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OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF MONTANA

Putting Montana Students First A+

Data Modernization FAQs

1. What is the Data Modernization project?
   The 2021 Legislature appropriated funds for OPI to modernize data systems. One part of the project will eventually replace the GEMS dashboarding tools currently being used. OPI purchased interactive dashboards through Power School to be used by district staff. Some dashboards will be available to the public. This is part of a larger data modernization effort undertaken by OPI in recent years.

2. Why do we need it?
   Our goal is to improve access to data to enable the OPI and school leaders to make data-informed decisions to best serve students within Montana.

3. What are the 'pieces' of Data Modernization in MT?
   Data will still be collected through each school's existing School Information System (SIS), then uploaded into Connected Intelligence (the data lake) which pulls from the Infinite Campus (IC) State Edition. Connected Intelligence then feeds into Analytics and Insights to create dashboards. Schools will be able to access their data using Analytics and Insights dashboards. Access to data will be limited by security permission. Analytics and Insights also has a public-facing module that will be available without security permissions with non-student-level data.

4. Will schools be required to use a particular SIS?
   No. Schools will be able to continue to use their current SIS.

5. How will it affect my job/school directly?
   Data managers may experience changes depending on the current SIS their district is using. The biggest change schools will see is for PowerSchool SIS schools: our goal is that users will no longer have to manually upload their data. Instead, this will be done automatically as it has been done for Infinite Campus SIS users in the past. The easily navigable Analytics and Insights dashboards will look different than the current GEMS dashboards. In addition, due to more frequent uploads, data will be able to reflect the current data provided by the schools. Previously, dashboards displayed data from annual collections.

6. What training will be provided?
   There will be both in-person and virtual training sessions offered.