

Montana Office of Public Instruction

INVITATION TO APPLY

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEARNING GRANT OPPORTUNITY

SB 08

**ISSUED BY**

Montana Office of Public Instruction 1227 11th Avenue, 2nd Floor

Box 202501

Helena, MT 59620-2501

**Application Opens: 8:00 a.m. Monday, December 4, 2023**

**Application Closes: 5:00 p.m. Monday, January 8, 2024**

Questions regarding this application should be directed to:

Montana Office of Public Instruction

1227 11th Avenue, 2nd floor

Box 20251

Helena, MT 59602-2501

Krystal Smith: program manager

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**OVERVIEW:**

When the 2019 Legislature adjourned, House Bill 351, sponsored by Representative Wendy McKamey, had passed and was subsequently signed into law by Governor Steve Bullock. HB 351 amends section 20-9-116, MCA, and revises education laws to support transformational learning. Transformational learning is defined in the bill as a flexible system of pupil-centered learning that is designed to meet the Montana Constitutional Mandate “to develop the full educational potential of each person. In the 2019 legislative session, HB351 was changed to HB089, changing the first-come, first-served ranking to a lottery system.

Further definition is provided in the bill as to what outcomes should be addressed:

* A system that is customized to address each pupil’s strengths, needs and interests.
* A system that includes continued focus on each pupil’s proficiency over content.
* A system that actively engages each pupil in determining what, how, when and where each pupil learns.

Specific requirements of the application as found in HB 351 include:

* Identify the number of full-time equivalent educators meeting the criteria of 20-9-327(3) who will participate in your district’s transformational learning program with full-time equivalent assignment that is dedicated to the district’s transformational learning program.
* Include the district’s definition of proficiency within the meaning of that term as used in 20-9-311 (4) (d). Remember, seat time cannot be required as a condition or other element of determining proficiency. The definitions must be incorporated into your district’s policies and must be used for the purposes of determining content and course mastery and any other progress for pupils enrolled in your district’s transformational program.
* Include a strategic plan with appropriate planning horizons for implementation (such as the four-year eligibility timeline), measurable objectives to ensure accountability, and planned strategies to:
* Develop a transformational learning plan for each participating pupil.
* Embed community-based, experiential, online and work-based learning opportunities that foster virtual and face-to-face connections.
* Provide effective professional development to assist employees in transitioning to a transformational learning model.
* Ensure equality of educational opportunity to participate by all pupils of your district.
* The local school district’s application must be formally approved by the District’s Board of Trustees and signed by the district board chair.

**KEY DATES:**

* Opening and Closing Dates of the FY 2025 Application: December 4, 2023 – January 8, 2024
* Deadline for FY 2024 Funded Districts Annual Report for The Board of Public Education:

5:00p.m. MST January 8, 2024

* The application is available on the OPI’s [Transformational Learning](https://opi.mt.gov/Leadership/Academic-Success/Transformational-Learning) website. This webpage will also have a link to Qualtrics, where all applications will be digitally submitted to the OPI.

Note: All applications received by the OPI will be submitted to The Board of Public Education for qualification.

**FUNDING**

Districts are eligible for four consecutive years of funding. However, the Transformational Learning Bill ends in FY2027. It is anticipated that districts applying in FY2025 will receive a maximum of three years of funding.

For those districts qualified for FY 2025 funding, payments are to be made no later than October 1, 2024. Districts are to deposit these state payments into the school district flexibility fund. The OPI will provide the state payment based on the timeline established by The Board of Public Education.

**PERMISSIVE LEVIES**

SB 08 allows additional funding that can be permissively levied by the school district to your flexibility fund in an amount up to the state Transformational Learning payment received by the school district. Remember, if you are intending to permissively levy for transformational learning, the notice to levy increases are due by March 31 in compliance with 20-9-116, MCA.

Section 2(5)(b) provides that a school district’s trustees may transfer state or local revenue from any budgeted or nonbudgeted fund, other than the debt service fund or retirement fund, to the district’s flexibility fund provided by 20-9-543, MCA as long as your school district remains qualified for a Transformational Learning aid payment.

To take advantage of added budget flexibilities, districts would need to know the amount of state payment to be received, to prepare and adopt district budgets with proper budget authority. The Board of Public Education will meet in January of 2024 to qualify FY 2025 districts in time for permissive levy notifications.

Funding for newly-applying districts in FY25 will be based on a lottery system, conducted by an independent 3rd party upon meeting the requirements of the application.

**ANNUAL REPORT**

A funded district’s FY 2024 annual report is due Monday, January 8, 2024. Districts that are anticipating increase FTE involved in their Transformational Learning plan will compete with new districts for a spot on the priority list, through a lottery system. The following is the **minimum** required in your district’s annual report for continued qualification.

**Measurable objectives from your strategic plan and progress toward them, including data**

* Qualitative
* Quantitative

**Full time educator equivalent (FTE):**

* + - Increase in participating educators, if any
    - Decrease in participating educators, if any
    - Cause of increase or decrease in FTE
      * An expansion in funding of a previously approved plan is contingent upon the availability of funds.

**HB946 additional reporting requirements**

* Descriptions of transformational learning activities
* Metrics used to evaluate effectiveness
* Assessment of level of effectiveness
* Future plans for each transformative activity
* Funds expended for each activity

An annual report template is provided for districts to use as a guideline.

**ASSISTANCE**

Technical assistance is available to any school district that has a need and is planning to apply for transformational learning funding. This can be sent to: [krystal.smith@mt.gov.](mailto:krystal.smith@mt.gov) The OPI participates in various conferences with Q&A sessions for districts. In addition, regularly scheduled Zoom webinars are offered for district staff. Finally, on-site technical assistance is also available. The remaining scheduled support Zoom webinars are: October 11th, November 16th, and November 30th, all from 1-2pm.