



## A. Tribal Education Caucus Presenters



**Sharyl Allen** is a native Montanan raised in an entrepreneurial environment with ranching as the backbone of her family. Community involvement and pride were firmly instilled by parents who valued work ethic, family, music, and God. Western Montana College provided an exceptional foundation to become an effective teacher. Her MBA was completed at Northern Arizona University, where she also completed post-master’s work in Educational Leadership. Georgetown University’s Urban Educational Leadership certificate was completed in 2015. With 38 years in public education, she has previously served as the Transformational Learning and Montana Advanced Opportunities program manager and since April 2020 as the Deputy Superintendent.



**Julie Murgel** is the Chief Operating Officer for the Montana Office of Public Instruction. Julie leads the operations for the educational programs within the Student Support Services, School Innovation and Improvement, and the Teaching and Learning Departments. A key responsibility for Julie is assisting the Superintendent in planning, budgeting, administrative management, policy development, drafting legislation, personnel management, communications management, and coordination, for the activities of the agency. She uses a data-driven approach to guide her work and has a passion for innovation and cultivating leadership and empowerment in others.

## Department of Innovation and Improvement

### Tribal Resiliency Unit



**Donnie Wetzel Jr.** serves as the Tribal Resiliency Unit Director, is Blackfeet (Amskapi Pikuni), and connects efforts in Tribal consultation, collaboration, and communication between OPI and Montana tribes through relationship building. He looks to for inclusion of opportunities in Indigenous perspectives within OPI interagency efforts, policies, and training while promoting and sharing Montana’s unique strength and Tribal knowledge for the benefit of our districts and youth



**Crystal Rondeaux Hickman** is an enrolled member of the Apsaalooke Tribe and of Northern Cheyenne descent. She is a dedicated wife, mother, grandmother, and daughter. She values spending time with her family above all else. Crystal has worked in the human services and community organizing fields for 20 years. She is passionate about working with the resilience of tribal people, youth empowerment, and giving a voice to those who have none.



**Matt Bell** is Nakoda and Aaniiih from Fort Belknap. He currently serves as the Language and Culture Specialist at the Montana Office of Public Instruction. His experience includes teaching Native American Studies and English in Missoula, as well as Graduate Studies in Linguistics, Native American Studies, and English Teaching. I am a University of Montana graduate, Missoula resident, and proud father of one amazing four-year-old.



**Alicia Doney** is from the Aaniiih and Nakoda Nations, also known as the Fort Belknap Reservation. She attended Hays/Lodgepole Highschool and graduated as Valedictorian in May of 2019. She is currently pursuing her degree in Human Services at MSU-Billings to become a counselor for our tribal youth within our schools.



**Anna Marsicano** is the coordinator for the OPI Tribal Culture and Connection AmeriCorps Planning Grant. She grew up in the state of North Carolina and went on to get her Bachelor's in Economics from the University of South Carolina. Following graduation, she served as an AmeriCorps VISTA for the Tribal Wraparound Project where she collaborated on issues such as mental health and youth empowerment.

### American Indian Student Achievement Unit



**Carrie Gophers** serves as the American Indian Student Achievement unit's Director and has an extensive teaching background. She has taught all levels of school - elementary, middle, and high school. She has been an elementary, family, and consumer science, driver's education, and secondary math teacher in Rocky Boy School District. Carrie has also served as an assistant athletic director, volleyball coach, and Native Youth Communities Project Coordinator. Most recently, she has served in a leadership role as a Dean of Students



**Morgan Smith** is a former K-8 teacher who has taught in Kansas, Missouri, Alaska, and Montana. She graduated with honors from Haskell Indian Nations University with an AA in Paraprofessional Education and a BS in Elementary Education. She has also received her M.Ed. in Learning and Technology from Western Governor's University. She has leadership experience within the public school setting, racial and social justice task forces, and is an active participant in her community.



## **Indian Education for All Unit**



**Zach Hawkins** serves as the Director of Indian Education for All. Prior to joining the OPI, he worked with American Indian students and school communities as a classroom teacher and Federal college access program administrator for 18 years. In previous positions, he led the Hays-Lodgepole Thunderbirds to their first football victory in five years, was chosen as a Helena Education Foundation Distinguished Educator, and co-led the National Council for Community Educational Partnerships' College and Career Readiness Evaluation Project.



**Mike Jetty** is an enrolled member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a Turtle Mountain Chippewa descendant. Mike is currently working at the Montana Office of Public Instruction as an Indian Education Specialist. He has been working with Indian Education issues for the past 28 years and has teaching experience at both the K-12 and University levels. He has a B.S. in History Education, a Master's in School Administration, and an Education Specialist Degree.

## **Department of Teaching and Learning**

### **Career Technical and Adult Education Director**



**Shannon Boswell** serves as the Career, Technical, and Adult Education Unit Director. She spent the first 13 years of her career teaching high school Agriculture in rural West Virginia. While there she grew the program from 30 students to 90 students, added a 20x 80 Greenhouse lab, and a 30x60 animal processing facility for her students to gain real-world skills. She worked closely with local businesses to provide career-readiness skills for all students. Upon leaving the classroom in 2017, she moved west to accept the role of Agricultural Education Specialist with the Montana OPI.

## **B. Dedicated work of each unit**

The **Tribal Relations and Resiliency Unit** (TRRU) was developed to build relationships and understandings within the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and Montana school districts to incorporate **Tribal voice**, share resources, and build connections through consultation on matters affecting American Indian students.

Within the TRRU, the Systems of Care Tribal Wraparound Director was absorbed, and a new position has been developed state-wide. The School Mental Health Support Services Coordinator will help connect the services and



support around Mental Health services while incorporating the experience from work centered on relationships, collaboration, and student services. Another addition is the Language and Culture Specialist. Working to seek guidance from our Communities, Elders, and Leaders to celebrate our tribal efforts around our Tribal identity.

The **American Indian Student Achievement Unit** provides guidance to districts regarding the Montana Code Annotated 20-9-330, appropriating \$200 per American Indian child, totaling over 3 million dollars per year, to provide funding to school districts for the purpose of closing the educational achievement gap that exists between American Indian students and non-Indian students. They have developed resources for districts to close the American Indian student achievement gap.

**Indian Education for All (IEFA)** Unit works with districts, tribes, and other entities to ensure all schools have the knowledge, tools, and resources necessary to honor the IEFA requirement and integrate it into their teaching materials and methods. Montana’s [constitutional requirement and duly enacted policy](#) require recognition of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and a commitment to our educational goals to preserve their cultural heritage. Every Montanan, whether Indian or non-Indian, should be encouraged to learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE)** prepares Montana K-12 students for a wide range of careers and post-secondary education programs. CTE courses are found in Montana's middle schools, high schools, and career centers.

### C. Tribal Education Caucus areas based on upcoming legislation

Date	Topic	Presenter
1/5/2023	Meet and Greet: Food will be served	Elsie Arntzen
1/12/2023	Health and Wellbeing- the Whole Child Approach	Donnie Wetzel Crystal Hickman
1/19/2023	Proactive Approach to Missing and Murdered Indigenous People	Carrie Gopher Morgan Smith
1/26/2023	Tribal Consultation	Donnie Wetzel
2/2/2023	Language Integration into Classrooms	Mathew Bell
2/9/2023	Tribal Youth Initiatives	Alicia Doney Anna Marscianno
2/16/2023	Land Based Learning	Carrie Gopher Morgan Smith
2/23/2023	Education Workforce Design and Development	Sharyl Allen
3/2/2023	Transmittal Break	
3/9/2023	Achievement in Math, Reading, Science	Julie Murgel
3/16/2023	Indian Education for All 0101Tri	Zach Hawkins Mike Jetty
3/23/2023	Career Technical Education Pathways	Shannon Boswell



3/30/2023	Kindergarten Readiness	Elsie Arntzen Sharyl Allen
4/6/2023	Infusing Curriculum into Culture	Carrie Gopher Morgan Smith
4/13/2023	Proficiency	Sharyl Allen
4/20/2023	Knowledge Keepers of Indigenous Nations	Donnie Wetzel
4/27/2023	Tribal Computer Program	Carrie Gopher

#### D. Q&A