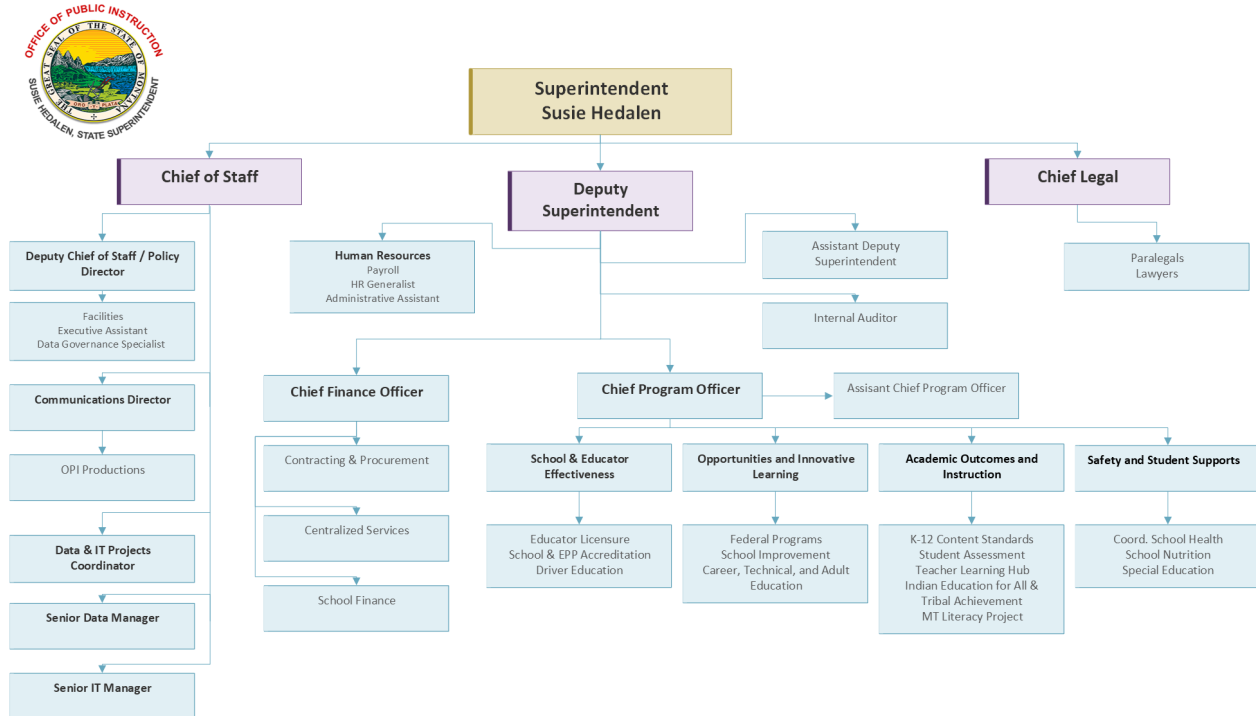
Susie Hedalen
Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction

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Agency Structure & Functions:

Agency Organization Chart:



Functions of Divisions:

- **The Program Division** implements state and federal academic programs in support of school, teacher, and student improvement, achievement, and safety
- **The Finance Division** performs the fiscal and centralized services support functions of the office.
- **The Information Technology and Data Division** provides technology and data support services.
- **The Superintendent's Office** consists of executive staff responsible for overseeing human resources, operations, communications, policy, and legal affairs, as well as oversight of agency administrators.

Superintendent's Office

Goal 1: Modernize agency structure and operations to improve effectiveness, accountability, and service delivery.

Actions: Complete a comprehensive Remote & Office Workplace Study (ROWS) to assess how agency structure, staffing models, and physical workspace support collaboration, fiscal responsibility, and responsiveness to schools. Implement an internal reorganization aligned to agency priorities, division functions, and strategic initiatives. This work includes:

- Establishing a committee of OPI staff with the appropriate finance, HR, technology, and facilities experience.
- Inventorying workspace and resources in the 1227 and 1300 buildings.
- Determining potential office space needs and availability outside of Helena.
- Reviewing telework agreements and policies.
- Reviewing jobs codes for appropriate alignment with workstations and telework agreements.
- Existing and needed workstation resources such as technology, equipment, and furniture.

Outcomes:

- Completion of the ROWS and implementation of recommended structural improvements.
- Updated telework agreements and clarified expectations for agency staff.
- Improved internal coordination and responsiveness to schools and stakeholders.

Goal 2: Strengthen transparency, accountability, and cross-agency alignment

Actions:

- Review and modernize internal policies, procedures, and administrative rules to improve clarity, consistency, and public transparency.
- Align executive oversight, division work plans, and performance measures with the Superintendent's Strategic Initiatives.
- Strengthen coordination with the Board of Public Education, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana University System, and other state agencies to ensure coherent education policy and implementation.

Outcomes:

- Clear alignment between strategic priorities, annual plan goals, and division-level initiatives.
- Reduced duplication of effort across agencies and improved policy coherence.
- Improved transparency for policymakers and the public regarding agency operations and decision-making.

Goal 3: Improve communication and support for schools and communities

Actions:

- Expand and modernize agency communications, including newsletters, guidance documents, and digital resources.
- Increase engagement with educators, school leaders, families, and community partners through statewide meetings and listening sessions.
- Use feedback from the field to inform Program Division priorities and resource development.

Outcomes:

- Improved clarity and consistency of agency communications.
 - Increased awareness of OPI guidance, programs, and expectations.
 - Stronger alignment between agency support and school-identified needs.
 - Develop a revamped newsletter and communications plan for schools
 - Launch a new website with updates resources
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Program Division

Safety & Student Supports

Goal 4: Create safe schools and healthy students through prevention, preparedness, and strong partnerships.

Actions:

- Develop and publish statewide frameworks and guidance to support:
- Cell phone-free school environments that reduce classroom disruptions and support student well-being.
- Responsible and ethical use of artificial intelligence in educational settings.
- Online safety, digital citizenship, and protection from exploitation.
- Expand child abuse and human trafficking prevention efforts through collaboration with public health agencies, law enforcement, and community partners.
- Strengthen educator licensure expectations and reporting requirements related to student safety.
- Provide high-quality training materials for educators, families, and community members who work with children.
- Improve school safety infrastructure guidance, including emergency operations planning, threat assessment processes, and extracurricular activity safety.

Outcomes:

- Publication of statewide guidance documents and toolkits for school safety and student wellness.
 - Increased adoption of best practices for emergency preparedness and student protection.
 - Improved access to training resources for schools and communities.
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Opportunities & Innovative Learning

Goal 5: Ensure every student has the opportunity to graduate college, career, and life ready.

Actions:

- Expand Career & Technical Education (CTE) opportunities by:
 - Increasing middle school exposure to career exploration and technical learning.
 - Expanding high-quality work-based learning (WBL) opportunities in high school.
 - Strengthening career and technical student organizations as leadership and skill-building pathways.
- Integrate CTE and WBL more meaningfully into accountability and reporting systems.
- Develop clear implementation guides for CTE and WBL to support educators, families, and private-sector partners.
- Expand public-private partnerships that align education with workforce needs.
- Increase intentional dual-credit opportunities and strengthen collaboration with the Montana University System.
- Promote FAFSA completion, financial literacy, and early career and degree-path planning.

Outcomes:

- Increased student participation in CTE, WBL, and dual-credit programs.
 - Improved alignment between secondary education, postsecondary expectations, and workforce needs.
 - Stronger indicators of postsecondary readiness among graduating students.
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Academic Outcomes & Instruction

Goal 6: Improve academic outcomes in core subjects through strong instruction, accountability, and educator support.

Actions:

- Strengthen early literacy interventions and partnerships to ensure students read on grade level by the end of grade 3.

- Increase family engagement and flexible learning options to support literacy development.
- Improve math proficiency by:
 - Collaborating with the Montana University System to align high school math pathways with college readiness.
 - Expanding technical and applied math options aligned to CTE pathways.
- Promote adoption and effective use of high-quality instructional materials and aligned professional development.
- Continue to modernize assessment, accountability, and accreditation systems to focus on meaningful student outcomes.
- Provide targeted supports for low-performing student groups.
- Strengthen enforcement of content standards to reinforce focus on core academic subjects and reduce instructional distractions.

Outcomes:

- Improved early literacy and math proficiency trends statewide.
- Increased educator capacity to deliver high-quality, standards-aligned instruction.
- More effective accountability systems that support continuous improvement.

School & Educator Effectiveness

Goal 7: Strengthen educator preparation, effectiveness, and system coherence.

Actions:

- Review and strengthen educator licensure and preparation expectations to ensure alignment with classroom needs.
- Improve accreditation and oversight of educator preparation programs.
- Expand access to meaningful professional development through the Teacher Learning Hub.
- Support schools identified for improvement with targeted, evidence-based interventions.

Outcomes:

- Improved alignment between educator preparation, licensure, and classroom practice.
 - Increased access to relevant, high-quality professional development.
 - Improved outcomes in schools receiving targeted supports.
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Finance Division

Goal 8: Improve fiscal transparency, consistency, and support for local schools while strengthening stewardship of public education funds.

Actions:

- Enhance and standardize budget tools, templates, and written guidance for school districts to improve clarity and consistency in budget development, amendments, and reporting.
- Provide targeted training and technical assistance for school clerks, business officials, administrators, and trustees, with particular support for new personnel and districts identified as needing improvement.
- Standardize budget review processes to ensure consistent application of statutory requirements across districts while maintaining local control over spending decisions.
- Strengthen internal fiscal workflows related to requisitions, payments, reimbursements, travel, and contracts to reduce processing delays and improve service to schools and vendors.
- Utilize audit findings, compliance reviews, and fiscal trend analysis to identify systemic issues and inform improvements to guidance, training, and internal controls.
- Improve coordination between finance staff and program divisions to ensure fiscal requirements are clearly aligned with programmatic expectations and timelines.
- Increase transparency around school finance processes and timelines through improved communication and publicly available resources.

Outcomes:

- Improved understanding among districts of budget requirements, timelines, and fiscal expectations.
- Reduced delays and compliance issues in school finance submissions.
- More consistent and predictable budget review and approval processes statewide.
- Improved internal efficiency and responsiveness within the agency's fiscal operations.
- Stronger stewardship of public education funds and increased confidence in school finance oversight by policymakers and the public.

Information Technology & Data Division

Goal 9: Advance transparency, innovation, and accountability through modern data systems that directly support schools in monitoring and improving student growth. The division's work focuses on modernizing systems, reducing administrative burden, and transforming data into tools that support instructional decision-making and student success.

Actions:

- Modernize core data systems to improve reliability, security, and usability while reducing duplicative and manual reporting requirements for schools.
- Align and integrate major agency platforms—including the OPI website, statewide student information systems, Teacher Learning Hub, Teach Montana, and professional development and licensure systems—to ensure consistent data flow and reduce redundancy.
- Improve data dashboards and reporting tools that allow schools and districts to:
 - Monitor student growth and academic progress over time.
 - Identify trends and gaps for specific student groups.
 - Support early intervention and targeted instructional strategies.
- Expand statewide data analytics capacity to move beyond compliance reporting toward meaningful insights that inform instruction, resource allocation, and policy decisions.
- Strengthen data governance, data quality standards, and validation processes to ensure information used by schools and policymakers is accurate and comparable.
- Partner with the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, Montana University System, and other agencies to improve longitudinal data analysis, including transitions from K–12 to postsecondary education and workforce pathways.
- Provide guidance and training to schools and districts on effective use of data tools to support continuous improvement and student growth monitoring.

Outcomes:

- Reduced reporting burden for schools through streamlined, automated data collection processes.
- Increased availability of clear, timely, and user-friendly data tools that support school-level decision-making.
- Improved ability for schools to monitor student growth, evaluate interventions, and address achievement gaps.
- Stronger alignment between K–12 data, postsecondary readiness indicators, and workforce outcomes.
- Greater transparency and confidence in education data used for accountability, planning, and legislative oversight.