

Department of Justice – Office of Public Instruction

Annual Process for Effect of Fire Inspection Reports on Accreditation Status

1. First Inspection – first violations

- Letter to school from Deputy State Fire Marshall
- Copy of letter to Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division

2. Second Inspection – with same violations

- Letter to school from Deputy State Fire Marshall
- Copy of letter to Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division

The following standard paragraph should be included in bold type, which will serve as a key indicator to the OPI:

"Due to the noted violation, this facility is in violation of Rule 10.55.2001, School Facilities of Sub-Chapter 20 of the Montanan School Accreditation Standards and Procedures Manual. We will be requesting the Office of Public Instruction take appropriate action to ensure compliance with the accreditation safety standards."

The OPI will note the deviation(s) on the final accreditation letter. Note of these deviations(s) alone may not necessarily create a recommendation to the Board of Public Education for an advice or deficiency status.

3. Third Inspection – with same violations

- Letter to school from State Fire Marshall
- Copy of letter to Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division

The following standard paragraph should be included in bold type:

"The school district has 30 days from the date of this letter to provide an acceptable plan of correction and begin the implementation of said corrections. Failure to comply will result in the matter being forwarded to the (insert county name) County Attorney's office for legal action."

The OPI will note deviation(s) on the final accreditation letter. On a third occurrence, the school will be recommended to the Board of Public Education for an **advice** accreditation status. Dependent upon the noted seriousness of the violations as determined by the State Fire Marshall (life threatening), a recommendation of **deficiency** status may be recommended.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) will forward documentation of corrective action by the school or acknowledgement of an extension provided to the school by DOJ to the OPI Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division.

4. **DOJ refers the case to a County Attorney or Issues a State Fire Marshal Order**

- Copy of case report or order to the OPI – Accreditation and Educator Preparation Division

The OPI recommends to the Board of Public Education that the school receive an accreditation status of deficiency. The OPI may recommend that the Board of Public Education consider holding a hearing with the appropriate school officials.

At every level, if the Department of Justice accepts a plan of corrections from a school, the OPI will be advised. The OPI then will remove or change the school's status in their files.

Information that is received by the OPI from DOJ after February 15 will not be able to be used for the current school year unless the information can be used to clear a school from an advice/deficiency status. The Board of Public Education determines the accreditation status of each school at the regularly scheduled March meeting.

At any level of inspection, nothing precludes a recommendation of advice or deficiency if the severity of the situation as noted by the State Fire Marshal warrants such action.