

## THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION ANNUAL PLAN - 2024

The Office of Public Instruction’s mission is to put Montana students first through efficient and innovative programs, finance, information technology, accountability and legal units. The units work together to provide efficient systems to support all public schools in Montana.

This annual plan provides the initiatives, goals, and outcomes the department intends to accomplish, meeting the requirements of 17-7-111, MCA. Find the 2023 Annual Plan at [opi.mt.gov](http://opi.mt.gov).



**THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - CPO PROGRAMS**

The Program Division includes five departments: Student Support Services, School Improvement and Engagement, Teaching and Learning, Accreditation and Licensure, and Educational Innovation. The departments are made up of multiple units. Through an innovative approach, the program staff are responsible for research, planning, development, and implementation of federal and state educational programs. The division goals and objectives align to the Superintendent’s 4 pillars: HOPE, TEACH, LEARN, and READY.



WHAT	WHO	GOAL
<p><b>LEARN:</b> Implement the innovative Montana Aligned to Standards Through-Year (MAST) math and ELA assessments for all 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that will replace the traditional end-of-year state summative assessments, satisfy federal testing requirements, provide actionable data for instructional purposes, and be flexibly aligned with local scope and sequence curriculum.</p>	<p>CPO, Education Innovation Manager, Teaching and Learning Senior Manager, Assessment Director and Specialists, and Program Directors and Specialist</p>	<p>In SY 2024-25, OPI will launch interim reporting in October 2024, configure and schedule testlet windows for all districts using automated tools, and create summative reports, interpretation guide, and training modules. In SY 2025-26, OPI will facilitate standards setting to create achievement levels, create and distribute summative score reports, and compile evidence for December 2025 Peer Review submission.</p>
<p><b>TEACH:</b> Establish and utilize an accreditation process that ensures coherence, focuses on student outcomes, and contains essential elements for quality schools. The accreditation process for all K-12 and public charter schools will emphasize a proficiency-based learning model, go beyond “check the box” compliance, and support innovation and improvement more effectively without overburdening district and school resources.</p>	<p>CPO, Accreditation and Licensure Director, Accreditation Specialists, Program Directors and Specialists, and Data Specialists</p>	<p>In SY 2024-25, OPI will facilitate a Think Tank composed of school district leaders to develop a Criteria Reference Guide; provide technical assistance and professional learning to district leaders to successfully submit evidence for the remaining data elements for the Integrated Strategic Action Plan including the finalized graduate profile, mentorship and induction plan, professional development plan, evaluation plan, curriculum processes, assessment plan, and school climate elements; deploy a new accreditation digital platform; determine accreditation status for all K-12 schools; and design and present to BPE for approval a three cycle for accreditation to be implemented in SY 2025-2026.</p>
<p><b>LEARN:</b> Modernize the Math and ELA content standards that prioritize simplicity, practicality, and clarity, set and uphold high academic standards for all students, guide instruction, and prepare our students for their lives beyond the classroom.</p> <p><b>TEACH:</b> Using innovative approaches, enhance instructional practices and build the capacity of Montana educators to implement the standards by providing professional learning opportunities and developing guidance documents.</p>	<p>CPO, Teaching and Learning Senior Manager, SIPL Director, and Content Specialist</p>	<p>OPI will propose to BPE math standards that emphasis critical concepts and mathematical practices, genuine integration of the cultural heritage of Montana’s American Indians, improvement of early numeracy and number sense at the K-5 level, and creation of diverse pathways for high school learners. OPI will also develop comprehensive guidance documents for teachers and families to provide a clear understanding of the math standards and provide professional learning opportunities that empower teachers in the classroom and assist families at home. For the ELA standards, OPI will conduct standard and writing sessions with educators; facilitate the negotiated rule-making process and propose to BPE ELA standards that align to current reading instructional practices and models; address the relationship between reading and writing; recognize stages of emergent literacy and language develop; have genuine integration of the cultural heritage of Montana’s American Indians; and focus on adolescent and disciplinary literacy. The OPI will provide ELA professional learning opportunities and develop guidance documents which include an emphasis on the science of reading and early literacy.</p>

WHAT	WHO	GOAL
<p><b>TEACH, LEARN, &amp; READY:</b> Apply innovative strategies to: (1) Enhance and expand the special education monitoring process to include data analysis, teaching strategies, family and community engagement strategies, and transitional planning for post-secondary college and career opportunities that all together aim to improve outcomes for Montana students with special need; and (2) Develop a para-professional pathway program that increases the capacity of Montana’s paraprofessionals and advances educators in the field of special education towards a Special Education Technician Certificate.</p>	<p>CPO, Student Support Service Senior Manager, Special Education Director, Special Education School Improvement Unit Director and Specialists</p>	<p>OPI will design a new differentiated monitoring process in consultation with special education technical assistance centers to be implemented in SY 2024-25 with schools on the 5-year monitoring process. OPI will establish the data and criteria to be used in the process; communicate the process with key stakeholders; provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities about the new process to school leaders and educators. OPI will also secure and implement a new digital monitoring tool to support the process and along with desk monitoring of IEPs, analyze critical data prior to onsite monitoring. The OPI will provide a comprehensive online library of training modules focused on professional development for paraprofessionals, particularly those working in a special education setting. The published modules will be utilized for required coursework towards a Montana’s Special Education Technician Certificate.</p>
<p><b>HOPE:</b> Develop innovative approaches for chronic absenteeism and mentorship and induction for new teachers in schools identified in the accountability system as needing the most support and improvement.</p>	<p>CPO, School Improvement and Engagement Senior Manager, School Improvement Director, Tribal Relations and Resiliency Director, and Specialists</p>	<p>During SY 24-25, the OPI will collaborate with educators, families, and post-secondary, community and work-force partners to bolster efforts that reduce and eliminate chronic absenteeism, so that students have a better chance to reach their full potential. The OPI will partner with UM to better understand how to mitigate the adverse factors that lead to absenteeism, including poverty, health challenges, community violence, and difficult family circumstances. The OPI will also partner with MSU to Implement an induction and mentoring program for up to 100 teachers working in comprehensive schools. Over the next three years, the mentorship program will reduce the high level of teacher turnover in hard to serve schools.</p>
<p><b>READY:</b> Leverage innovation for the unique Montana rural culture to Identify, pilot, and expand opportunities to catalyze post-secondary and workforce readiness.</p>	<p>CPO, Education Innovation Manager, Ready Coordinator, and CTAE Director and Specialists</p>	<p>In collaboration with K-12 schools, local communities, post-secondary educators, and industry partners, the OPI will pilot in Central Montana education-to-employment strategies aligned to the region’s economic needs. Within the pilot, the OPI will support the implementation of college and career pathways that lead to students earning industry-recognized credentials and securing in-demand jobs. The OPI will also build the capacity of K-12 school systems across the state to expand work-based learning programs and initiatives, by developing guidance and providing professional learning opportunities focused on career exploration, career awareness, and career development.</p>

**THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - CAO**  
**ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Accountability Division provides various support services to OPI units and divisions by providing efficient internal systems to ensure integrity in hiring, contracting, and internal controls. It oversees and manages Human Resource Management, Internal Controls and Auditing, Contracts and Procurement, Facilities, and Data Governance.

<b>WHAT</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>GOAL</b>
Maintain facilities for a safe and healthy environment for employees and public visitors which includes waste management and air quality. Confirm the security of the building and grounds for the physical safety of employees as well as data security.	CAO, Maintenance Worker	OPI will continue to regularly review the building for maintenance issues, and respond timely to service tickets, as well as communicate regularly with State GSD. This includes verifying that camera and security systems for the building are up to date to ensure the safety of employees and visitors as they enter and exit the building. Maintain consistent procedures and record keeping for visitors to the building
Ensure policies, procedures, and forms are up-to-date for internal processes and procurement to increase efficiency and effectivity.	CAO, Procurement Manager, Centralized Services	OPI will regularly review policies, create agency procedures for contacting and procurement, and outline procedures for internal agency form submission and updating, including a training plan as needed for new and current employees. Communication between procurement and programming departments will be strengthened to ensure efficiency by implementing a communication plan.
Verify internal audit procedures, processes, systems are all consistent and effective to ensure transparent record keeping and responsible use of state dollars.	CAO, HR Manager, Internal Auditor	OPI will review desktop manuals to ensure all manuals are up-to-date. All processes will be uniform, and easily accessible to OPI employees on the internal website. OPI will also continue to work with state auditors.
Ensure timely hiring procedures to fill vacancies and maintain OPI the best workforce to effectively serve communities and schools.	CAO, HR Manager	OPI will build out updated hiring procedures and train managers on the procedures.
Data Governance	CAO	OPI will review data governance processes and procedures to ensure Personally Identifiable Information protection and security. Update process for monitoring data input and requests.

The Finance Division provides financial service to other OPI divisions, distributes and monitors state and federal grant programs to local education agencies, distributes ESSER funding in innovative and valuable ways to schools and their partners, and allocates funding from federal, state, county, and local sources to establish school district budgets.

WHAT	WHO	GOAL
Allocate 100% of ESSER III funding to Montana schools before the grant closeout date of September 30, 2024, or later if program is extended.	ESSER/Centralized Services Teams	OPI is working with schools to ensure they have executed their budget plans and will have all work and funds obligated by 9/30/2024. The ESSER team is focusing on helping schools with applications for final allocations related to afterschool and summer school programs and ensuring schools are requesting fund distributions from OPI for final expense reporting.
Improve business processes for requisitions, Contract Services, Procurement, ProCard purchases, travel requests and reimbursements, and payments to vendors.	CFO, Centralized Services, Senior Manager, CSD staff, Procurement Officer	OPI will implement a more automated requisition form and approval process and establishing training for all program staff. CSD will also approach assigning accounts payable staff queues related to types of payments. OPI will document internal processes and update the purchasing and procurement policies.
Monitor compliance and accountability for grant program requirements and regulations.	CFO and Centralized Services Senior Manager	OPI will implement a school allocation system which will improve the ability to correctly calculate allocations, provide notifications and reports, and monitor school spending. This tool will be utilized to increase school funding opportunities, decrease grant reversions, and ensure conformity with program requirements.
Collaboration with Montana Education Organizations on guidance, training, and outreach.	CFO, School Finance Manager, Centralized Services Senior Manager	OPI will increase the number of productive interactions with Montana education boards, advocacy groups, professional organizations, and other partners to improve training on OPI grant and reporting systems, increase adherence to data collection deadlines, and provide transparency of school allocations.

**THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES-CIO**  
**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND DATA**

The Information Technology and Data Division delivers technical services to other OPI divisions and school districts statewide, manages data collection and reporting for both federal and state requirements, and offers project management services for agency initiatives.



WHAT	WHO	GOAL
<p>Enhance agency-wide data governance by advancing data maturity and implementing improved collection strategies to elevate data quality and reporting.</p>	<p>Data and IT teams</p>	<p>OPI will improve data maturity through improved and simplified systems and interfaces. Information collection strategies will be enhanced by consolidating collection tools and systems. OPI will enhance data quality assurance by leveraging advanced tools and AI to automate data validation, detect anomalies, and streamline error correction processes. OPI will also expand the Comprehensive Data Inventory, including the creation of data dictionaries for all data sources.</p>
<p>Develop human capacity to effectively utilize data by creating training plans that establish a unified data skills program, focused on building proficiency in data analysis, quality assurance, data visualization, and storytelling.</p>	<p>Data and IT teams</p>	<p>OPI will develop and implement a data workforce training plan to create a pool of agency staff who thoroughly understand the data being collected and can assist during collection periods. A cohesive data skills program will be established to improve data tool usage and efficiencies. OPI will also build capacity for data visualizations and storytelling to improve data understanding.</p>
<p>Promote the strategic use of data to strengthen data-driven decision-making for stakeholders.</p>	<p>Data and IT teams</p>	<p>OPI will create value through the data analytics platform by improving the data flow timing and data presentation. OPI will also consolidate the number of systems and data sources to simplify data streams, as well as continue to make investments and enhancements in the systems implemented.</p>
<p>Improve data access, transparency, sharing, and reporting by leveraging effective tools to deliver data visualizations that enhance accessibility and security.</p>	<p>Data and IT teams</p>	<p>OPI will build out the Connected Intelligence Snow Flake environment, the Unified Insights platform to track student, school, and district performance, and the Community Engagement platform for public data to be easily accessible. Analytic and data visualization tools will continue to be deployed as part of the modernization project. OPI will also improve data sharing processes with other agencies, to include adopting the Common Educational Data Standard (CEDS).</p>



The Legal Division of the Montana Office of Public Instruction provides legal advice and services to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the agency generally. The Legal Division consists of two teams: one in-house agency team that generally supports the agency and one telework SPED (special education) team that specifically supports OPI’s Special Education Unit.

WHAT	WHO	GOAL
Improve monitoring of Legal Division contact details from parents, education officials, and the public.	Agency Team	Develop procedures for data entry and management of external contact details and implement the procedure through OPI’s online customer service interface.
Increase local school district capacity for dispute resolution with families of students with disabilities.	SPED Team	OPI will collaborate with the Montana Empowerment Center, Montana’s Parent and Training Information Center, to apply to CADRE (Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education) for the Collaborative State TA Workgroup for Local-level Capacity-building.