



Dear Partners in Education,

August 24, 2017

Montana ESSA Plan Handouts:

The OPI has created an [Executive Summary](#) that follows the headings of the template for the state ESSA plan. This should be a quick reference/overview that will help you in finding areas of the plan that may interest you. There is also [a shorter version](#) including plan highlights.

Title I School Support & Accountability:

During the 2017-2018 school year we will be transitioning into the new Title I School Support models including: supporting high priority school districts, direct collaboration with schools on development of their CSIP and completing needs assessments with districts receiving support. The new accountability system will not be used to meaningfully differentiate schools for Title I support until 2018-2019.

Ongoing Collaboration & Communication:

This week the OPI presented an ESSA update to the Interim Education Committee which sparked an in-depth question and answer session. Many discussions also occurred between the OPI and education advocates including MT-PEC members, the Governor's Office, and the Board of Public Education in regards to final steps before the submission of the ESSA state plan. The OPI is looking forward to upcoming ESSA meetings with statewide PTA, school psychologists, and the counselors association.

Submission & Peer Review:

Next week the OPI will send out a new draft plan in the weekly update with a description of revisions that have been made. After speaking with the U.S. Department of Education regarding submission, we were encouraged to examine particular sections to ensure they are complete and have the technical aspects the U.S. DOE will be looking for when ESSA is peer reviewed. Montana is prepared to submit the state ESSA plan through a secure government site for peer review between September 14th and 18th. We were told that the DOE will try to complete the peer review and consult with the MT OPI in four to six weeks; however, it may take longer because many states will be submitting at the same time. This is unlike this past spring when only seventeen states submitted. After peer review, we will have fifteen days to make revisions suggested. The OPI and partners in education will consider these suggestions, determine as to if we agree with them or not, and then resubmit the plan to the DOE. At that time the Department of Education can accept the plan or request further justification or changes to certain areas of the plan.

Approved state plans since submission to the Department of Education on April 3rd: Delaware, Nevada, New Mexico, New Jersey, Louisiana and Connecticut.

Please send feedback, input and questions to ESSAinput@mt.gov